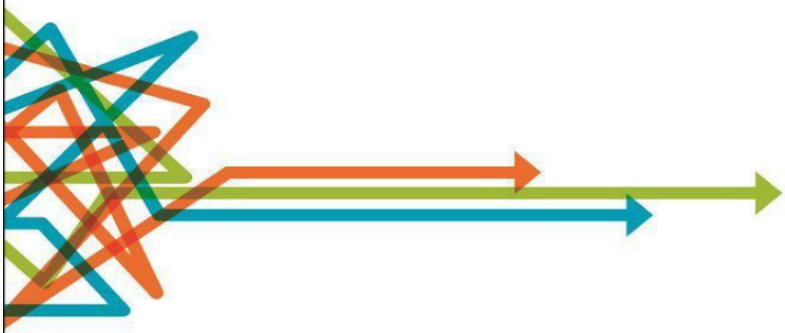
The Wayfinding™ Bible

Helping you
navigate
God's Word.



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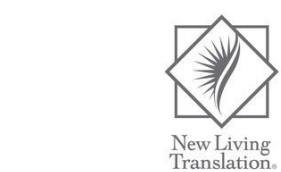

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ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF BIBLE BOOKS

Acts

Amos

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Colossians

1 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

Daniel

Deuteronomy

Ecclesiastes

Ephesians

Esther

Exodus

Ezekiel

Ezra

Galatians

Genesis

Habakkuk

Haggai

Hebrews

Hosea

Isaiah

James

Jeremiah

Job

Joel

John

1 John

2 John

3 John

Jonah

Joshua

Jude

Judges

1 Kings

2 Kings

Lamentations

Leviticus

Luke

Malachi

Mark

Matthew

Micah

Nahum

Nehemiah

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THE WAYFINDING BIBLE USER'S GUIDE

1 CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE

The Wayfinding Bible offers three routes through the Bible using the innovative Bible Mapping System. Each route will take you through a series of chronological readings that capture the main storyline in

God's Word. Select which route is right for you. These icons mark the beginning of each reading.

THE FLYOVER ROUTE—In 54 readings you'll gain a chronological overview of the events of the Bible.

THE DIRECT ROUTE—In 215 readings you gain a full perspective of the entire Bible and how it fits together, all in less than a year.

THE SCENIC ROUTE—In 386 readings you'll discover the depth and richness of God's Word as you wind your way through well-known and not-so-well-known passages alike.

2 FOLLOW THE STOPS

On your route, each stop is clearly marked so you will always know where you are on your journey.

3 READ THE PASSAGE

When you get to your stop, read the introduction first. Then read the Bible passage.

The end of each reading is clearly marked with icons like this:

4 DISCOVER THESE FEATURES

Along the way, you'll discover lots of extra features to help you better understand God's Word.

BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

Book Introductions will help you understand why each book was written, what the book is about, and what events were happening around the same time. You'll also see ways that each book points you toward Jesus.

GETTING YOUR BEARINGS

At eight critical points along the way, you'll pause, step back, and review your journey so far. Then you'll look at where you're going next. You'll also have a chance to see where Jesus, either directly or indirectly, has been involved in the story. A timeline and world map give you a sense of when and where all this is happening and show world history events for added context.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

Historical Markers will draw your attention to specific locations and the events that happened there. These markers will shed light on the stories you're reading and will fill in background details you might not know.

SCENIC OVERLOOKS

Scenic Overlooks will allow you to pause and see many of the significant locations mentioned in the Bible. You'll also gain more

insight into the history, the people, and God's Word itself as you explore the full-color infographics.

SIDE TRIPS

In the margins throughout this Bible, you'll see markers for various Side Trips. These twenty-five topic-based trips will highlight various Scripture passages that will show you what the Bible has to say about each topic. You can find a full listing of these Side Trips in the back of this Bible, or you can simply pick up and follow any marker you encounter while reading.

5 ENJOY THE JOURNEY

No matter which route you choose, we know your Wayfinding journey through God's story will give you a greater understanding of the biblical narrative and a closer, more intimate relationship with God.

BON VOYAGE!

Start by selecting one of the routes now:

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ABOUT THE WAYFINDING BIBLE

Show me the right path, O LORD; point out the road for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you.
PSALM 25:4-5

The Wayfinding Bible has been created to encourage the reading of God's Word. Many people want to read the Bible—or want to read it more often—but they're challenged by its rich complexity. It is over a thousand pages long, it was written dozens of centuries ago in cultures very different from ours, and it consists of sixty-six separate books that aren't arranged in typical chronological order. In many ways, navigating the Bible is like navigating an unfamiliar environment—a large city, a confusing hospital, or a new airport. Because people often get lost in these types of environments, architects and urban planners use wayfinding signs to help people find their way around and minimize their frustration. These signs show your present location, help you select the best route, and enable you to journey from one point to another without getting lost.

The Wayfinding Bible draws from the science of wayfinding to help you successfully navigate God's Word. Route lines across the top of the pages provide easy-to-follow paths through Scripture. Getting Your Bearings articles orient you when the Bible's story takes a significant turn. Historical Markers and Scenic Overlooks add cultural information and visual details to enrich your reading. *The*

Wayfinding Bible helps new Bible readers find their way with confidence, even as it encourages experienced readers to explore familiar territory from a unique perspective.
Throughout the development of *The Wayfinding Bible*, an advisory committee consisting of Bible readers of various backgrounds reviewed the features and designs. We are very grateful for the time and advice provided by these committee members.
Doris Rikkers
Jeannette Taylor

A Note to Readers

The *Holy Bible,* New Living Translation, was first published in 1996. It quickly became one of the most popular Bible translations in the

English-speaking world. While the NLT's influence was rapidly growing, the Bible Translation Committee determined that an additional investment in scholarly review and text refinement could make it even better. So shortly after its initial publication, the committee began an eight-year process with the purpose of increasing the level of the NLT's precision without sacrificing its easy-to-understand quality. This second-generation text was completed in 2004, with minor changes subsequently introduced in 2007 and 2013.

The goal of any Bible translation is to convey the meaning and content of the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts as accurately as possible to contemporary readers. The challenge for our translators was to create a text that would communicate as clearly and powerfully to today's readers as the original texts did to readers and listeners in the ancient biblical world. The resulting translation is easy to read and understand, while also accurately communicating the meaning and content of the original biblical texts. The NLT is a general-purpose text especially good for study, devotional reading, and reading aloud in worship services.

We believe that the New Living Translation—which combines the latest biblical scholarship with a clear, dynamic writing style—will communicate God's word powerfully to all who read it. We publish it with the prayer that God will use it to speak his timeless truth to the church and the world in a fresh, new way.

The Publishers

January 2013

Introduction to the New Living Translation

Translation Philosophy and Methodology

English Bible translations tend to be governed by one of two general translation theories. The first theory has been called "formal-equivalence," "literal," or "word-for-word" translation.

According to this theory, the translator attempts to render each word of the original language into English and seeks to preserve the original syntax and sentence structure as much as possible in translation. The second theory has been called “dynamic-equivalence,” “functional-equivalence,” or “thought-for-thought” translation. The goal of this translation theory is to produce in English the closest natural equivalent of the message expressed by the original-language text, both in meaning and in style.

Both of these translation theories have their strengths. A formal-equivalence translation preserves aspects of the original text—including ancient idioms, term consistency, and original-language syntax—that are valuable for scholars and professional study. It allows a reader to trace formal elements of the original-language text through the English translation. A dynamic-equivalence translation, on the other hand, focuses on translating the message of the original-language text. It ensures that the meaning of the text is readily apparent to the contemporary reader. This allows the message to come through with immediacy, without requiring the reader to struggle with foreign idioms and awkward syntax. It also facilitates serious study of the text’s message and clarity in both devotional and public reading.

The pure application of either of these translation philosophies would create translations at opposite ends of the translation spectrum. But in reality, all translations contain a mixture of these two philosophies. A purely formal-equivalence translation would be unintelligible in English, and a purely dynamic-equivalence translation would risk being unfaithful to the original. That is why translations shaped by dynamic-equivalence theory are usually quite literal when the original text is relatively clear, and the translations shaped by formal-equivalence theory are sometimes quite dynamic when the original text is obscure.

The translators of the New Living Translation set out to render the message of the original texts of Scripture into clear, contemporary English. As they did so, they kept the concerns of both formal-equivalence and dynamic-equivalence in mind. On the one hand, they translated as simply and literally as possible when that approach yielded an accurate, clear, and natural English text. Many

words and phrases were rendered literally and consistently into English, preserving essential literary and rhetorical devices, ancient metaphors, and word choices that give structure to the text and provide echoes of meaning from one passage to the next.

On the other hand, the translators rendered the message more dynamically when the literal rendering was hard to understand, was misleading, or yielded archaic or foreign wording. They clarified difficult metaphors and terms to aid in the reader's understanding. The translators first struggled with the meaning of the words and phrases in the ancient context; then they rendered the message into clear, natural English. Their goal was to be both faithful to the ancient texts and eminently readable. The result is a translation that is both exegetically accurate and idiomatically powerful.

Translation Process and Team To produce an accurate translation of the Bible into contemporary English, the translation team needed the skills necessary to enter into the thought patterns of the ancient authors and then to render their ideas, connotations, and effects into clear, contemporary English. To begin this process, qualified biblical scholars were needed to interpret the meaning of the original text and to check it against our base English translation. In order to guard against personal and theological biases, the scholars needed to represent a diverse group of evangelicals who would employ the best exegetical tools. Then to work alongside the scholars, skilled English stylists were needed to shape the text into clear, contemporary English.

With these concerns in mind, the Bible Translation Committee recruited teams of scholars that represented a broad spectrum of denominations, theological perspectives, and backgrounds within the worldwide evangelical community. (These scholars are listed at the end of this introduction.) Each book of the Bible was assigned to three different scholars with proven expertise in the book or group of books to be reviewed. Each of these scholars made a thorough review of a base translation and submitted suggested revisions to the appropriate Senior Translator. The Senior Translator then reviewed and summarized these suggestions and proposed a first-draft revision of the base text. This draft served as the basis for several additional phases of exegetical and stylistic committee review. Then the Bible Translation Committee jointly reviewed and

approved every verse of the final translation.

Throughout the translation and editing process, the Senior Translators and their scholar teams were given a chance to review the editing done by the team of stylists. This ensured that exegetical errors would not be introduced late in the process and that the entire Bible Translation Committee was happy with the final result. By choosing a team of qualified scholars and skilled stylists and by setting up a process that allowed their interaction throughout the process, the New Living Translation has been refined to preserve the essential formal elements of the original biblical texts, while also creating a clear, understandable English text.

The New Living Translation was first published in 1996. Shortly after its initial publication, the Bible Translation Committee began a process of further committee review and translation refinement. The purpose of this continued revision was to increase the level of precision without sacrificing the text's easy-to-understand quality. This second-edition text was completed in 2004, with minor changes subsequently introduced in 2007 and 2013.

Written to Be Read Aloud It is evident in Scripture that the biblical documents were written to be read aloud, often in public worship (see Nehemiah 8; Luke 4:16-20; 1 Timothy 4:13; Revelation 1:3). It is still the case today that more people will hear the Bible read aloud in church than are likely to read it for themselves. Therefore, a new translation must communicate with clarity and power when it is read publicly. Clarity was a primary goal for the NLT translators, not only to facilitate private reading and understanding, but also to ensure that it would be excellent for public reading and make an immediate and powerful impact on any listener.

The Texts behind the New Living Translation The Old Testament translators used the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible as represented in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (1977), with its extensive system of textual notes; this is an update of Rudolf Kittel's Biblia Hebraica (Stuttgart, 1937). The translators also further compared the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint and other Greek manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and any other versions or manuscripts that shed light on the meaning of difficult passages.

The New Testament translators used the two standard editions of the Greek New Testament: the *Greek New Testament,* published by the United Bible Societies (UBS, fourth revised edition, 1993), and *Novum Testamentum Graece,* edited by Nestle and Aland (NA, twenty-seventh edition, 1993). These two editions, which have the same text but differ in punctuation and textual notes, represent, for the most part, the best in modern textual scholarship. However, in cases where strong textual or other scholarly evidence supported the decision, the translators sometimes chose to differ from the UBS and NA Greek texts and followed variant readings found in other ancient witnesses. Significant textual variants of this sort are always noted in the textual notes of the New Living Translation.

Translation Issues The translators have made a conscious effort to provide a text that can be easily understood by the typical reader of modern English. To this end, we sought to use only vocabulary and language structures in common use today. We avoided using language likely to become quickly dated or that reflects only a narrow subdialect of English, with the goal of making the New Living Translation as broadly useful and timeless as possible.

But our concern for readability goes beyond the concerns of vocabulary and sentence structure. We are also concerned about historical and cultural barriers to understanding the Bible, and we have sought to translate terms shrouded in history and culture in ways that can be immediately understood. To this end:

- We have converted ancient weights and measures (for example, “ephah” [a unit of dry volume] or “cubit” [a unit of length]) to modern English (American) equivalents, since the ancient measures are not generally meaningful to today’s readers. Then in the textual footnotes we offer the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek measures, along with modern metric equivalents.
- Instead of translating ancient currency values literally, we have expressed them in common terms that communicate the message. For example, in the Old Testament, “ten shekels of silver” becomes “ten pieces of silver” to convey the intended message. In the New Testament, we have often translated the “denarius” as “the normal daily wage” to facilitate

understanding. Then a footnote offers: "Greek *a denarius,* the payment for a full day's labor." In general, we give a clear English rendering and then state the literal Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek in a textual footnote.

- Since the names of Hebrew months are unknown to most contemporary readers, and since the Hebrew lunar calendar fluctuates from year to year in relation to the solar calendar used today, we have looked for clear ways to communicate the time of year the Hebrew months (such as Abib) refer to. When an expanded or interpretive rendering is given in the text, a textual note gives the literal rendering. Where it is possible to define a specific ancient date in terms of our modern calendar, we use modern dates in the text. A textual footnote then gives the literal Hebrew date and states the rationale for our rendering. For example, Ezra 6:15 pinpoints the date when the postexilic Temple was completed in Jerusalem: "the third day of the month Adar." This was during the sixth year of King Darius's reign (that is, 515 B.C.). We have translated that date as March 12, with a footnote giving the Hebrew and identifying the year as 515 B.C.
- Since ancient references to the time of day differ from our modern methods of denoting time, we have used renderings that are instantly understandable to the modern reader. Accordingly, we have rendered specific times of day by using approximate equivalents in terms of our common "o'clock" system. On occasion, translations such as "at dawn the next morning" or "as the sun was setting" have been used when the biblical reference is more general.
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the message of the text, its meaning is often illuminated with a textual footnote. For example, in Exodus 2:10 the text reads: "The princess named him Moses, for she explained, 'I lifted him out of the water.' " The accompanying footnote reads: "*Moses* sounds like a Hebrew term that means 'to lift out.' "

  Sometimes, when the actual meaning of a name is clear, that meaning is included in parentheses within the text itself. For example, the text at Genesis 16:11 reads: "You are to name him Ishmael *(which means 'God hears'),* for the LORD has

heard your cry of distress." Since the original hearers and readers would have instantly understood the meaning of the name "Ishmael," we have provided modern readers with the same information so they can experience the text in a similar way.

- Many words and phrases carry a great deal of cultural meaning that was obvious to the original readers but needs explanation in our own culture. For example, the phrase "they beat their breasts" (Luke 23:48) in ancient times meant that people were very upset, often in mourning. In our translation we chose to translate this phrase dynamically for clarity: "They went home *in deep sorrow.*" Then we included a footnote with the literal Greek, which reads: "Greek *went home beating their breasts.*" In other similar cases, however, we have sometimes chosen to illuminate the existing literal expression to make it immediately understandable. For example, here we might have expanded the literal Greek phrase to read: "They went home beating their breasts *in sorrow.*" If we had done this, we would not have included a textual footnote, since the literal Greek clearly appears in translation.
- Metaphorical language is sometimes difficult for contemporary readers to understand, so at times we have chosen to translate or illuminate the meaning of a metaphor. For example, the ancient poet writes, "Your neck is *like* the tower of David" (Song of Songs 4:4). We have rendered it "Your neck is *as beautiful as* the tower of David" to clarify the intended positive meaning of the simile. Another example comes in Ecclesiastes 12:3, which can be literally rendered: "Remember him . . . when the grinding women cease because they are few, and the women who look through the windows see dimly." We have rendered it: "Remember him before your teeth—your few remaining servants—stop grinding; and before your eyes—the women looking through the windows—see dimly." We clarified such metaphors only when we believed a typical reader might be confused by the literal text.
- When the content of the original language text is poetic in character, we have rendered it in English poetic form. We sought to break lines in ways that clarify and highlight the

relationships between phrases of the text. Hebrew poetry often uses parallelism, a literary form where a second phrase (or in some instances a third or fourth) echoes the initial phrase in some way. In Hebrew parallelism, the subsequent parallel phrases continue, while also furthering and sharpening, the thought expressed in the initial line or phrase. Whenever possible, we sought to represent these parallel phrases in natural poetic English.

- The Greek term *hoi Ioudaioi* is literally translated "the Jews" in many English translations. In the Gospel of John, however, this term doesn't always refer to the Jewish people generally. In some contexts, it refers more particularly to the Jewish religious leaders. We have attempted to capture the meaning in these different contexts by using terms such as "the people" (with a footnote: Greek *the Jewish people*) or "the religious leaders," where appropriate.
- One challenge we faced was how to translate accurately the ancient biblical text that was originally written in a context where male-oriented terms were used to refer to humanity generally. We needed to respect the nature of the ancient context while also trying to make the translation clear to a modern audience that tends to read male-oriented language as applying only to males. Often the original text, though using masculine nouns and pronouns, clearly intends that the message be applied to both men and women. A typical example is found in the New Testament letters, where the believers are called "brothers" (*adelphoi*). Yet it is clear from the content of these letters that they were addressed to all the believers—male and female. Thus, we have usually translated this Greek word as "brothers and sisters" in order to represent the historical situation more accurately.

  We have also been sensitive to passages where the text applies generally to human beings or to the human condition. In some instances we have used plural pronouns (they, them) in place of the masculine singular (he, him). For example, a traditional rendering of Proverbs 22:6 is: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." We have rendered it: "Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it." At

times, we have also replaced third person pronouns with the second person to ensure clarity. A traditional rendering of Proverbs 26:27 is: “He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.” We have rendered it: “If you set a trap for others, you will get caught in it yourself. If you roll a boulder down on others, it will crush you instead.”

We should emphasize, however, that all masculine nouns and pronouns used to represent God (for example, “Father”) have been maintained without exception. All decisions of this kind have been driven by the concern to reflect accurately the intended meaning of the original texts of Scripture.

Lexical Consistency in Terminology For the sake of clarity, we have translated certain original-language terms consistently, especially within synoptic passages and for commonly repeated rhetorical phrases, and within certain word categories such as divine names and non-theological technical terminology (e.g., liturgical, legal, cultural, zoological, and botanical terms). For theological terms, we have allowed a greater semantic range of acceptable English words or phrases for a single Hebrew or Greek word. We have avoided some theological terms that are not readily understood by many modern readers. For example, we avoided using words such as “justification” and “sanctification,” which are carryovers from Latin translations. In place of these words, we have provided renderings such as “made right with God” and “made holy.”

The Spelling of Proper Names Many individuals in the Bible, especially the Old Testament, are known by more than one name (e.g., Uzziah/ Azariah). For the sake of clarity, we have tried to use a single spelling for any one individual, footnoting the literal spelling whenever we differ from it. This is especially helpful in delineating the kings of Israel and Judah. King Joash/Jehoash of Israel has been consistently called Jehoash, while King Joash/Jehoash of Judah is called Joash. A similar distinction has been used to distinguish between Joram/Jehoram of Israel and Joram/Jehoram of Judah. All such decisions were made with the goal of clarifying the text for the reader. When the ancient biblical writers clearly had a theological purpose in their choice of a variant name (e.g., Esh-baal/Ishbosheth), the different names have been maintained with an explanatory footnote.

For the names Jacob and Israel, which are used interchangeably for both the individual patriarch and the nation, we generally render it "Israel" when it refers to the nation and "Jacob" when it refers to the individual. When our rendering of the name differs from the underlying Hebrew text, we provide a textual footnote, which includes this explanation: "The names 'Jacob' and 'Israel' are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation."

The Rendering of Divine Names In the Old Testament, all appearances of 'el, 'elohim, or 'eloah have been translated "God," except where the context demands the translation "god(s)." We have generally rendered the tetragrammaton (YHWH) consistently as "the LORD," utilizing a form with small capitals that is common among English translations. This will distinguish it from the name 'adonai, which we render "Lord." When 'adonai and YHWH appear together, we have rendered it "Sovereign LORD." When 'elohim and YHWH appear together, we have rendered it "LORD God." When YH (the short form of YHWH) and YHWH appear together, we have rendered it "LORD GOD." When YHWH appears with the term tseba'oth, we have rendered it "LORD of Heaven's Armies" to translate the meaning of the name. In a few cases, we have utilized the transliteration, Yahweh, when the personal character of the name is being invoked in contrast to another divine name or the name of some other god (for example, see Exodus 3:15; 6:2-3).

In the Gospels and Acts, the Greek word *christos* has normally been translated as "Messiah" when the context assumes a Jewish audience. When a Gentile audience can be assumed (which is consistently the case in the Epistles and Revelation), *christos* has been translated as "Christ." The Greek word *kurios* is consistently translated "Lord," except that it is translated "LORD" wherever the New Testament text explicitly quotes from the Old Testament, and the text there has it in small capitals.

Textual Footnotes The New Living Translation provides several kinds of textual footnotes, all designated in the text with an asterisk:

- When for the sake of clarity the NLT renders a difficult or potentially confusing phrase dynamically, we generally give the literal rendering in a textual footnote. This allows the

reader to see the literal source of our dynamic rendering and how our translation relates to other more literal translations. These notes are prefaced with "Hebrew," "Aramaic," or "Greek," identifying the language of the underlying source text. For example, in Acts 2:42 we translated the literal "breaking of bread" (from the Greek) as "the Lord's Supper" to clarify that this verse refers to the ceremonial practice of the church rather than just an ordinary meal. Then we attached a footnote to "the Lord's Supper," which reads: "Greek *the breaking of bread.*"

- Textual footnotes are also used to show alternative renderings, prefaced with the word "Or." These normally occur for passages where an aspect of the meaning is debated. On occasion, we also provide notes on words or phrases that represent a departure from long-standing tradition. These notes are prefaced with "Traditionally rendered." For example, the footnote to the translation "serious skin disease" at Leviticus 13:2 says: "Traditionally rendered *leprosy*. The Hebrew word used throughout this passage is used to describe various skin diseases."
- When our translators follow a textual variant that differs significantly from our standard Hebrew or Greek texts (listed earlier), we document that difference with a footnote. We also footnote cases when the NLT excludes a passage that is included in the Greek text known as the *Textus Receptus* (and familiar to readers through its translation in the King James Version). In such cases, we offer a translation of the excluded text in a footnote, even though it is generally recognized as a later addition to the Greek text and not part of the original Greek New Testament.
- All Old Testament passages that are quoted in the New Testament are identified by a textual footnote at the New Testament location. When the New Testament clearly quotes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and when it differs significantly in wording from the Hebrew text, we also place a textual footnote at the Old Testament location. This note includes a rendering of the Greek version, along with a cross-reference to the New Testament passage(s) where it is cited (for example, see notes on Psalms 8:2; 53:3; Proverbs 3:12).

- Some textual footnotes provide cultural and historical information on places, things, and people in the Bible that are probably obscure to modern readers. Such notes should aid the reader in understanding the message of the text. For example, in Acts 12:1, "King Herod" is named in this translation as "King Herod Agrippa" and is identified in a footnote as being "the nephew of Herod Antipas and a grandson of Herod the Great."
- When the meaning of a proper name (or a wordplay inherent in a proper name) is relevant to the meaning of the text, it is either illuminated with a textual footnote or included within parentheses in the text itself. For example, the footnote concerning the name "Eve" at Genesis 3:20 reads: "*Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means 'to give life.' " This wordplay in the Hebrew illuminates the meaning of the text, which goes on to say that Eve "would be the mother of all who live."

AS WE SUBMIT this translation for publication, we recognize that any translation of the Scriptures is subject to limitations and imperfections. Anyone who has attempted to communicate the richness of God's word into another language will realize it is impossible to make a perfect translation. Recognizing these limitations, we sought God's guidance and wisdom throughout this project. Now we pray that he will accept our efforts and use this translation for the benefit of the church and of all people.

We pray that the New Living Translation will overcome some of the barriers of history, culture, and language that have kept people from reading and understanding God's word. We hope that readers unfamiliar with the Bible will find the words clear and easy to understand and that readers well versed in the Scriptures will gain a fresh perspective. We pray that readers will gain insight and wisdom for living, but most of all that they will meet the God of the Bible and be forever changed by knowing him.

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Genesis

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

WELCOME TO

GENESIS

Every journey starts with the first step. And your journey through the Bible begins with Genesis, the book about beginnings: the beginning of the world, the beginning of humanity, the beginning of sin, and the beginning of redemption. In fact, the word *genesis* means “origin” or “beginning.”

Genesis also tells us the story of the beginning of God’s special people, as God calls Abraham to leave his home and move to Canaan, the land God will give Abraham’s descendants. Abraham’s family isn’t perfect, but God loves them and promises to bless the entire world through them.

Genesis is more than a collection of stories, though. It answers the most basic human questions: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Why is there evil in the world? Does God care? The answers to these questions shape every facet of our lives, and in Genesis we hear answers that come from God himself.

7 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll get a glimpse of the great stories of Genesis as they outline God's plan for his creation and his people. Your first stop is at Genesis 1:1.

21 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Along the way, you'll see God at work in

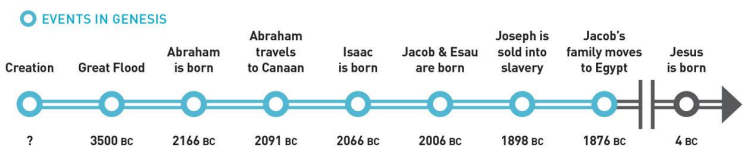
the life of the world and then in the lives of Abraham and his descendants. Your first stop is at Genesis 1:1.

30 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll be reading all of Genesis except for a few chapters, so sit back and enjoy all the fabulous stories, starting at the very beginning. Your first stop is at Genesis 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN GENESIS

Before the events in the book of Genesis even begin, Jesus is there. Jesus, the Word, already existed with God before the creation of the world (John 1:1). God created all things through his Son, Jesus.
You will catch glimpses of Jesus throughout the book: He is Eve's promised offspring who will crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15); he is Abraham's descendant who will bless the whole world (12:2); and he is the ultimate king promised as a descendant of Judah (49:10). In the book of Hebrews, Jesus is likened to Melchizedek, the priest-king who appears in Genesis 14.
When Abraham climbs Mount Moriah, prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac on an altar, a ram is found to take Isaac's place, prefiguring what Jesus would become for us: our substitute.



HOLY SPIRIT GENESIS 1:1-8

Genesis 1

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

1In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*2The earth
was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters.
And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

3Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4And God

saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. 5God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

6Then God said, “Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth.” 7And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. 8God called the space “sky.”

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

9Then God said, “Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear.” And that is what happened. 10God called the dry ground “land” and the waters “seas.” And God saw that it was good. 11Then God said, “Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came.” And that is what happened. 12The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

13And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

14Then God said, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. 15Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth.” And that is what happened. 16God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, 18to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

19And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day.

20Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind.” 21So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the

water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. 22Then God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

23And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

24Then God said, “Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals.” And that is what happened. 25God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

26Then God said, “Let us make human beings* in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,* and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

27So God created human beings* in his own image.
In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

28Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

29Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. 30And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground —everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

31Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!

And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day.

Genesis 2

1So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in
them was completed. 2On the seventh day God had finished his
work of creation, so he rested* from all his work. 3And God blessed
the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when
he rested from all his work of creation.

4This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

THE MAN AND WOMAN IN EDEN

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 5neither wild
plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had
not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to
cultivate the soil. 6Instead, springs* came up from the ground and
watered all the land. 7Then the LORD God formed the man from the
dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's
nostrils, and the man became a living person.

GARDEN OF EDEN

8Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and
there he placed the man he had made. 9The LORD God made all
sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful
and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he
placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and
evil.

10A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and
then dividing into four branches. 11The first branch, called the

Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. 12The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. 13The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. 14The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

15The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. 16But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—17except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

WEDDINGS GENESIS 2:18-25

18Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” 19So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man* to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. 20He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

21So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man’s ribs* and closed up the opening. 22Then the LORD God made a woman from

the rib, and he brought her to the man.

23“At last!” the man exclaimed.

“This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh!
She will be called ‘woman,’
because she was taken from ‘man.’”

24This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

25Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

Genesis 3

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

1The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD
God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say
you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

2“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the
woman replied. 3“It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of
the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not
eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

4“You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. 5“God knows
that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be
like God, knowing both good and evil.”

6The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful
and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would
give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave

some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. 7At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

THE MESSIAH GENESIS 3:8-19

8When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man* and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. 9Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

11“Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

12The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

13Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”

14Then the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done
this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you
live.

15And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and
between your offspring and her offspring.
He will strike* your head, and you will strike his heel.”

16Then he said to the woman, “I will sharpen the pain of your
pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth.

And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over
you.*”

17And to the man he said, “Since you listened to your wife and ate
from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is
cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

18It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its
grains.

19By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you
return to the ground from which you were made.
For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

PARADISE LOST: GOD’S JUDGMENT

20Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be
the mother of all who live.*21And the LORD God made clothing
from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

22Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings* have become

like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take
fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!”
23So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he
sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been
made. 24After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty
cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a
flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the
tree of life.

Genesis 4

CAIN AND ABEL

1Now Adam* had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she
became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the
LORD’s help, I have produced* a man!” 2Later she gave birth to his
brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated
the ground. 3When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some
of his crops as a gift to the LORD. 4Abel also brought a gift—the
best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD
accepted Abel and his gift, 5but he did not accept Cain and his gift.
This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

6“Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look
so dejected? 7You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you
refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the
door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its
master.”

8One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the
fields.”* And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother,
Abel, and killed him.

9Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is
Abel?”

“I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

10But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s
blood cries out to me from the ground! 11Now you are cursed and
banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother’s
blood. 12No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no
matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless
wanderer on the earth.”

13Cain replied to the LORD, “My punishment* is too great for me to
bear! 14You have banished me from the land and from your
presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who
finds me will kill me!”

15The LORD replied, “No, for I will give a sevenfold punishment to
anyone who kills you.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain to warn
anyone who might try to kill him. 16So Cain left the LORD’s
presence and settled in the land of Nod,* east of Eden.

THE CITY OF ENOCH

THE DESCENDANTS OF CAIN

17Cain had sexual relations with his wife, and she became pregnant
and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain founded a city, which he named
Enoch, after his son. 18Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad became the
father of* Mehujael. Mehujael became the father of Methushael.
Methushael became the father of Lamech.

19Lamech married two women. The first was named Adah, and the
second was Zillah. 20Adah gave birth to Jabal, who was the first of
those who raise livestock and live in tents. 21His brother's name was
Jubal, the first of all who play the harp and flute. 22Lamech's other
wife, Zillah, gave birth to a son named Tubal-cain. He became an
expert in forging tools of bronze and iron. Tubal-cain had a sister
named Naamah. 23One day Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and
Zillah, hear my voice; listen to me, you wives of Lamech.

I have killed a man who attacked me, a young man who wounded
me.

24If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times, then the one
who kills me will be punished seventy-seven times!"

THE BIRTH OF SETH

25Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth
to another son. She named him Seth,* for she said, "God has granted
me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed." 26When Seth
grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people
first began to worship the LORD by name.

Genesis 5

THE DESCENDANTS OF ADAM

1This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings,* he made them to be like himself. 2He created them male and female, and he blessed them and called them “human.”

3When Adam was 130 years old, he became the father of a son who was just like him—in his very image. He named his son Seth. 4After the birth of Seth, Adam lived another 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 5Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

6When Seth was 105 years old, he became the father of* Enosh. 7After the birth of* Enosh, Seth lived another 807 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 8Seth lived 912 years, and then he died.

9When Enosh was 90 years old, he became the father of Kenan. 10After the birth of Kenan, Enosh lived another 815 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 11Enosh lived 905 years, and then he died.

12When Kenan was 70 years old, he became the father of Mahalalel. 13After the birth of Mahalalel, Kenan lived another 840 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 14Kenan lived 910 years, and then he died.

15When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he became the father of Jared.
16After the birth of Jared, Mahalalel lived another 830 years, and he
had other sons and daughters. 17Mahalalel lived 895 years, and then
he died.

18When Jared was 162 years old, he became the father of Enoch.
19After the birth of Enoch, Jared lived another 800 years, and he
had other sons and daughters. 20Jared lived 962 years, and then he
died.

21When Enoch was 65 years old, he became the father of
Methuselah. 22After the birth of Methuselah, Enoch lived in close
fellowship with God for another 300 years, and he had other sons
and daughters. 23Enoch lived 365 years, 24walking in close
fellowship with God. Then one day he disappeared, because God
took him.

25When Methuselah was 187 years old, he became the father of
Lamech. 26After the birth of Lamech, Methuselah lived another 782
years, and he had other sons and daughters. 27Methuselah lived 969
years, and then he died.

28When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son.
29Lamech named his son Noah, for he said, “May he bring us relief*
from our work and the painful labor of farming this ground that the
LORD has cursed.” 30After the birth of Noah, Lamech lived another
595 years, and he had other sons and daughters. 31Lamech lived 777
years, and then he died.

32After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem,
Ham, and Japheth.

Genesis 6

A WORLD GONE WRONG

1 Then the people began to multiply on the earth, and daughters
were born to them. 2 The sons of God saw the beautiful women* and
took any they wanted as their wives. 3 Then the LORD said, "My
Spirit will not put up with* humans for such a long time, for they
are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no

more than 120 years.”

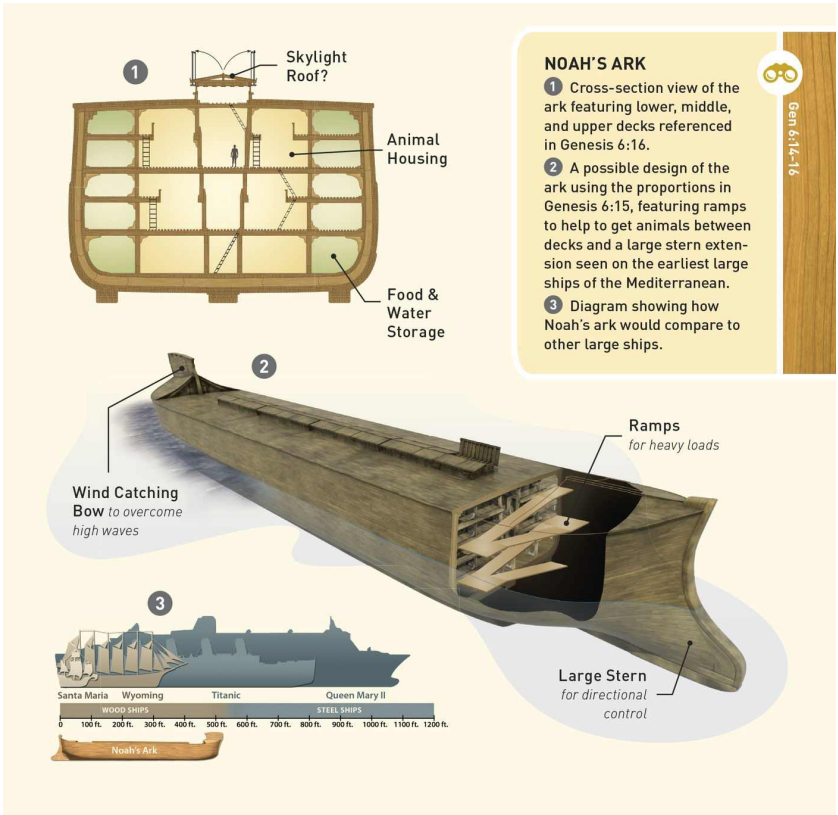
4In those days, and for some time after, giant Nephilites lived on the earth, for whenever the sons of God had intercourse with women, they gave birth to children who became the heroes and famous warriors of ancient times.

5The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. 6So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. 7And the LORD said, “I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them.” 8But Noah found favor with the LORD.

THE STORY OF NOAH

9This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God. 10Noah was the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. 12God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt. 13So God said to Noah, “I have decided to destroy all living creatures, for they have filled the earth with violence. Yes, I will wipe them all out along with the earth!



NOAH'S ARK

14 "Build a large boat* from cypress wood* and waterproof it with
tar, inside and out. Then construct decks and stalls throughout its
interior. 15 Make the boat 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet
high.* 16 Leave an 18-inch opening* below the roof all the way
around the boat. Put the door on the side, and build three decks
inside the boat—lower, middle, and upper.

17 "Look! I am about to cover the earth with a flood that will destroy
every living thing that breathes. Everything on earth will die. 18 But
I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and
your wife and your sons and their wives. 19 Bring a pair of every

kind of animal—a male and a female—into the boat with you to
keep them alive during the flood. 20Pairs of every kind of bird, and
every kind of animal, and every kind of small animal that scurries
along the ground, will come to you to be kept alive. 21And be sure
to take on board enough food for your family and for all the
animals.”

22So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him.

Genesis 7

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

1When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the
boat with all your family, for among all the people of the earth, I
can see that you alone are righteous. 2Take with you seven pairs—
male and female—of each animal I have approved for eating and
for sacrifice,* and take one pair of each of the others. 3Also take

seven pairs of every kind of bird. There must be a male and a female in each pair to ensure that all life will survive on the earth after the flood. 4Seven days from now I will make the rains pour down on the earth. And it will rain for forty days and forty nights, until I have wiped from the earth all the living things I have created."

5So Noah did everything as the LORD commanded him.

6Noah was 600 years old when the flood covered the earth. 7He went on board the boat to escape the flood—he and his wife and his sons and their wives. 8With them were all the various kinds of animals—those approved for eating and for sacrifice and those that were not—along with all the birds and the small animals that scurry along the ground. 9They entered the boat in pairs, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. 10After seven days, the waters of the flood came and covered the earth.

11When Noah was 600 years old, on the seventeenth day of the second month, all the underground waters erupted from the earth, and the rain fell in mighty torrents from the sky. 12The rain continued to fall for forty days and forty nights.

13That very day Noah had gone into the boat with his wife and his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives. 14With them in the boat were pairs of every kind of animal—domestic and wild, large and small—along with birds of every kind. 15Two by two they came into the boat, representing every living thing that breathes. 16A male and female of each kind entered, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD closed the door behind them.

17For forty days the floodwaters grew deeper, covering the ground and lifting the boat high above the earth. 18As the waters rose higher and higher above the ground, the boat floated safely on the surface. 19Finally, the water covered even the highest mountains on the earth, 20rising more than twenty-two feet* above the highest peaks. 21All the living things on earth died—birds, domestic

animals, wild animals, small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people. 22Everything that breathed and lived on dry land died. 23God wiped out every living thing on the earth—people, livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and the birds of the sky. All were destroyed. The only people who survived were Noah and those with him in the boat. 24And the floodwaters covered the earth for 150 days.

THE MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT

Genesis 8

THE FLOOD RECEDES

1But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and livestock with him in the boat. He sent a wind to blow across the earth, and the floodwaters began to recede. 2The underground waters stopped flowing, and the torrential rains from the sky were stopped. 3So the floodwaters gradually receded from the earth. After 150 days, 4exactly five months from the time the flood began,* the boat came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. 5Two and a half months later,* as the waters continued to go down, other mountain peaks became visible.

6After another forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat 7and released a raven. The bird flew back and forth until the floodwaters on the earth had dried up. 8He also released a dove to see if the water had receded and it could find dry ground. 9But the dove could find no place to land because the water still covered the ground. So it returned to the boat, and Noah held out his hand and drew the dove back inside. 10After waiting another seven days, Noah released the dove again. 11This time the dove returned to him in the evening with a fresh olive leaf in its beak. Then Noah knew that the floodwaters were almost gone. 12He waited another seven

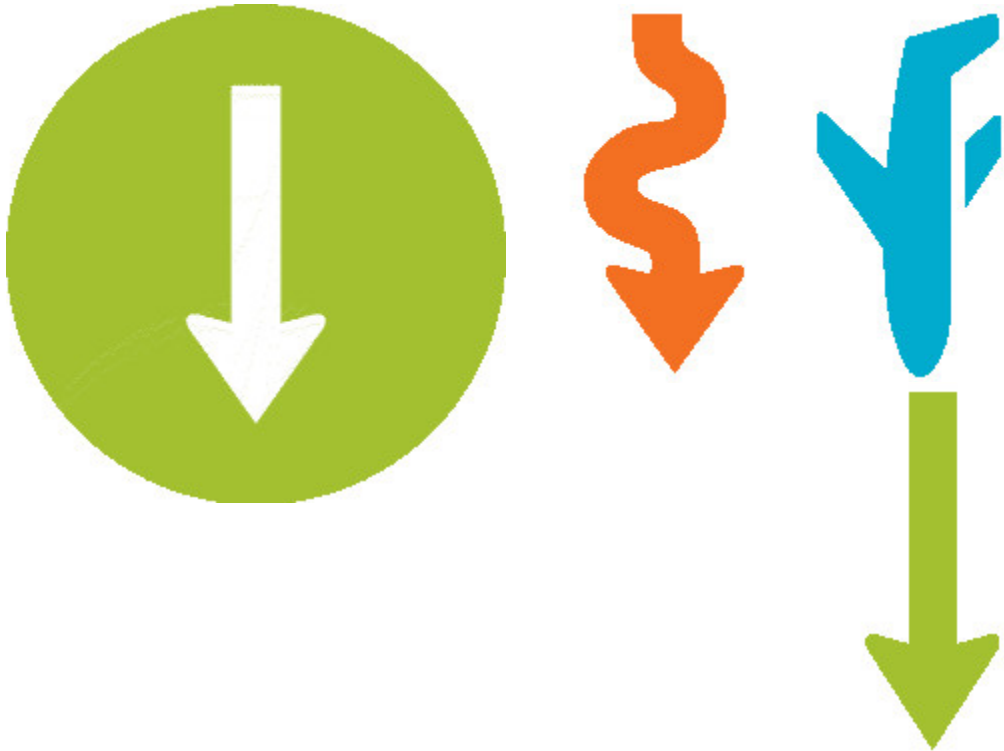
days and then released the dove again. This time it did not come back.

13Noah was now 601 years old. On the first day of the new year, ten and a half months after the flood began,* the floodwaters had almost dried up from the earth. Noah lifted back the covering of the boat and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. 14Two more months went by,* and at last the earth was dry!

15Then God said to Noah, 16“Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. 17Release all the animals —the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth.”

18So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. 19And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair.

20Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.*21And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. 22As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night.”



Genesis 9

GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT

1Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, “Be fruitful
and multiply. Fill the earth. 2All the animals of the earth, all the
birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground,
and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I
have placed them in your power. 3I have given them to you for
food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. 4But you must
never eat any meat that still has the lifeblood in it.

5“And I will require the blood of anyone who takes another person’s
life. If a wild animal kills a person, it must die. And anyone who
murders a fellow human must die. 6If anyone takes a human life,
that person’s life will also be taken by human hands. For God made
human beings* in his own image. 7Now be fruitful and multiply, and
repopulate the earth.”

8Then God told Noah and his sons, 9“I hereby confirm my covenant
with you and your descendants, 10and with all the animals that were
on the boat with you—the birds, the livestock, and all the wild

animals—every living creature on earth. 11Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth."

12Then God said, "I am giving you a sign of my covenant with you and with all living creatures, for all generations to come. 13I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my covenant with you and with all the earth. 14When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will appear in the clouds, 15and I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures. Never again will the floodwaters destroy all life. 16When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth." 17Then God said to Noah, "Yes, this rainbow is the sign of the covenant I am confirming with all the creatures on earth."

NOAH'S SONS

18The sons of Noah who came out of the boat with their father were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham is the father of Canaan.) 19From these three sons of Noah came all the people who now populate the earth.

20After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. 21One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. 22Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. 23Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

24When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his
youngest son, had done. 25Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:
“May Canaan be cursed!

May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives.”

26Then Noah said, “May the LORD, the God of Shem, be blessed,
and may Canaan be his servant!

27May God expand the territory of Japheth!
May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem,*
and may Canaan be his servant.”

28Noah lived another 350 years after the great flood. 29He lived 950
years, and then he died.

Genesis 10

1This is the account of the families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the
three sons of Noah. Many children were born to them after the
great flood.

DESCENDANTS OF JAPHETH

2The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan,
Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

3The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and

Togarmah.

4The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and
Rodanim.*5Their descendants became the seafaring peoples that
spread out to various lands, each identified by its own language,
clan, and national identity.

DESCENDANTS OF HAM

6The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

7The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and
Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

8Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic
warrior on earth. 9Since he was the greatest hunter in the world,*
his name became proverbial. People would say, “This man is like
Nimrod, the greatest hunter in the world.” 10He built his kingdom in
the land of Babylonia,* with the cities of Babylon, Erech, Akkad,
and Calneh. 11From there he expanded his territory to Assyria,*
building the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, 12and Resen (the
great city located between Nineveh and Calah).

13Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites,
Naphtuhites, 14Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from
whom the Philistines came.*

15Canaan’s oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians.
Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites,*16Jebusites, Amorites,
Girgashites, 17Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, 18Arvadites, Zemarites, and
Hamathites. The Canaanite clans eventually spread out, 19and the
territory of Canaan extended from Sidon in the north to Gerar and
Gaza in the south, and east as far as Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and
Zeboiim, near Lasha.

20These were the descendants of Ham, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

DESCENDANTS OF SHEM

21Sons were also born to Shem, the older brother of Japheth.* Shem was the ancestor of all the descendants of Eber.

22The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

23The descendants of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

24Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,* and Shelah was the father of Eber.

25Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means "division"), for during his lifetime the people of the world were divided into different language groups. His brother's name was Joktan.

26Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 27Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28Obal, Abimael, Sheba, 29Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan. 30The territory they occupied extended from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern mountains.

31These were the descendants of Shem, identified by clan, language, territory, and national identity.

CONCLUSION

32These are the clans that descended from Noah's sons, arranged by
nation according to their lines of descent. All the nations of the
earth descended from these clans after the great flood.

Genesis 11

THE TOWER OF BABEL

1At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language
and used the same words. 2As the people migrated to the east, they
found a plain in the land of Babylonia* and settled there.

Djoser pyramid, Egypt

TOWER OF BABEL

3They began saying to each other, “Let’s make bricks and harden
them with fire.” (In this region bricks were used instead of stone,
and tar was used for mortar.) 4Then they said, “Come, let’s build a
great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This
will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the
world.”

5But the LORD came down to look at the city and the tower the
people were building. 6“Look!” he said. “The people are united, and
they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to
do will be impossible for them! 7Come, let’s go down and confuse
the people with different languages. Then they won’t be able to
understand each other.”

8In that way, the LORD scattered them all over the world, and they
stopped building the city. 9That is why the city was called Babel,*
because that is where the LORD confused the people with different
languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world.

THE LINE OF DESCENT FROM SHEM TO ABRAM

10This is the account of Shem's family.

Two years after the great flood, when Shem was 100 years old, he became the father of* Arphaxad. 11After the birth of* Arphaxad, Shem lived another 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

12When Arphaxad was 35 years old, he became the father of Shelah.
13After the birth of Shelah, Arphaxad lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.*

14When Shelah was 30 years old, he became the father of Eber.
15After the birth of Eber, Shelah lived another 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

16When Eber was 34 years old, he became the father of Peleg.
17After the birth of Peleg, Eber lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

18When Peleg was 30 years old, he became the father of Reu. 19After the birth of Reu, Peleg lived another 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

20When Reu was 32 years old, he became the father of Serug.
21After the birth of Serug, Reu lived another 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

22When Serug was 30 years old, he became the father of Nahor.
23After the birth of Nahor, Serug lived another 200 years and had
other sons and daughters.

24When Nahor was 29 years old, he became the father of Terah.
25After the birth of Terah, Nahor lived another 119 years and had
other sons and daughters.

26After Terah was 70 years old, he became the father of Abram,
Nahor, and Haran.

UR OF THE CHALDEANS

THE FAMILY OF TERAH

27This is the account of Terah's family. Terah was the father of
Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran was the father of Lot. 28But
Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, the land of his birth, while his

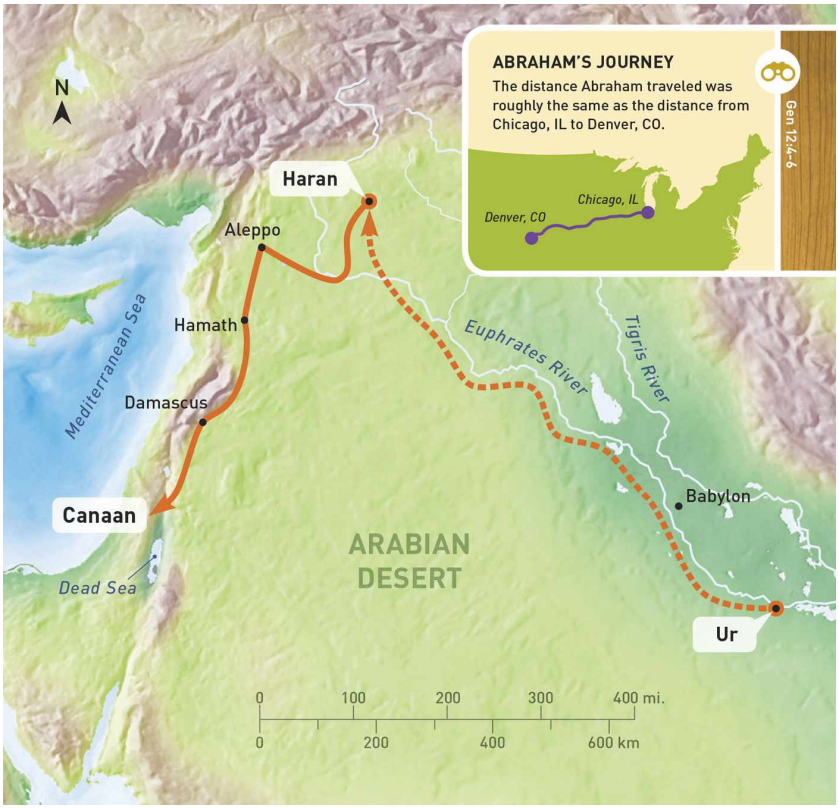
father, Terah, was still living. 29Meanwhile, Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. (Milcah and her sister Iscah were daughters of Nahor's brother Haran.) 30But Sarai was unable to become pregnant and had no children.

31One day Terah took his son Abram, his daughter-in-law Sarai (his son Abram's wife), and his grandson Lot (his son Haran's child) and moved away from Ur of the Chaldeans. He was headed for the land of Canaan, but they stopped at Haran and settled there. 32Terah lived for 205 years* and died while still in Haran.

Genesis 12

THE CALL OF ABRAM

1The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. 3I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."



ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY

4So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with
him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. 5He took
his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth—his livestock
and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran—and
headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan,
6Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set
up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was
inhabited by Canaanites.

7Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land
to your descendants.* " And Abram built an altar there and

dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8After that, Abram traveled south and set up camp in the hill country, with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. There he built another altar and dedicated it to the LORD, and he worshiped the LORD. 9Then Abram continued traveling south by stages toward the Negev.

ABRAM AND SARAI IN EGYPT

10At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. 11As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, "Look, you are a very beautiful woman. 12When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife. Let's kill him; then we can have her!' 13So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you."

14And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone noticed Sarai's beauty. 15When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. 16Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

17But the LORD sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. "What have you done to me?" he demanded. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? 19Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!" 20Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his

possessions.

THE NEGEV

Genesis 13

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

1So Abram left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev, along with
his wife and Lot and all that they owned. 2(Abram was very rich in
livestock, silver, and gold.) 3From the Negev, they continued
traveling by stages toward Bethel, and they pitched their tents
between Bethel and Ai, where they had camped before. 4This was
the same place where Abram had built the altar, and there he
worshiped the LORD again.

5Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy
with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. 6But

the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. 7So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)

8Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! 9The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I’ll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I’ll go to the left.”

10Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) 11Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. 12So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. 13But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.

14After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. 15I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants* as a permanent possession. 16And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! 17Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you.”

18So Abram moved his camp to Hebron and settled near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. There he built another altar to the LORD.

Genesis 14

ABRAM RESCUES LOT

1About this time war broke out in the region. King Amraphel of Babylonia,* King Arioch of Ellasar, King Kedorlaomer of Elam, and King Tidal of Goiim 2fought against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (also called Zoar).

3This second group of kings joined forces in Siddim Valley (that is, the valley of the Dead Sea*). 4For twelve years they had been subject to King Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled against him.

5One year later Kedorlaomer and his allies arrived and defeated the Rephaites at Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzites at Ham, the Emites at Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6and the Horites at Mount Seir, as far as El-paran at the edge of the wilderness. 7Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (now called Kadesh) and conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites living in Hazazon-tamar.

8Then the rebel kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela (also called Zoar) prepared for battle in the valley of the Dead Sea.*9They fought against King Kedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Babylonia, and King Arioch of Ellasar—

four kings against five. 10As it happened, the valley of the Dead Sea was filled with tar pits. And as the army of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into the tar pits, while the rest escaped into the mountains. 11The victorious invaders then plundered Sodom and Gomorrah and headed for home, taking with them all the spoils of war and the food supplies. 12They also captured Lot—Abram's nephew who lived in Sodom—and carried off everything he owned.

13But one of Lot's men escaped and reported everything to Abram the Hebrew, who was living near the oak grove belonging to Mamre the Amorite. Mamre and his relatives, Eshcol and Aner, were Abram's allies.

14When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them at Dan. 15There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. 16Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives.

MELCHIZEDEK BLESSES ABRAM

17After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

18And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High,* brought Abram some bread and wine. 19Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.

20And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you."

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

21The king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give back my people who were captured. But you may keep for yourself all the goods you have recovered.”

22Abram replied to the king of Sodom, “I solemnly swear to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 23that I will not take so much as a single thread or sandal thong from what belongs to you. Otherwise you might say, ‘I am the one who made Abram rich.’ 24I will accept only what my young warriors have already eaten, and I request that you give a fair share of the goods to my allies—Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre.”

Genesis 15

THE LORD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAM

1Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to
him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your
reward will be great."

2But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your

blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. 3You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir."

4Then the LORD said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir." 5Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

6And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

7Then the LORD told him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as your possession."

8But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I be sure that I will actually possess it?"

9The LORD told him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10So Abram presented all these to him and killed them. Then he cut each animal down the middle and laid the halves side by side; he did not, however, cut the birds in half. 11Some vultures swooped down to eat the carcasses, but Abram chased them away.

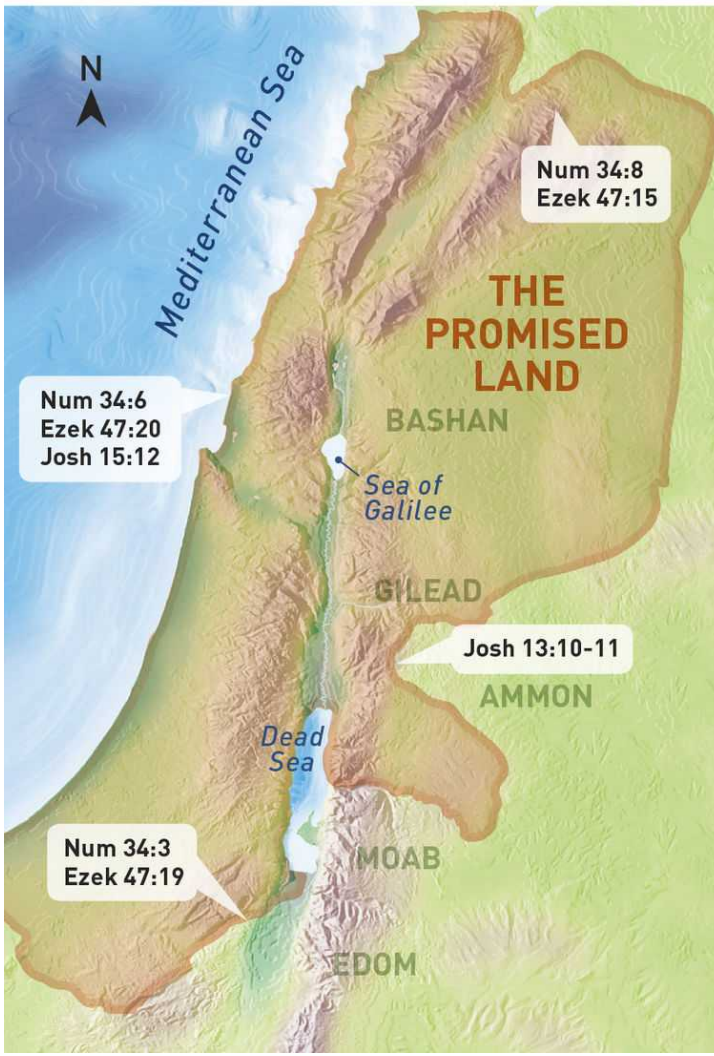
12As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. 13Then the LORD said to Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. 14But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. 15(As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) 16After four generations

your descendants will return here to this land, for the sins of the Amorites do not yet warrant their destruction.”

THE LAND PROMISED TO ABRAHAM

Natural landmarks like mountains, rivers, and seas designated many of the boundaries of the Promised Land. Numerous Bible passages outline these boundaries, including Numbers 34, Joshua 13–19, and Ezekiel 47–48.

Gen 15:18-21



THE LAND PROMISED TO ABRAHAM

17After the sun went down and darkness fell, Abram saw a smoking
firepot and a flaming torch pass between the halves of the
carcasses. 18So the LORD made a covenant with Abram that day and
said, “I have given this land to your descendants, all the way from
the border of Egypt* to the great Euphrates River—19the land now
occupied by the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20Hittites,
Perizzites, Rephaites, 21Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and
Jebusites.”

Genesis 16

THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL

1Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had not been able to bear children for
him. But she had an Egyptian servant named Hagar. 2So Sarai said
to Abram, "The LORD has prevented me from having children. Go
and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through
her." And Abram agreed with Sarai's proposal. 3So Sarai, Abram's
wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a
wife. (This happened ten years after Abram had settled in the land
of Canaan.)

4So Abram had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became
pregnant. But when Hagar knew she was pregnant, she began to
treat her mistress, Sarai, with contempt. 5Then Sarai said to Abram,
"This is all your fault! I put my servant into your arms, but now
that she's pregnant she treats me with contempt. The LORD will
show who's wrong—you or me!"

6Abram replied, "Look, she is your servant, so deal with her as you
see fit." Then Sarai treated Hagar so harshly that she finally ran

away.

7The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the
wilderness, along the road to Shur. 8The angel said to her, “Hagar,
Sarai’s servant, where have you come from, and where are you
going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress, Sarai,” she replied.

9The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and
submit to her authority.” 10Then he added, “I will give you more
descendants than you can count.”

11And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give
birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means ‘God
hears’), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress. 12This son of
yours will be a wild man, as untamed as a wild donkey! He will
raise his fist against everyone, and everyone will be against him.
Yes, he will live in open hostility against all his relatives.”

13Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who
had spoken to her. She said, “You are the God who sees me.”* She
also said, “Have I truly seen the One who sees me?” 14So that well
was named Beer-lahai-roi (which means “well of the Living One
who sees me”). It can still be found between Kadesh and Bered.

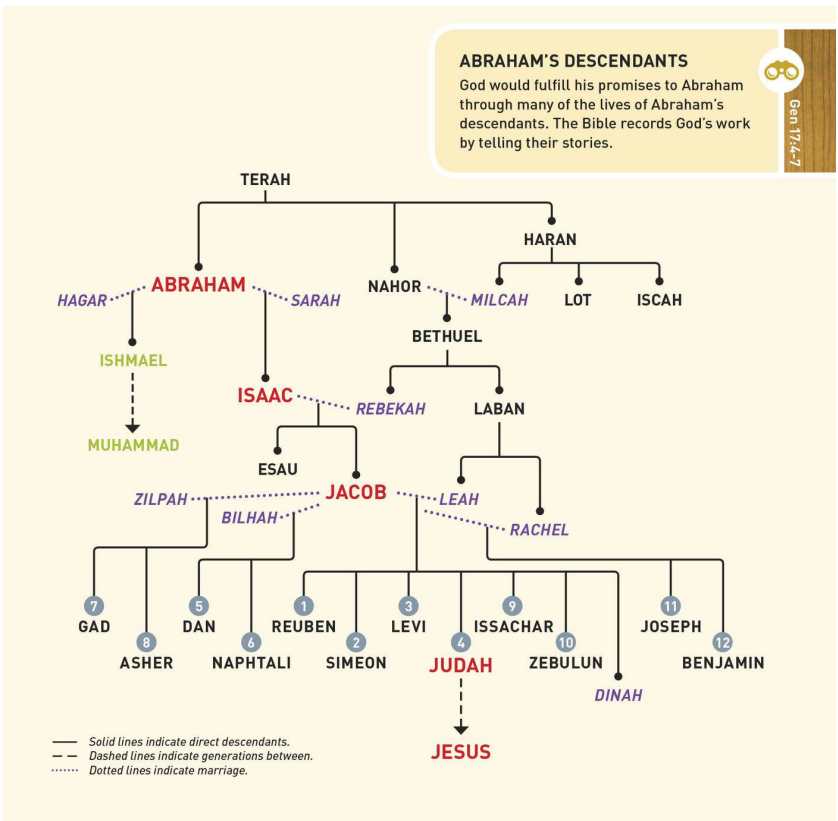
15So Hagar gave Abram a son, and Abram named him Ishmael.
16Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born.

WHO, ME? GENESIS 17:1-27

Genesis 17

ABRAM IS NAMED ABRAHAM

1When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him
and said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Serve me faithfully and
live a blameless life. 2I will make a covenant with you, by which I
will guarantee to give you countless descendants.”



ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS

3At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to
him, 4"This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a
multitude of nations! 5What's more, I am changing your name. It
will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham,* for
you will be the father of many nations. 6I will make you extremely
fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will
be among them!

7"I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants* after
you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting
covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your
descendants after you. 8And I will give the entire land of Canaan,
where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It
will be their possession forever, and I will be their God."

THE MARK OF THE COVENANT

9Then God said to Abraham, "Your responsibility is to obey the
terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this
continual responsibility. 10This is the covenant that you and your
descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised.
11You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the
covenant between me and you. 12From generation to generation,
every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his
birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to
the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants
whom you have purchased. 13All must be circumcised. Your bodies
will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. 14Any male who fails
to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for
breaking the covenant."

SARAI IS NAMED SARAH

15Then God said to Abraham, "Regarding Sarai, your wife—her

name will no longer be Sarai. From now on her name will be Sarah.*16And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants.”

17Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. “How could I become a father at the age of 100?” he thought. “And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old?” 18So Abraham said to God, “May Ishmael live under your special blessing!”

19But God replied, “No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac,* and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant. 20As for Ishmael, I will bless him also, just as you have asked. I will make him extremely fruitful and multiply his descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21But my covenant will be confirmed with Isaac, who will be born to you and Sarah about this time next year.” 22When God had finished speaking, he left Abraham.

23On that very day Abraham took his son, Ishmael, and every male in his household, including those born there and those he had bought. Then he circumcised them, cutting off their foreskins, just as God had told him. 24Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised, 25and Ishmael, his son, was thirteen. 26Both Abraham and his son, Ishmael, were circumcised on that same day, 27along with all the other men and boys of the household, whether they were born there or bought as servants. All were circumcised with him.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Genesis 18

A SON IS PROMISED TO SARAH

1The LORD appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove
belonging to Mamre. One day Abraham was sitting at the entrance
to his tent during the hottest part of the day. 2He looked up and
noticed three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he ran to
meet them and welcomed them, bowing low to the ground.

3"My lord," he said, "if it pleases you, stop here for a while. 4Rest in
the shade of this tree while water is brought to wash your feet. 5And
since you've honored your servant with this visit, let me prepare
some food to refresh you before you continue on your journey."

"All right," they said. "Do as you have said."

6So Abraham ran back to the tent and said to Sarah, "Hurry! Get
three large measures* of your best flour, knead it into dough, and
bake some bread." 7Then Abraham ran out to the herd and chose a
tender calf and gave it to his servant, who quickly prepared it.
8When the food was ready, Abraham took some yogurt and milk
and the roasted meat, and he served it to the men. As they ate,
Abraham waited on them in the shade of the trees.

9"Where is Sarah, your wife?" the visitors asked.

"She's inside the tent," Abraham replied.

10Then one of them said, "I will return to you about this time next
year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!"

Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. 11Abraham
and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past

the age of having children. 12So she laughed silently to herself and said, “How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?”

13Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, ‘Can an old woman like me have a baby?’ 14Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

15Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying, “I didn’t laugh.”

But the LORD said, “No, you did laugh.”

SKIP TO 21:1

ABRAHAM INTERCEDES FOR SODOM

16Then the men got up from their meal and looked out toward
Sodom. As they left, Abraham went with them to send them on
their way.

17"Should I hide my plan from Abraham?" the LORD asked. 18"For
Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all
the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. 19I have
singled him out so that he will direct his sons and their families to
keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then I
will do for Abraham all that I have promised."

20So the LORD told Abraham, "I have heard a great outcry from
Sodom and Gomorrah, because their sin is so flagrant. 21I am going
down to see if their actions are as wicked as I have heard. If not, I
want to know."

22The other men turned and headed toward Sodom, but the LORD
remained with Abraham. 23Abraham approached him and said,
"Will you sweep away both the righteous and the wicked?
24Suppose you find fifty righteous people living there in the city—
will you still sweep it away and not spare it for their sakes? 25Surely
you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with
the wicked. Why, you would be treating the righteous and the
wicked exactly the same! Surely you wouldn't do that! Should not
the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"

26And the LORD replied, "If I find fifty righteous people in Sodom, I
will spare the entire city for their sake."

27Then Abraham spoke again. "Since I have begun, let me speak
further to my Lord, even though I am but dust and ashes. 28Suppose
there are only forty-five righteous people rather than fifty? Will you
destroy the whole city for lack of five?"

And the LORD said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five

righteous people there.”

29Then Abraham pressed his request further. “Suppose there are only forty?”

And the LORD replied, “I will not destroy it for the sake of the forty.”

30“Please don’t be angry, my Lord,” Abraham pleaded. “Let me speak—suppose only thirty righteous people are found?”

And the LORD replied, “I will not destroy it if I find thirty.”

31Then Abraham said, “Since I have dared to speak to the Lord, let me continue—suppose there are only twenty?”

And the LORD replied, “Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty.”

32Finally, Abraham said, “Lord, please don’t be angry with me if I speak one more time. Suppose only ten are found there?”

And the LORD replied, “Then I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten.”

33When the LORD had finished his conversation with Abraham, he went on his way, and Abraham returned to his tent.

Genesis 19

SODOM AND GOMORRAH DESTROYED

1That evening the two angels came to the entrance of the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting there, and when he saw them, he stood up to meet them. Then he welcomed them and bowed with his face to the ground. 2“My lords,” he said, “come to my home to wash your

feet, and be my guests for the night. You may then get up early in the morning and be on your way again."

"Oh no," they replied. "We'll just spend the night out here in the city square."

3But Lot insisted, so at last they went home with him. Lot prepared a feast for them, complete with fresh bread made without yeast, and they ate. 4But before they retired for the night, all the men of Sodom, young and old, came from all over the city and surrounded the house. 5They shouted to Lot, "Where are the men who came to spend the night with you? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!"

6So Lot stepped outside to talk to them, shutting the door behind him. 7"Please, my brothers," he begged, "don't do such a wicked thing. 8Look, I have two virgin daughters. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do with them as you wish. But please, leave these men alone, for they are my guests and are under my protection."

9"Stand back!" they shouted. "This fellow came to town as an outsider, and now he's acting like our judge! We'll treat you far worse than those other men!" And they lunged toward Lot to break down the door.

10But the two angels* reached out, pulled Lot into the house, and bolted the door. 11Then they blinded all the men, young and old, who were at the door of the house, so they gave up trying to get inside.

12Meanwhile, the angels questioned Lot. "Do you have any other relatives here in the city?" they asked. "Get them out of this place—your sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. 13For we are about to destroy this city completely. The outcry against this place is so great it has reached the LORD, and he has sent us to destroy it."

14So Lot rushed out to tell his daughters' fiancés, "Quick, get out of
the city! The LORD is about to destroy it." But the young men
thought he was only joking.

15At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. "Hurry,"
they said to Lot. "Take your wife and your two daughters who are
here. Get out right now, or you will be swept away in the
destruction of the city!"

16When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands
of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the
city, for the LORD was merciful. 17When they were safely out of the
city, one of the angels ordered, "Run for your lives! And don't look
back or stop anywhere in the valley! Escape to the mountains, or
you will be swept away!"

18"Oh no, my lord!" Lot begged. 19"You have been so gracious to me
and saved my life, and you have shown such great kindness. But I
cannot go to the mountains. Disaster would catch up to me there,
and I would soon die. 20See, there is a small village nearby. Please
let me go there instead; don't you see how small it is? Then my life
will be saved."

21"All right," the angel said, "I will grant your request. I will not
destroy the little village. 22But hurry! Escape to it, for I can do
nothing until you arrive there." (This explains why that village was
known as Zoar, which means "little place.")

23Lot reached the village just as the sun was rising over the horizon.
24Then the LORD rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky
on Sodom and Gomorrah. 25He utterly destroyed them, along with
the other cities and villages of the plain, wiping out all the people
and every bit of vegetation. 26But Lot's wife looked back as she was
following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt.

27Abraham got up early that morning and hurried out to the place
where he had stood in the LORD's presence. 28He looked out across
the plain toward Sodom and Gomorrah and watched as columns of
smoke rose from the cities like smoke from a furnace.

29But God had listened to Abraham's request and kept Lot safe,
removing him from the disaster that engulfed the cities on the
plain.

LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS

30Afterward Lot left Zoar because he was afraid of the people there,
and he went to live in a cave in the mountains with his two
daughters. 31One day the older daughter said to her sister, "There
are no men left anywhere in this entire area, so we can't get
married like everyone else. And our father will soon be too old to
have children. 32Come, let's get him drunk with wine, and then we
will have sex with him. That way we will preserve our family line
through our father."

33So that night they got him drunk with wine, and the older
daughter went in and had intercourse with her father. He was
unaware of her lying down or getting up again.

34The next morning the older daughter said to her younger sister, "I
had sex with our father last night. Let's get him drunk with wine
again tonight, and you go in and have sex with him. That way we
will preserve our family line through our father." 35So that night
they got him drunk with wine again, and the younger daughter
went in and had intercourse with him. As before, he was unaware
of her lying down or getting up again.

36As a result, both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their own
father. 37When the older daughter gave birth to a son, she named
him Moab.* He became the ancestor of the nation now known as the
Moabites. 38When the younger daughter gave birth to a son, she
named him Ben-ammi.* He became the ancestor of the nation now

known as the Ammonites.

Genesis 20

ABRAHAM DECEIVES ABIMELECH

1Abraham moved south to the Negev and lived for a while between
Kadesh and Shur, and then he moved on to Gerar. While living
there as a foreigner, 2Abraham introduced his wife, Sarah, by
saying, “She is my sister.” So King Abimelech of Gerar sent for
Sarah and had her brought to him at his palace.

3But that night God came to Abimelech in a dream and told him,
“You are a dead man, for that woman you have taken is already
married!”

4But Abimelech had not slept with her yet, so he said, “Lord, will
you destroy an innocent nation? 5Didn’t Abraham tell me, ‘She is
my sister’? And she herself said, ‘Yes, he is my brother.’ I acted in
complete innocence! My hands are clean.”

6In the dream God responded, “Yes, I know you are innocent. That’s
why I kept you from sinning against me, and why I did not let you
touch her. 7Now return the woman to her husband, and he will pray
for you, for he is a prophet. Then you will live. But if you don’t
return her to him, you can be sure that you and all your people will
die.”

8Abimelech got up early the next morning and quickly called all his

servants together. When he told them what had happened, his men were terrified. 9Then Abimelech called for Abraham. “What have you done to us?” he demanded. “What crime have I committed that deserves treatment like this, making me and my kingdom guilty of this great sin? No one should ever do what you have done! 10Whatever possessed you to do such a thing?”

11Abraham replied, “I thought, ‘This is a godless place. They will want my wife and will kill me to get her.’ 12And she really is my sister, for we both have the same father, but different mothers. And I married her. 13When God called me to leave my father’s home and to travel from place to place, I told her, ‘Do me a favor. Wherever we go, tell the people that I am your brother.’”

14Then Abimelech took some of his sheep and goats, cattle, and male and female servants, and he presented them to Abraham. He also returned his wife, Sarah, to him. 15Then Abimelech said, “Look over my land and choose any place where you would like to live.” 16And he said to Sarah, “Look, I am giving your ‘brother’ 1,000 pieces of silver* in the presence of all these witnesses. This is to compensate you for any wrong I may have done to you. This will settle any claim against me, and your reputation is cleared.”

17Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants, so they could have children. 18For the LORD had caused all the women to be infertile because of what happened with Abraham’s wife, Sarah.

HEALING GENESIS 21:1-7

Genesis 21

THE BIRTH OF ISAAC

1The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had
promised. 2She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for
Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had
said it would. 3And Abraham named their son Isaac. 4Eight days
after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had
commanded. 5Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born.

6And Sarah declared, “God has brought me laughter.* All who hear
about this will laugh with me. 7Who would have said to Abraham
that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in
his old age!”

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL ARE SENT AWAY

8When Isaac grew up and was about to be weaned, Abraham
prepared a huge feast to celebrate the occasion. 9But Sarah saw
Ishmael—the son of Abraham and her Egyptian servant Hagar—
making fun of her son, Isaac.*10So she turned to Abraham and
demanded, “Get rid of that slave woman and her son. He is not
going to share the inheritance with my son, Isaac. I won’t have it!”

11This upset Abraham very much because Ishmael was his son. 12But
God told Abraham, “Do not be upset over the boy and your servant.
Do whatever Sarah tells you, for Isaac is the son through whom
your descendants will be counted. 13But I will also make a nation of
the descendants of Hagar’s son because he is your son, too.”

14So Abraham got up early the next morning, prepared food and a
container of water, and strapped them on Hagar’s shoulders. Then
he sent her away with their son, and she wandered aimlessly in the
wilderness of Beersheba.

15When the water was gone, she put the boy in the shade of a bush.
16Then she went and sat down by herself about a hundred yards*
away. “I don’t want to watch the boy die,” she said, as she burst
into tears.

17But God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to
Hagar from heaven, “Hagar, what’s wrong? Do not be afraid! God
has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18Go to him and comfort
him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants.”

19Then God opened Hagar's eyes, and she saw a well full of water.
She quickly filled her water container and gave the boy a drink.

20And God was with the boy as he grew up in the wilderness. He
became a skillful archer, 21and he settled in the wilderness of Paran.
His mother arranged for him to marry a woman from the land of
Egypt.

ABRAHAM'S COVENANT WITH ABIMELECH

22About this time, Abimelech came with Phicol, his army
commander, to visit Abraham. "God is obviously with you, helping
you in everything you do," Abimelech said. 23"Swear to me in God's
name that you will never deceive me, my children, or any of my
descendants. I have been loyal to you, so now swear that you will
be loyal to me and to this country where you are living as a
foreigner."

24Abraham replied, "Yes, I swear to it!" 25Then Abraham
complained to Abimelech about a well that Abimelech's servants
had taken by force from Abraham's servants.

26"This is the first I've heard of it," Abimelech answered. "I have no
idea who is responsible. You have never complained about this
before."

27Abraham then gave some of his sheep, goats, and cattle to
Abimelech, and they made a treaty. 28But Abraham also took seven
additional female lambs and set them off by themselves.
29Abimelech asked, "Why have you set these seven apart from the
others?"

30Abraham replied, "Please accept these seven lambs to show your
agreement that I dug this well." 31Then he named the place
Beersheba (which means "well of the oath"), because that was

where they had sworn the oath.

32After making their covenant at Beersheba, Abimelech left with
Phicol, the commander of his army, and they returned home to the
land of the Philistines. 33Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at
Beersheba, and there he worshiped the LORD, the Eternal
God.*34And Abraham lived as a foreigner in Philistine country for a
long time.

Genesis 22

ABRAHAM'S FAITH TESTED

1Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called.

"Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

2"Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much —and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

3The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about. 4On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5"Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back."

6So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's
shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the
two of them walked on together, 7Isaac turned to Abraham and said,
"Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the
sheep for the burnt offering?"

8"God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son,"
Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

9When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go,
Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied
his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. 10And
Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. 11At that
moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven,
"Abraham! Abraham!"

"Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!"

12"Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in
any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not
withheld from me even your son, your only son."

13Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a
thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in
place of his son. 14Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which
means "the LORD will provide"). To this day, people still use that
name as a proverb: "On the mountain of the LORD it will be
provided."

15Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from
heaven. 16"This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed
me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by
my own name that 17I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your

descendants* beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. 18And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me."

19Then they returned to the servants and traveled back to Beersheba, where Abraham continued to live.

20Soon after this, Abraham heard that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, had borne Nahor eight sons. 21The oldest was named Uz, the next oldest was Buz, followed by Kemuel (the ancestor of the Arameans), 22Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. 23(Bethuel became the father of Rebekah.) In addition to these eight sons from Milcah, 24Nahor had four other children from his concubine Reumah. Their names were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Genesis 23

THE BURIAL OF SARAH

1When Sarah was 127 years old, 2she died at Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron) in the land of Canaan. There Abraham mourned and wept for her.

3Then, leaving her body, he said to the Hittite elders, 4“Here I am, a
stranger and a foreigner among you. Please sell me a piece of land
so I can give my wife a proper burial.”

5The Hittites replied to Abraham, 6“Listen, my lord, you are an
honored prince among us. Choose the finest of our tombs and bury
her there. No one here will refuse to help you in this way.”

7Then Abraham bowed low before the Hittites 8and said, “Since you
are willing to help me in this way, be so kind as to ask Ephron son
of Zohar 9to let me buy his cave at Machpelah, down at the end of
his field. I will pay the full price in the presence of witnesses, so I
will have a permanent burial place for my family.”

10Ephron was sitting there among the others, and he answered
Abraham as the others listened, speaking publicly before all the
Hittite elders of the town. 11“No, my lord,” he said to Abraham,
“please listen to me. I will give you the field and the cave. Here in
the presence of my people, I give it to you. Go and bury your dead.”

12Abraham again bowed low before the citizens of the land, 13and
he replied to Ephron as everyone listened. “No, listen to me. I will
buy it from you. Let me pay the full price for the field so I can bury
my dead there.”

14Ephron answered Abraham, 15“My lord, please listen to me. The
land is worth 400 pieces* of silver, but what is that between
friends? Go ahead and bury your dead.”

16So Abraham agreed to Ephron’s price and paid the amount he had
suggested—400 pieces of silver, weighed according to the market
standard. The Hittite elders witnessed the transaction.

17So Abraham bought the plot of land belonging to Ephron at

Machpelah, near Mamre. This included the field itself, the cave that was in it, and all the surrounding trees. 18It was transferred to Abraham as his permanent possession in the presence of the Hittite elders at the city gate. 19Then Abraham buried his wife, Sarah, there in Canaan, in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre (also called Hebron). 20So the field and the cave were transferred from the Hittites to Abraham for use as a permanent burial place.

Genesis 24

A WIFE FOR ISAAC

1Abraham was now a very old man, and the LORD had blessed him
in every way. 2One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man
in charge of his household, “Take an oath by putting your hand
under my thigh. 3Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth,
that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local
Canaanite women. 4Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives,
and find a wife there for my son Isaac.”

5The servant asked, “But what if I can’t find a young woman who is
willing to travel so far from home? Should I then take Isaac there to
live among your relatives in the land you came from?”

6“No!” Abraham responded. “Be careful never to take my son there.
7For the LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s
house and my native land, solemnly promised to give this land to
my descendants.* He will send his angel ahead of you, and he will
see to it that you find a wife there for my son. 8If she is unwilling to
come back with you, then you are free from this oath of mine. But
under no circumstances are you to take my son there.”

9So the servant took an oath by putting his hand under the thigh of
his master, Abraham. He swore to follow Abraham’s instructions.
10Then he loaded ten of Abraham’s camels with all kinds of
expensive gifts from his master, and he traveled to distant Aram-
naharaim. There he went to the town where Abraham’s brother
Nahor had settled. 11He made the camels kneel beside a well just
outside the town. It was evening, and the women were coming out
to draw water.

12“O LORD, God of my master, Abraham,” he prayed. “Please give
me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham.
13See, I am standing here beside this spring, and the young women
of the town are coming out to draw water. 14This is my request. I
will ask one of them, ‘Please give me a drink from your jug.’ If she
says, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!’—let her

be the one you have selected as Isaac's wife. This is how I will know that you have shown unfailing love to my master."

15Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman named Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham's brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah. 16Rebekah was very beautiful and old enough to be married, but she was still a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up again. 17Running over to her, the servant said, "Please give me a little drink of water from your jug."

18"Yes, my lord," she answered, "have a drink." And she quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and gave him a drink. 19When she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough to drink." 20So she quickly emptied her jug into the watering trough and ran back to the well to draw water for all his camels.

21The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not the LORD had given him success in his mission. 22Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he took out a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets* for her wrists.

23"Whose daughter are you?" he asked. "And please tell me, would your father have any room to put us up for the night?"

24"I am the daughter of Bethuel," she replied. "My grandparents are Nahor and Milcah. 25Yes, we have plenty of straw and feed for the camels, and we have room for guests."

26The man bowed low and worshiped the LORD. 27"Praise the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham," he said. "The LORD has shown unfailing love and faithfulness to my master, for he has led me straight to my master's relatives."

SKIP TO 24:61

28The young woman ran home to tell her family everything that had
happened. 29Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, who ran out
to meet the man at the spring. 30He had seen the nose-ring and the
bracelets on his sister's wrists, and had heard Rebekah tell what the
man had said. So he rushed out to the spring, where the man was
still standing beside his camels. 31Laban said to him, "Come and
stay with us, you who are blessed by the LORD! Why are you
standing here outside the town when I have a room all ready for
you and a place prepared for the camels?"

32So the man went home with Laban, and Laban unloaded the
camels, gave him straw for their bedding, fed them, and provided
water for the man and the camel drivers to wash their feet. 33Then
food was served. But Abraham's servant said, "I don't want to eat
until I have told you why I have come."

"All right," Laban said, "tell us."

34"I am Abraham's servant," he explained. 35"And the LORD has
greatly blessed my master; he has become a wealthy man. The
LORD has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, a
fortune in silver and gold, and many male and female servants and
camels and donkeys.

36"When Sarah, my master's wife, was very old, she gave birth to
my master's son, and my master has given him everything he owns.
37And my master made me take an oath. He said, 'Do not allow my
son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. 38Go instead to
my father's house, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my
son.'

39"But I said to my master, 'What if I can't find a young woman who
is willing to go back with me?' 40He responded, 'The LORD, in
whose presence I have lived, will send his angel with you and will

make your mission successful. Yes, you must find a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father's family. 41Then you will have fulfilled your obligation. But if you go to my relatives and they refuse to let her go with you, you will be free from my oath.'

42"So today when I came to the spring, I prayed this prayer: 'O LORD, God of my master, Abraham, please give me success on this mission. 43See, I am standing here beside this spring. This is my request. When a young woman comes to draw water, I will say to her, "Please give me a little drink of water from your jug." 44If she says, "Yes, have a drink, and I will draw water for your camels, too," let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master's son.'

45"Before I had finished praying in my heart, I saw Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.' 46She quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and said, 'Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!' So I drank, and then she watered the camels.

47"Then I asked, 'Whose daughter are you?' She replied, 'I am the daughter of Bethuel, and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists.

48"Then I bowed low and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master, Abraham, because he had led me straight to my master's niece to be his son's wife. 49So tell me—will you or won't you show unfailing love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I'll know what to do next."

50Then Laban and Bethuel replied, "The LORD has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. 51Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."

52When Abraham's servant heard their answer, he bowed down to
the ground and worshiped the LORD. 53Then he brought out silver
and gold jewelry and clothing and presented them to Rebekah. He
also gave expensive presents to her brother and mother. 54Then they
ate their meal, and the servant and the men with him stayed there
overnight.

But early the next morning, Abraham's servant said, "Send me back
to my master."

55"But we want Rebekah to stay with us at least ten days," her
brother and mother said. "Then she can go."

56But he said, "Don't delay me. The LORD has made my mission
successful; now send me back so I can return to my master."

57"Well," they said, "we'll call Rebekah and ask her what she
thinks." 58So they called Rebekah. "Are you willing to go with this
man?" they asked her.

And she replied, "Yes, I will go."

59So they said good-bye to Rebekah and sent her away with
Abraham's servant and his men. The woman who had been
Rebekah's childhood nurse went along with her. 60They gave her
this blessing as she parted: "Our sister, may you become the mother
of many millions!

May your descendants be strong and conquer the cities of their
enemies."

61Then Rebekah and her servant girls mounted the camels and
followed the man. So Abraham's servant took Rebekah and went on
his way.

62Meanwhile, Isaac, whose home was in the Negev, had returned

from Beer-lahai-roi. 63One evening as he was walking and meditating in the fields, he looked up and saw the camels coming. 64When Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac, she quickly dismounted from her camel. 65"Who is that man walking through the fields to meet us?" she asked the servant.

And he replied, "It is my master." So Rebekah covered her face with her veil. 66Then the servant told Isaac everything he had done.

67And Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, and she became his wife. He loved her deeply, and she was a special comfort to him after the death of his mother.

Genesis 25

THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM

1Abraham married another wife, whose name was Keturah. 2She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's descendants were the Asshurites, Letushites, and Leummites. 4Midian's sons were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. These were all descendants of Abraham through Keturah.

5Abraham gave everything he owned to his son Isaac. 6But before he died, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them off to a land in the east, away from Isaac.

7Abraham lived for 175 years, 8and he died at a ripe old age, having

lived a long and satisfying life. He breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death. 9His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite. 10This was the field Abraham had purchased from the Hittites and where he had buried his wife Sarah. 11After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who settled near Beer-lahai-roi in the Negev.

ISHMAEL'S DESCENDANTS

12This is the account of the family of Ishmael, the son of Abraham through Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian servant. 13Here is a list, by their names and clans, of Ishmael's descendants: The oldest was Nebaioth, followed by Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16These twelve sons of Ishmael became the founders of twelve tribes named after them, listed according to the places they settled and camped. 17Ishmael lived for 137 years. Then he breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death. 18Ishmael's descendants occupied the region from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt in the direction of Asshur. There they lived in open hostility toward all their relatives.*

THE BIRTHS OF ESAU AND JACOB

19This is the account of the family of Isaac, the son of Abraham.
20When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter
of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan-aram and the sister of Laban
the Aramean.

21Isaac pleaded with the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she
was unable to have children. The LORD answered Isaac's prayer,
and Rebekah became pregnant with twins. 22But the two children
struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the
LORD about it. "Why is this happening to me?" she asked.

23And the LORD told her, "The sons in your womb will become two
nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals.
One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will
serve your younger son."

24And when the time came to give birth, Rebekah discovered that
she did indeed have twins! 25The first one was very red at birth and

covered with thick hair like a fur coat. So they named him Esau.*26Then the other twin was born with his hand grasping Esau's heel. So they named him Jacob.* Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born.

ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT

27As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter. He was an outdoorsman, but Jacob had a quiet temperament, preferring to stay at home. 28Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed eating the wild game Esau brought home, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. 30Esau said to Jacob, "I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew!" (This is how Esau got his other name, Edom, which means "red.")

31"All right," Jacob replied, "but trade me your rights as the firstborn son."

32"Look, I'm dying of starvation!" said Esau. "What good is my birthright to me now?"

33But Jacob said, "First you must swear that your birthright is mine." So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob.

34Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn.

Genesis 26

ISAAC DECEIVES ABIMELECH

1A severe famine now struck the land, as had happened before in
Abraham's time. So Isaac moved to Gerar, where Abimelech, king of
the Philistines, lived.

2The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt,
but do as I tell you. 3Live here as a foreigner in this land, and I will
be with you and bless you. I hereby confirm that I will give all these
lands to you and your descendants,* just as I solemnly promised
Abraham, your father. 4I will cause your descendants to become as
numerous as the stars of the sky, and I will give them all these
lands. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth
will be blessed. 5I will do this because Abraham listened to me and
obeyed all my requirements, commands, decrees, and instructions."
6So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

7When the men who lived there asked Isaac about his wife,
Rebekah, he said, "She is my sister." He was afraid to say, "She is
my wife." He thought, "They will kill me to get her, because she is
so beautiful." 8But some time later, Abimelech, king of the
Philistines, looked out his window and saw Isaac caressing
Rebekah.

9Immediately, Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed, "She is
obviously your wife! Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?"

“Because I was afraid someone would kill me to get her from me,” Isaac replied.

10“How could you do this to us?” Abimelech exclaimed. “One of my people might easily have taken your wife and slept with her, and you would have made us guilty of great sin.”

11Then Abimelech issued a public proclamation: “Anyone who touches this man or his wife will be put to death!”

CONFLICT OVER WATER RIGHTS

12When Isaac planted his crops that year, he harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted, for the LORD blessed him. 13He became a very rich man, and his wealth continued to grow. 14He acquired so many flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and servants that the Philistines became jealous of him. 15So the Philistines filled up all of Isaac’s wells with dirt. These were the wells that had been dug by the servants of his father, Abraham.

16Finally, Abimelech ordered Isaac to leave the country. “Go somewhere else,” he said, “for you have become too powerful for us.”

17So Isaac moved away to the Gerar Valley, where he set up their tents and settled down. 18He reopened the wells his father had dug, which the Philistines had filled in after Abraham’s death. Isaac also restored the names Abraham had given them.

19Isaac’s servants also dug in the Gerar Valley and discovered a well of fresh water. 20But then the shepherds from Gerar came and claimed the spring. “This is our water,” they said, and they argued over it with Isaac’s herdsmen. So Isaac named the well Esek (which means “argument”). 21Isaac’s men then dug another well, but again there was a dispute over it. So Isaac named it Sitnah (which means “hostility”). 22Abandoning that one, Isaac moved on and dug

another well. This time there was no dispute over it, so Isaac named the place Rehoboth (which means “open space”), for he said, “At last the LORD has created enough space for us to prosper in this land.”

23From there Isaac moved to Beersheba, 24where the LORD appeared to him on the night of his arrival. “I am the God of your father, Abraham,” he said. “Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you. I will multiply your descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will do this because of my promise to Abraham, my servant.” 25Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the LORD. He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug another well.

ISAAC’S COVENANT WITH ABIMELECH

26One day King Abimelech came from Gerar with his adviser, Ahuzzath, and also Phicol, his army commander. 27“Why have you come here?” Isaac asked. “You obviously hate me, since you kicked me off your land.”

28They replied, “We can plainly see that the LORD is with you. So we want to enter into a sworn treaty with you. Let’s make a covenant. 29Swear that you will not harm us, just as we have never troubled you. We have always treated you well, and we sent you away from us in peace. And now look how the LORD has blessed you!”

30So Isaac prepared a covenant feast to celebrate the treaty, and they ate and drank together. 31Early the next morning, they each took a solemn oath not to interfere with each other. Then Isaac sent them home again, and they left him in peace.

32That very day Isaac’s servants came and told him about a new well they had dug. “We’ve found water!” they exclaimed. 33So Isaac named the well Shibah (which means “oath”). And to this day the town that grew up there is called Beersheba (which means “well of

the oath”).

34At the age of forty, Esau married two Hittite wives: Judith, the
daughter of Beeri, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon. 35But Esau’s
wives made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah.

Genesis 27

JACOB STEALS ESAU’S BLESSING

1One day when Isaac was old and turning blind, he called for Esau,
his older son, and said, “My son.”

“Yes, Father?” Esau replied.

2“I am an old man now,” Isaac said, “and I don’t know when I may
die. 3Take your bow and a quiver full of arrows, and go out into the
open country to hunt some wild game for me. 4Prepare my favorite
dish, and bring it here for me to eat. Then I will pronounce the
blessing that belongs to you, my firstborn son, before I die.”

5But Rebekah overheard what Isaac had said to his son Esau. So
when Esau left to hunt for the wild game, 6she said to her son
Jacob, “Listen. I overheard your father say to Esau, 7‘Bring me some
wild game and prepare me a delicious meal. Then I will bless you in
the LORD’s presence before I die.’ 8Now, my son, listen to me. Do
exactly as I tell you. 9Go out to the flocks, and bring me two fine
young goats. I’ll use them to prepare your father’s favorite dish.
10Then take the food to your father so he can eat it and bless you
before he dies.”

11“But look,” Jacob replied to Rebekah, “my brother, Esau, is a
hairy man, and my skin is smooth. 12What if my father touches me?
He’ll see that I’m trying to trick him, and then he’ll curse me
instead of blessing me.”

13But his mother replied, “Then let the curse fall on me, my son!
Just do what I tell you. Go out and get the goats for me!”

14So Jacob went out and got the young goats for his mother.
Rebekah took them and prepared a delicious meal, just the way
Isaac liked it. 15Then she took Esau’s favorite clothes, which were
there in the house, and gave them to her younger son, Jacob. 16She
covered his arms and the smooth part of his neck with the skin of
the young goats. 17Then she gave Jacob the delicious meal,
including freshly baked bread.

18So Jacob took the food to his father. “My father?” he said.

“Yes, my son,” Isaac answered. “Who are you—Esau or Jacob?”

19Jacob replied, “It’s Esau, your firstborn son. I’ve done as you told me. Here is the wild game. Now sit up and eat it so you can give me your blessing.”

20Isaac asked, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?”

“The LORD your God put it in my path!” Jacob replied.

21Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come closer so I can touch you and make sure that you really are Esau.” 22So Jacob went closer to his father, and Isaac touched him. “The voice is Jacob’s, but the hands are Esau’s,” Isaac said. 23But he did not recognize Jacob, because Jacob’s hands felt hairy just like Esau’s. So Isaac prepared to bless Jacob. 24“But are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

“Yes, I am,” Jacob replied.

25Then Isaac said, “Now, my son, bring me the wild game. Let me eat it, and then I will give you my blessing.” So Jacob took the food to his father, and Isaac ate it. He also drank the wine that Jacob served him. 26Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come a little closer and kiss me, my son.”

27So Jacob went over and kissed him. And when Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he was finally convinced, and he blessed his son. He said, “Ah! The smell of my son is like the smell of the outdoors, which the LORD has blessed!

28“From the dew of heaven and the richness of the earth, may God always give you abundant harvests of grain and bountiful new wine.

29May many nations become your servants, and may they bow

down to you.
May you be the master over your brothers, and may your mother's
sons bow down to you.
All who curse you will be cursed, and all who bless you will be
blessed."

30As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and almost before
Jacob had left his father, Esau returned from his hunt. 31Esau
prepared a delicious meal and brought it to his father. Then he said,
"Sit up, my father, and eat my wild game so you can give me your
blessing."

32But Isaac asked him, "Who are you?"

Esau replied, "It's your son, your firstborn son, Esau."

33Isaac began to tremble uncontrollably and said, "Then who just
served me wild game? I have already eaten it, and I blessed him just
before you came. And yes, that blessing must stand!"

34When Esau heard his father's words, he let out a loud and bitter
cry. "Oh my father, what about me? Bless me, too!" he begged.

35But Isaac said, "Your brother was here, and he tricked me. He has
taken away your blessing."

36Esau exclaimed, "No wonder his name is Jacob, for now he has
cheated me twice.* First he took my rights as the firstborn, and now
he has stolen my blessing. Oh, haven't you saved even one blessing
for me?"

37Isaac said to Esau, "I have made Jacob your master and have
declared that all his brothers will be his servants. I have guaranteed
him an abundance of grain and wine—what is left for me to give

you, my son?”

38Esau pleaded, “But do you have only one blessing? Oh my father,
bless me, too!” Then Esau broke down and wept.

39Finally, his father, Isaac, said to him, “You will live away from the
richness of the earth, and away from the dew of the heaven above.

40You will live by your sword, and you will serve your brother.
But when you decide to break free, you will shake his yoke from
your neck.”

JACOB FLEES TO PADDAN-ARAM

41From that time on, Esau hated Jacob because their father had
given Jacob the blessing. And Esau began to scheme: “I will soon be
mourning my father’s death. Then I will kill my brother, Jacob.”

42But Rebekah heard about Esau’s plans. So she sent for Jacob and
told him, “Listen, Esau is consoling himself by plotting to kill you.
43So listen carefully, my son. Get ready and flee to my brother,
Laban, in Haran. 44Stay there with him until your brother cools off.
45When he calms down and forgets what you have done to him, I
will send for you to come back. Why should I lose both of you in
one day?”

46Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I’m sick and tired of these local
Hittite women! I would rather die than see Jacob marry one of
them.”

Genesis 28

1So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and said, “You must not
marry any of these Canaanite women. 2Instead, go at once to
Paddan-aram, to the house of your grandfather Bethuel, and marry

one of your uncle Laban's daughters. 3May God Almighty* bless you
and give you many children. And may your descendants multiply
and become many nations! 4May God pass on to you and your
descendants* the blessings he promised to Abraham. May you own
this land where you are now living as a foreigner, for God gave this
land to Abraham."

JACOB'S JOURNEY TO PADDAN-ARAM

5So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to stay
with his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, the son of Bethuel the
Aramean.

6Esau knew that his father, Isaac, had blessed Jacob and sent him to
Paddan-aram to find a wife, and that he had warned Jacob, "You

must not marry a Canaanite woman." 7He also knew that Jacob had obeyed his parents and gone to Paddan-aram. 8It was now very clear to Esau that his father did not like the local Canaanite women. 9So Esau visited his uncle Ishmael's family and married one of Ishmael's daughters, in addition to the wives he already had. His new wife's name was Mahalath. She was the sister of Nebaioth and the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son.

JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL

10Meanwhile, Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. 11At sundown he arrived at a good place to set up camp and stopped there for the night. Jacob found a stone to rest his head against and lay down to sleep. 12As he slept, he dreamed of a stairway that reached from the earth up to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down the stairway.

13At the top of the stairway stood the LORD, and he said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I am giving it to you and your descendants. 14Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants. 15What's more, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you."

16Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in
this place, and I wasn’t even aware of it!” 17But he was also afraid
and said, “What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the
house of God, the very gateway to heaven!”

18The next morning Jacob got up very early. He took the stone he
had rested his head against, and he set it upright as a memorial
pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it. 19He named that place
Bethel (which means “house of God”), although it was previously
called Luz.

20Then Jacob made this vow: “If God will indeed be with me and
protect me on this journey, and if he will provide me with food and
clothing, 21and if I return safely to my father’s home, then the LORD
will certainly be my God. 22And this memorial pillar I have set up
will become a place for worshiping God, and I will present to God a
tenth of everything he gives me.”

Genesis 29

JACOB ARRIVES AT PADDAN-ARAM

1Then Jacob hurried on, finally arriving in the land of the east. 2He
saw a well in the distance. Three flocks of sheep and goats lay in an
open field beside it, waiting to be watered. But a heavy stone
covered the mouth of the well.

3It was the custom there to wait for all the flocks to arrive before
removing the stone and watering the animals. Afterward the stone
would be placed back over the mouth of the well. 4Jacob went over
to the shepherds and asked, “Where are you from, my friends?”

“We are from Haran,” they answered.

5“Do you know a man there named Laban, the grandson of Nahor?”

he asked.

“Yes, we do,” they replied.

6“Is he doing well?” Jacob asked.

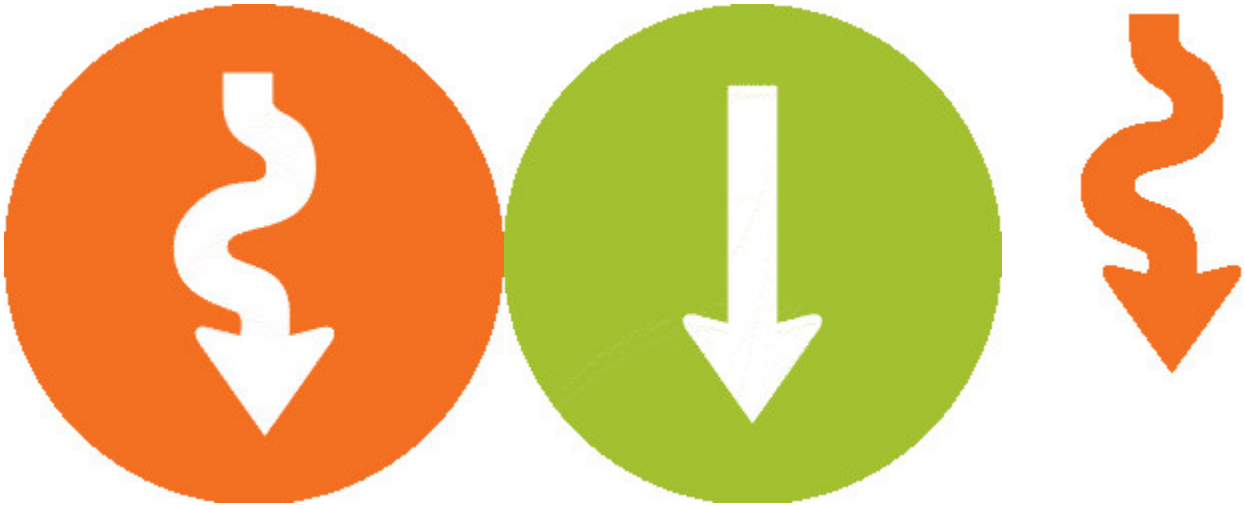
“Yes, he’s well,” they answered. “Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the flock now.”

7Jacob said, “Look, it’s still broad daylight—too early to round up the animals. Why don’t you water the sheep and goats so they can get back out to pasture?”

8“We can’t water the animals until all the flocks have arrived,” they replied. “Then the shepherds move the stone from the mouth of the well, and we water all the sheep and goats.”

9Jacob was still talking with them when Rachel arrived with her father’s flock, for she was a shepherd. 10And because Rachel was his cousin—the daughter of Laban, his mother’s brother—and because the sheep and goats belonged to his uncle Laban, Jacob went over to the well and moved the stone from its mouth and watered his uncle’s flock. 11Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and he wept aloud. 12He explained to Rachel that he was her cousin on her father’s side—the son of her aunt Rebekah. So Rachel quickly ran and told her father, Laban.

13As soon as Laban heard that his nephew Jacob had arrived, he ran out to meet him. He embraced and kissed him and brought him home. When Jacob had told him his story, 14Laban exclaimed, “You really are my own flesh and blood!”



WEDDINGS GENESIS 29:14-30

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL

After Jacob had stayed with Laban for about a month, 15Laban said to him, “You shouldn’t work for me without pay just because we are relatives. Tell me how much your wages should be.”

16Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. 17There was no sparkle in Leah’s eyes,* but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face. 18Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, “I’ll work for you for seven years if you’ll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife.”

19“Agreed!” Laban replied. “I’d rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me.” 20So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days.

21Finally, the time came for him to marry her. “I have fulfilled my agreement,” Jacob said to Laban. “Now give me my wife so I can sleep with her.”

22So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast. 23But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her. 24(Laban had given Leah a servant, Zilpah, to be her maid.)

25But when Jacob woke up in the morning—it was Leah! “What have you done to me?” Jacob raged at Laban. “I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?”

26“It’s not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn,” Laban replied. 27“But wait until the bridal week is over; then we’ll give you Rachel, too—provided you promise to work another seven years for me.”

28So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too. 29(Laban gave Rachel a servant, Bilhah, to be her maid.) 30So Jacob slept with Rachel, too, and he loved her much more than Leah. He then stayed and worked for Laban the additional seven years.

JACOB’S MANY CHILDREN

31When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to have children, but Rachel could not conceive. 32So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben,* for she said, “The LORD has noticed my misery, and now my husband will love me.”

33She soon became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She named him Simeon,* for she said, “The LORD heard that I was unloved and has given me another son.”

34Then she became pregnant a third time and gave birth to another son. He was named Levi,* for she said, “Surely this time my husband will feel affection for me, since I have given him three sons!”

35Once again Leah became pregnant and gave birth to another son.

She named him Judah,* for she said, “Now I will praise the LORD!”
And then she stopped having children.

Genesis 30

1When Rachel saw that she wasn’t having any children for Jacob,
she became jealous of her sister. She pleaded with Jacob, “Give me
children, or I’ll die!”

2Then Jacob became furious with Rachel. “Am I God?” he asked.
“He’s the one who has kept you from having children!”

3Then Rachel told him, “Take my maid, Bilhah, and sleep with her.
She will bear children for me,* and through her I can have a family,
too.” 4So Rachel gave her servant, Bilhah, to Jacob as a wife, and he
slept with her. 5Bilhah became pregnant and presented him with a
son. 6Rachel named him Dan,* for she said, “God has vindicated me!
He has heard my request and given me a son.” 7Then Bilhah became
pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. 8Rachel named him
Naphtali,* for she said, “I have struggled hard with my sister, and
I’m winning!”

9Meanwhile, Leah realized that she wasn’t getting pregnant
anymore, so she took her servant, Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob as
a wife. 10Soon Zilpah presented him with a son. 11Leah named him
Gad,* for she said, “How fortunate I am!” 12Then Zilpah gave Jacob
a second son. 13And Leah named him Asher,* for she said, “What joy
is mine! Now the other women will celebrate with me.”

14One day during the wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrakes
growing in a field and brought them to his mother, Leah. Rachel
begged Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”

15But Leah angrily replied, “Wasn’t it enough that you stole my

husband? Now will you steal my son's mandrakes, too?"

Rachel answered, "I will let Jacob sleep with you tonight if you give me some of the mandrakes."

16So that evening, as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You must come and sleep with me tonight!" she said. "I have paid for you with some mandrakes that my son found." So that night he slept with Leah. 17And God answered Leah's prayers. She became pregnant again and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. 18She named him Issachar,* for she said, "God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband as a wife." 19Then Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. 20She named him Zebulun,* for she said, "God has given me a good reward. Now my husband will treat me with respect, for I have given him six sons." 21Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

22Then God remembered Rachel's plight and answered her prayers by enabling her to have children. 23She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. "God has removed my disgrace," she said. 24And she named him Joseph,* for she said, "May the LORD add yet another son to my family."

JACOB'S WEALTH INCREASES

25Soon after Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Please release me so I can go home to my own country. 26Let me take my wives and children, for I have earned them by serving you, and let me be on my way. You certainly know how hard I have worked for you."

27"Please listen to me," Laban replied. "I have become wealthy, for* the LORD has blessed me because of you. 28Tell me how much I owe you. Whatever it is, I'll pay it."

29Jacob replied, “You know how hard I’ve worked for you, and how
your flocks and herds have grown under my care. 30You had little
indeed before I came, but your wealth has increased enormously.
The LORD has blessed you through everything I’ve done. But now,
what about me? When can I start providing for my own family?”

31“What wages do you want?” Laban asked again.

Jacob replied, “Don’t give me anything. Just do this one thing, and
I’ll continue to tend and watch over your flocks. 32Let me inspect
your flocks today and remove all the sheep and goats that are
speckled or spotted, along with all the black sheep. Give these to
me as my wages. 33In the future, when you check on the animals
you have given me as my wages, you’ll see that I have been honest.
If you find in my flock any goats without speckles or spots, or any
sheep that are not black, you will know that I have stolen them
from you.”

34“All right,” Laban replied. “It will be as you say.” 35But that very
day Laban went out and removed the male goats that were streaked
and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted or
had white patches, and all the black sheep. He placed them in the
care of his own sons, 36who took them a three-days’ journey from
where Jacob was. Meanwhile, Jacob stayed and cared for the rest of
Laban’s flock.

37Then Jacob took some fresh branches from poplar, almond, and
plane trees and peeled off strips of bark, making white streaks on
them. 38Then he placed these peeled branches in the watering
troughs where the flocks came to drink, for that was where they
mated. 39And when they mated in front of the white-streaked
branches, they gave birth to young that were streaked, speckled,
and spotted. 40Jacob separated those lambs from Laban’s flock. And
at mating time he turned the flock to face Laban’s animals that were
streaked or black. This is how he built his own flock instead of
increasing Laban’s.

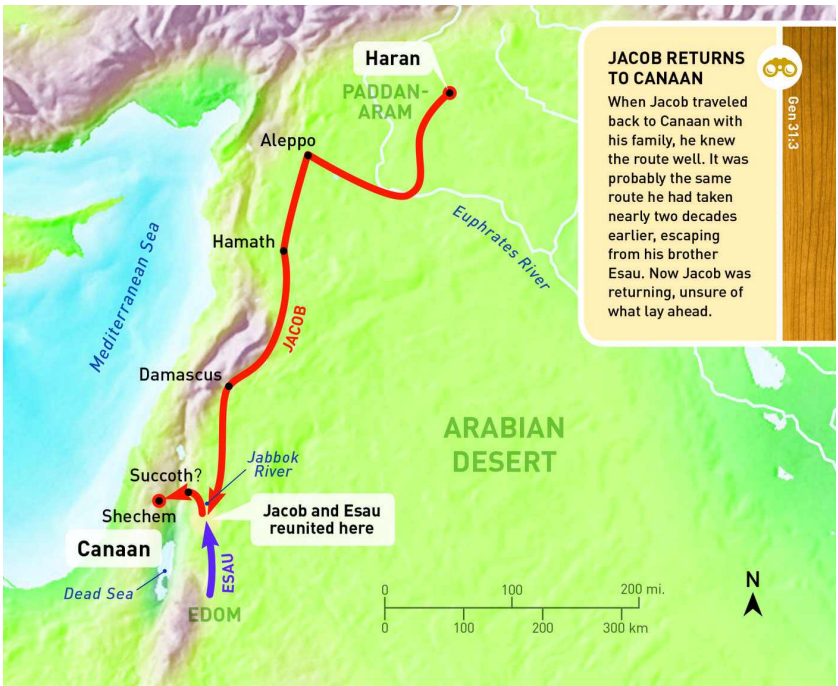
41Whenever the stronger females were ready to mate, Jacob would
place the peeled branches in the watering troughs in front of them.
Then they would mate in front of the branches. 42But he didn't do
this with the weaker ones, so the weaker lambs belonged to Laban,
and the stronger ones were Jacob's. 43As a result, Jacob became
very wealthy, with large flocks of sheep and goats, female and male
servants, and many camels and donkeys.

Genesis 31

JACOB FLEES FROM LABAN

1But Jacob soon learned that Laban's sons were grumbling about
him. "Jacob has robbed our father of everything!" they said. "He
has gained all his wealth at our father's expense." 2And Jacob began

to notice a change in Laban's attitude toward him.



JACOB RETURNS TO CANAAN

3Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your father
and grandfather and to your relatives there, and I will be with you."

4So Jacob called Rachel and Leah out to the field where he was
watching his flock. 5He said to them, "I have noticed that your
father's attitude toward me has changed. But the God of my father
has been with me. 6You know how hard I have worked for your
father, 7but he has cheated me, changing my wages ten times. But
God has not allowed him to do me any harm. 8For if he said, 'The
speckled animals will be your wages,' the whole flock began to

produce speckled young. And when he changed his mind and said,
‘The striped animals will be your wages,’ then the whole flock
produced striped young. 9In this way, God has taken your father’s
animals and given them to me.

10“One time during the mating season, I had a dream and saw that
the male goats mating with the females were streaked, speckled,
and spotted. 11Then in my dream, the angel of God said to me,
‘Jacob!’ And I replied, ‘Yes, here I am.’

12“The angel said, ‘Look up, and you will see that only the streaked,
speckled, and spotted males are mating with the females of your
flock. For I have seen how Laban has treated you. 13I am the God
who appeared to you at Bethel,* the place where you anointed the
pillar of stone and made your vow to me. Now get ready and leave
this country and return to the land of your birth.’”

14Rachel and Leah responded, “That’s fine with us! We won’t inherit
any of our father’s wealth anyway. 15He has reduced our rights to
those of foreign women. And after he sold us, he wasted the money
you paid him for us. 16All the wealth God has given you from our
father legally belongs to us and our children. So go ahead and do
whatever God has told you.”

17So Jacob put his wives and children on camels, 18and he drove all
his livestock in front of him. He packed all the belongings he had
acquired in Paddan-aram and set out for the land of Canaan, where
his father, Isaac, lived. 19At the time they left, Laban was some
distance away, shearing his sheep. Rachel stole her father’s
household idols and took them with her. 20Jacob outwitted Laban
the Aramean, for they set out secretly and never told Laban they
were leaving. 21So Jacob took all his possessions with him and
crossed the Euphrates River,* heading for the hill country of Gilead.

LABAN PURSUES JACOB

22Three days later, Laban was told that Jacob had fled. 23So he

gathered a group of his relatives and set out in hot pursuit. He caught up with Jacob seven days later in the hill country of Gilead. 24But the previous night God had appeared to Laban the Aramean in a dream and told him, “I’m warning you—leave Jacob alone!”

25Laban caught up with Jacob as he was camped in the hill country of Gilead, and he set up his camp not far from Jacob’s. 26“What do you mean by deceiving me like this?” Laban demanded. “How dare you drag my daughters away like prisoners of war? 27Why did you slip away secretly? Why did you deceive me? And why didn’t you say you wanted to leave? I would have given you a farewell feast, with singing and music, accompanied by tambourines and harps. 28Why didn’t you let me kiss my daughters and grandchildren and tell them good-bye? You have acted very foolishly! 29I could destroy you, but the God of your father appeared to me last night and warned me, ‘Leave Jacob alone!’ 30I can understand your feeling that you must go, and your intense longing for your father’s home. But why have you stolen my gods?”

31“I rushed away because I was afraid,” Jacob answered. “I thought you would take your daughters from me by force. 32But as for your gods, see if you can find them, and let the person who has taken them die! And if you find anything else that belongs to you, identify it before all these relatives of ours, and I will give it back!” But Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the household idols.

33Laban went first into Jacob’s tent to search there, then into Leah’s, and then the tents of the two servant wives—but he found nothing. Finally, he went into Rachel’s tent. 34But Rachel had taken the household idols and hidden them in her camel saddle, and now she was sitting on them. When Laban had thoroughly searched her tent without finding them, 35she said to her father, “Please, sir, forgive me if I don’t get up for you. I’m having my monthly period.” So Laban continued his search, but he could not find the household idols.

36Then Jacob became very angry, and he challenged Laban. “What’s

my crime?" he demanded. "What have I done wrong to make you chase after me as though I were a criminal? 37You have rummaged through everything I own. Now show me what you found that belongs to you! Set it out here in front of us, before our relatives, for all to see. Let them judge between us!

38"For twenty years I have been with you, caring for your flocks. In all that time your sheep and goats never miscarried. In all those years I never used a single ram of yours for food. 39If any were attacked and killed by wild animals, I never showed you the carcass and asked you to reduce the count of your flock. No, I took the loss myself! You made me pay for every stolen animal, whether it was taken in broad daylight or in the dark of night.

40"I worked for you through the scorching heat of the day and through cold and sleepless nights. 41Yes, for twenty years I slaved in your house! I worked for fourteen years earning your two daughters, and then six more years for your flock. And you changed my wages ten times! 42In fact, if the God of my father had not been on my side—the God of Abraham and the fearsome God of Isaac*—you would have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen your abuse and my hard work. That is why he appeared to you last night and rebuked you!"

JACOB'S TREATY WITH LABAN

43Then Laban replied to Jacob, "These women are my daughters, these children are my grandchildren, and these flocks are my flocks—in fact, everything you see is mine. But what can I do now about my daughters and their children? 44So come, let's make a covenant, you and I, and it will be a witness to our commitment."

45So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a monument. 46Then he told his family members, "Gather some stones." So they gathered stones and piled them in a heap. Then Jacob and Laban sat down beside the pile of stones to eat a covenant meal. 47To commemorate the

event, Laban called the place Jegar-sahadutha (which means “witness pile” in Aramaic), and Jacob called it Galeed (which means “witness pile” in Hebrew).

48Then Laban declared, “This pile of stones will stand as a witness
to remind us of the covenant we have made today.” This explains
why it was called Galeed—“Witness Pile.” 49But it was also called
Mizpah (which means “watchtower”), for Laban said, “May the
LORD keep watch between us to make sure that we keep this
covenant when we are out of each other’s sight. 50If you mistreat my
daughters or if you marry other wives, God will see it even if no
one else does. He is a witness to this covenant between us.

51“See this pile of stones,” Laban continued, “and see this
monument I have set between us. 52They stand between us as
witnesses of our vows. I will never pass this pile of stones to harm
you, and you must never pass these stones or this monument to
harm me. 53I call on the God of our ancestors—the God of your
grandfather Abraham and the God of my grandfather Nahor—to
serve as a judge between us.”

So Jacob took an oath before the fearsome God of his father, Isaac,* to respect the boundary line. 54Then Jacob offered a sacrifice to God there on the mountain and invited everyone to a covenant feast. After they had eaten, they spent the night on the mountain.

55*Laban got up early the next morning, and he kissed his
grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and
returned home.

Genesis 32

1*As Jacob started on his way again, angels of God came to meet
him. 2When Jacob saw them, he exclaimed, “This is God’s camp!”
So he named the place Mahanaim.*

JACOB SENDS GIFTS TO ESAU

3Then Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother, Esau, who was
living in the region of Seir in the land of Edom. 4He told them,
“Give this message to my master Esau: ‘Humble greetings from your
servant Jacob. Until now I have been living with Uncle Laban, 5and
now I own cattle, donkeys, flocks of sheep and goats, and many
servants, both men and women. I have sent these messengers to
inform my lord of my coming, hoping that you will be friendly to
me.’”

6After delivering the message, the messengers returned to Jacob and
reported, “We met your brother, Esau, and he is already on his way
to meet you—with an army of 400 men!” 7Jacob was terrified at the
news. He divided his household, along with the flocks and herds
and camels, into two groups. 8He thought, “If Esau meets one group
and attacks it, perhaps the other group can escape.”

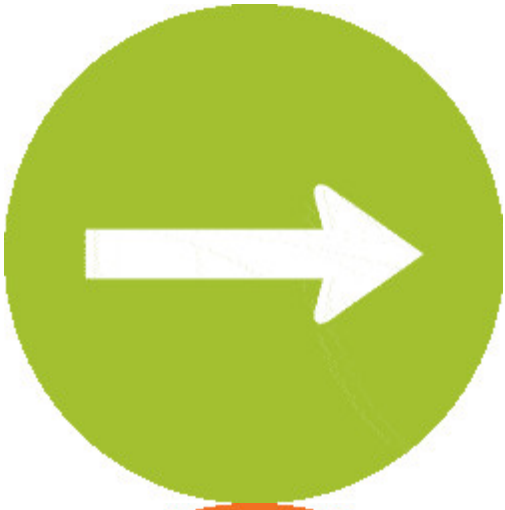
9Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my grandfather Abraham, and God
of my father, Isaac—O LORD, you told me, ‘Return to your own
land and to your relatives.’ And you promised me, ‘I will treat you
kindly.’ 10I am not worthy of all the unfailing love and faithfulness
you have shown to me, your servant. When I left home and crossed
the Jordan River, I owned nothing except a walking stick. Now my
household fills two large camps! 11O LORD, please rescue me from
the hand of my brother, Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to
attack me, along with my wives and children. 12But you promised
me, ‘I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your
descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the
seashore—too many to count.’”

13Jacob stayed where he was for the night. Then he selected these
gifts from his possessions to present to his brother, Esau: 14200
female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 1530 female camels
with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10
male donkeys. 16He divided these animals into herds and assigned
each to different servants. Then he told his servants, “Go ahead of
me with the animals, but keep some distance between the herds.”

17He gave these instructions to the men leading the first group:
“When my brother, Esau, meets you, he will ask, ‘Whose servants
are you? Where are you going? Who owns these animals?’ 18You
must reply, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob, but they are a gift
for his master Esau. Look, he is coming right behind us.’”

19Jacob gave the same instructions to the second and third
herdsmen and to all who followed behind the herds: “You must say
the same thing to Esau when you meet him. 20And be sure to say,
‘Look, your servant Jacob is right behind us.’”

Jacob thought, “I will try to appease him by sending gifts ahead of
me. When I see him in person, perhaps he will be friendly to me.”
21So the gifts were sent on ahead, while Jacob himself spent that
night in the camp.



FACING GOD GENESIS 32:22-32

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

22During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two
servant wives, and his eleven sons and crossed the Jabbok River
with them. 23After taking them to the other side, he sent over all his
possessions.

24This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a man came and
wrestled with him until the dawn began to break. 25When the man
saw that he would not win the match, he touched Jacob's hip and
wrenched it out of its socket. 26Then the man said, "Let me go, for
the dawn is breaking!"

But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

27"What is your name?" the man asked.

He replied, "Jacob."

28"Your name will no longer be Jacob," the man told him. "From
now on you will be called Israel,* because you have fought with
God and with men and have won."

29"Please tell me your name," Jacob said.

"Why do you want to know my name?" the man replied. Then he
blessed Jacob there.

30Jacob named the place Peniel (which means "face of God"), for he
said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared."
31The sun was rising as Jacob left Peniel,* and he was limping
because of the injury to his hip. 32(Even today the people of Israel
don't eat the tendon near the hip socket because of what happened

that night when the man strained the tendon of Jacob's hip.)

Genesis 33

JACOB AND ESAU MAKE PEACE

1Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his 400 men. So
he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and his two servant
wives. 2He put the servant wives and their children at the front,
Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3Then
Jacob went on ahead. As he approached his brother, he bowed to
the ground seven times before him. 4Then Esau ran to meet him and
embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him.
And they both wept.

5Then Esau looked at the women and children and asked, "Who are
these people with you?"

"These are the children God has graciously given to me, your
servant," Jacob replied. 6Then the servant wives came forward with
their children and bowed before him. 7Next came Leah with her
children, and they bowed before him. Finally, Joseph and Rachel
came forward and bowed before him.

8“And what were all the flocks and herds I met as I came?” Esau asked.

Jacob replied, “They are a gift, my lord, to ensure your friendship.”

9“My brother, I have plenty,” Esau answered. “Keep what you have for yourself.”

10But Jacob insisted, “No, if I have found favor with you, please accept this gift from me. And what a relief to see your friendly smile. It is like seeing the face of God! 11Please take this gift I have brought you, for God has been very gracious to me. I have more than enough.” And because Jacob insisted, Esau finally accepted the gift.

12“Well,” Esau said, “let’s be going. I will lead the way.”

13But Jacob replied, “You can see, my lord, that some of the children are very young, and the flocks and herds have their young, too. If they are driven too hard, even for one day, all the animals could die. 14Please, my lord, go ahead of your servant. We will follow slowly, at a pace that is comfortable for the livestock and the children. I will meet you at Seir.”

15“All right,” Esau said, “but at least let me assign some of my men to guide and protect you.”

Jacob responded, “That’s not necessary. It’s enough that you’ve received me warmly, my lord!”

16So Esau turned around and started back to Seir that same day. 17Jacob, on the other hand, traveled on to Succoth. There he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place was named Succoth (which means “shelters”).

18Later, having traveled all the way from Paddan-aram, Jacob
arrived safely at the town of Shechem, in the land of Canaan. There
he set up camp outside the town. 19Jacob bought the plot of land
where he camped from the family of Hamor, the father of Shechem,
for 100 pieces of silver.*20And there he built an altar and named it
El-Elohe-Israel.*

SHECHEM

Genesis 34

REVENGE AGAINST SHECHEM

1One day Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, went to visit some
of the young women who lived in the area. 2But when the local
prince, Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, saw Dinah, he seized her
and raped her. 3But then he fell in love with her, and he tried to win
her affection with tender words. 4He said to his father, Hamor, “Get
me this young girl. I want to marry her.”

5Soon Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter, Dinah.
But since his sons were out in the fields herding his livestock, he
said nothing until they returned. 6Hamor, Shechem’s father, came to
discuss the matter with Jacob. 7Meanwhile, Jacob’s sons had come
in from the field as soon as they heard what had happened. They

were shocked and furious that their sister had been raped. Shechem had done a disgraceful thing against Jacob's family,* something that should never be done.

8Hamor tried to speak with Jacob and his sons. "My son Shechem is truly in love with your daughter," he said. "Please let him marry her. 9In fact, let's arrange other marriages, too. You give us your daughters for our sons, and we will give you our daughters for your sons. 10And you may live among us; the land is open to you! Settle here and trade with us. And feel free to buy property in the area."

11Then Shechem himself spoke to Dinah's father and brothers. "Please be kind to me, and let me marry her," he begged. "I will give you whatever you ask. 12No matter what dowry or gift you demand, I will gladly pay it—just give me the girl as my wife."

13But since Shechem had defiled their sister, Dinah, Jacob's sons responded deceitfully to Shechem and his father, Hamor. 14They said to them, "We couldn't possibly allow this, because you're not circumcised. It would be a disgrace for our sister to marry a man like you! 15But here is a solution. If every man among you will be circumcised like we are, 16then we will give you our daughters, and we'll take your daughters for ourselves. We will live among you and become one people. 17But if you don't agree to be circumcised, we will take her and be on our way."

18Hamor and his son Shechem agreed to their proposal. 19Shechem wasted no time in acting on this request, for he wanted Jacob's daughter desperately. Shechem was a highly respected member of his family, 20and he went with his father, Hamor, to present this proposal to the leaders at the town gate.

21"These men are our friends," they said. "Let's invite them to live here among us and trade freely. Look, the land is large enough to hold them. We can take their daughters as wives and let them marry ours. 22But they will consider staying here and becoming one people with us only if all of our men are circumcised, just as they

are. 23But if we do this, all their livestock and possessions will
eventually be ours. Come, let's agree to their terms and let them
settle here among us."

24So all the men in the town council agreed with Hamor and
Shechem, and every male in the town was circumcised. 25But three
days later, when their wounds were still sore, two of Jacob's sons,
Simeon and Levi, who were Dinah's full brothers, took their swords
and entered the town without opposition. Then they slaughtered
every male there, 26including Hamor and his son Shechem. They
killed them with their swords, then took Dinah from Shechem's
house and returned to their camp.

27Meanwhile, the rest of Jacob's sons arrived. Finding the men
slaughtered, they plundered the town because their sister had been
defiled there. 28They seized all the flocks and herds and donkeys—
everything they could lay their hands on, both inside the town and
outside in the fields. 29They looted all their wealth and plundered
their houses. They also took all their little children and wives and
led them away as captives.

30Afterward Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have ruined me!
You've made me stink among all the people of this land—among all
the Canaanites and Perizzites. We are so few that they will join
forces and crush us. I will be ruined, and my entire household will
be wiped out!"

31"But why should we let him treat our sister like a prostitute?"
they retorted angrily.

Genesis 35

JACOB'S RETURN TO BETHEL

1Then God said to Jacob, "Get ready and move to Bethel and settle
there. Build an altar there to the God who appeared to you when

you fled from your brother, Esau.”

2So Jacob told everyone in his household, “Get rid of all your pagan
idols, purify yourselves, and put on clean clothing. 3We are now
going to Bethel, where I will build an altar to the God who
answered my prayers when I was in distress. He has been with me
wherever I have gone.”

4So they gave Jacob all their pagan idols and earrings, and he
buried them under the great tree near Shechem. 5As they set out, a
terror from God spread over the people in all the towns of that area,
so no one attacked Jacob’s family.

6Eventually, Jacob and his household arrived at Luz (also called
Bethel) in Canaan. 7Jacob built an altar there and named the place
El-bethel (which means “God of Bethel”), because God had
appeared to him there when he was fleeing from his brother, Esau.

8Soon after this, Rebekah’s old nurse, Deborah, died. She was
buried beneath the oak tree in the valley below Bethel. Ever since,
the tree has been called Allon-bacuth (which means “oak of
weeping”).

9Now that Jacob had returned from Paddan-aram, God appeared to
him again at Bethel. God blessed him, 10saying, “Your name is
Jacob, but you will not be called Jacob any longer. From now on
your name will be Israel.”* So God renamed him Israel.

11Then God said, “I am El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty.’ Be fruitful and
multiply. You will become a great nation, even many nations. Kings
will be among your descendants! 12And I will give you the land I
once gave to Abraham and Isaac. Yes, I will give it to you and your
descendants after you.” 13Then God went up from the place where
he had spoken to Jacob.

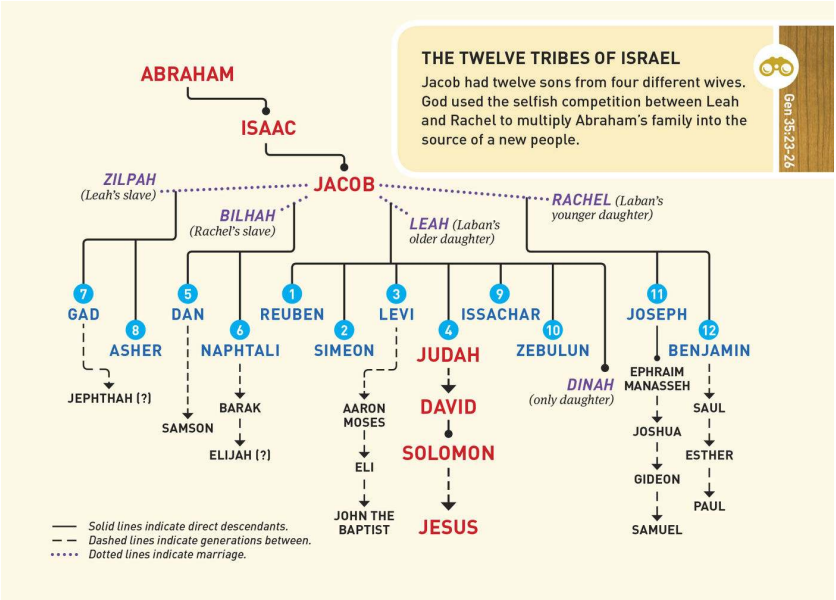
14Jacob set up a stone pillar to mark the place where God had
spoken to him. Then he poured wine over it as an offering to God
and anointed the pillar with olive oil. 15And Jacob named the place
Bethel (which means “house of God”), because God had spoken to
him there.

THE DEATHS OF RACHEL AND ISAAC

16Leaving Bethel, Jacob and his clan moved on toward Ephrath. But
Rachel went into labor while they were still some distance away.
Her labor pains were intense. 17After a very hard delivery, the
midwife finally exclaimed, “Don’t be afraid—you have another
son!” 18Rachel was about to die, but with her last breath she named
the baby Ben-oni (which means “son of my sorrow”). The baby’s
father, however, called him Benjamin (which means “son of my
right hand”). 19So Rachel died and was buried on the way to
Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). 20Jacob set up a stone monument over
Rachel’s grave, and it can be seen there to this day.

21Then Jacob* traveled on and camped beyond Migdal-eder. 22While
he was living there, Reuben had intercourse with Bilhah, his
father’s concubine, and Jacob soon heard about it.

These are the names of the twelve sons of Jacob:



THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

23The sons of Leah were Reuben (Jacob's oldest son), Simeon, Levi,
Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

24The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

25The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant, were Dan and Naphtali.

26The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant, were Gad and Asher.

These are the names of the sons who were born to Jacob at Paddan-
aram.

27So Jacob returned to his father, Isaac, in Mamre, which is near
Kiriath-arba (now called Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had
both lived as foreigners. 28Isaac lived for 180 years. 29Then he
breathed his last and died at a ripe old age, joining his ancestors in

death. And his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.

Genesis 36

DESCENDANTS OF ESAU

1This is the account of the descendants of Esau (also known as
Edom). 2Esau married two young women from Canaan: Adah, the
daughter of Elon the Hittite; and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah
and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite. 3He also married his cousin
Basemath, who was the daughter of Ishmael and the sister of
Nebaioth. 4Adah gave birth to a son named Eliphaz for Esau.
Basemath gave birth to a son named Reuel. 5Oholibamah gave birth
to sons named Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. All these sons were born to
Esau in the land of Canaan.

6Esau took his wives, his children, and his entire household, along
with his livestock and cattle—all the wealth he had acquired in the
land of Canaan—and moved away from his brother, Jacob. 7There
was not enough land to support them both because of all the
livestock and possessions they had acquired. 8So Esau (also known
as Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir.

9This is the account of Esau's descendants, the Edomites, who lived
in the hill country of Seir.

10These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife
Adah; and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath.

11The descendants of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam,
and Kenaz. 12Timna, the concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz, gave birth
to a son named Amalek. These are the descendants of Esau's wife
Adah.

13The descendants of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and

Mizzah. These are the descendants of Esau's wife Basemath.

14Esau also had sons through Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah
and granddaughter of Zibeon. Their names were Jeush, Jalam, and
Korah.

15These are the descendants of Esau who became the leaders of
various clans: The descendants of Esau's oldest son, Eliphaz, became
the leaders of the clans of Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, 16Korah,
Gatam, and Amalek. These are the clan leaders in the land of Edom
who descended from Eliphaz. All these were descendants of Esau's
wife Adah.

17The descendants of Esau's son Reuel became the leaders of the
clans of Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These are the clan
leaders in the land of Edom who descended from Reuel. All these
were descendants of Esau's wife Basemath.

18The descendants of Esau and his wife Oholibamah became the
leaders of the clans of Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the clan
leaders who descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter
of Anah.

19These are the clans descended from Esau (also known as Edom),
identified by their clan leaders.

ORIGINAL PEOPLES OF EDOM

20These are the names of the tribes that descended from Seir the
Horite. They lived in the land of Edom: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon,
Anah, 21Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the Horite clan
leaders, the descendants of Seir, who lived in the land of Edom.

22The descendants of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. Lotan's sister
was named Timna.

23The descendants of Shobal were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho,
and Onam.

24The descendants of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah. (This is the Anah
who discovered the hot springs in the wilderness while he was
grazing his father's donkeys.)

25The descendants of Anah were his son, Dishon, and his daughter,
Oholibamah.

26The descendants of Dishon* were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and
Keran.

27The descendants of Ezer were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

28The descendants of Dishan were Uz and Aran.

29So these were the leaders of the Horite clans: Lotan, Shobal,
Zibeon, Anah, 30Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. The Horite clans are
named after their clan leaders, who lived in the land of Seir.

RULERS OF EDOM

31These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before any
king ruled over the Israelites*:

32Bela son of Beor, who ruled in Edom from his city of Dinhabah.

33When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became king in
his place.

34When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites
became king in his place.

35When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became king in his place
and ruled from the city of Avith. He was the one who defeated the
Midianites in the land of Moab.

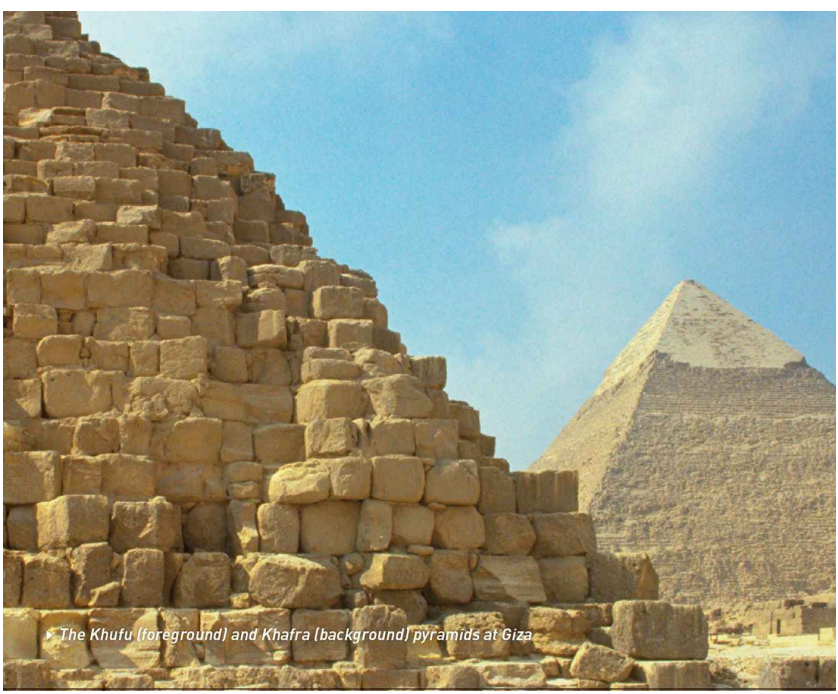
36When Hadad died, Samlah from the city of Masrekah became king
in his place.

37When Samlah died, Shaul from the city of Rehoboth-on-the-River
became king in his place.

38When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Acbor became king in his
place.

39When Baal-hanan son of Acbor died, Hadad* became king in his
place and ruled from the city of Pau. His wife was Mehetabel, the
daughter of Matred and granddaughter of Me-zahab.

40These are the names of the leaders of the clans descended from
Esau, who lived in the places named for them: Timna, Alvah,
Jetheth, 41Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, 42Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,
43Magdiel, and Iram. These are the leaders of the clans of Edom,
listed according to their settlements in the land they occupied. They
all descended from Esau, the ancestor of the Edomites.



The Khufu (foreground) and Khafra (background) pyramids at Giza

EGYPT

Genesis 37

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

1So Jacob settled again in the land of Canaan, where his father had
lived as a foreigner.

2This is the account of Jacob and his family. When Joseph was
seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks. He worked
for his half brothers, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and
Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his
brothers were doing.

3Jacob* loved Joseph more than any of his other children because
Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a
special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe.*4But his brothers
hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of
them. They couldn't say a kind word to him.

5One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers
about it, they hated him more than ever. 6"Listen to this dream," he
said. 7"We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly
my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and
bowed low before mine!"

8His brothers responded, "So you think you will be our king, do
you? Do you actually think you will reign over us?" And they hated
him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about
them.

9Soon Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers
about it. "Listen, I have had another dream," he said. "The sun,
moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!"

10This time he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers,
but his father scolded him. “What kind of dream is that?” he asked.
“Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow
to the ground before you?” 11But while his brothers were jealous of
Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant.

12Soon after this, Joseph’s brothers went to pasture their father’s
flocks at Shechem. 13When they had been gone for some time, Jacob
said to Joseph, “Your brothers are pasturing the sheep at Shechem.
Get ready, and I will send you to them.”

“I’m ready to go,” Joseph replied.

14“Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are getting along,”
Jacob said. “Then come back and bring me a report.” So Jacob sent
him on his way, and Joseph traveled to Shechem from their home
in the valley of Hebron.

15When he arrived there, a man from the area noticed him
wandering around the countryside. “What are you looking for?” he
asked.

16“I’m looking for my brothers,” Joseph replied. “Do you know
where they are pasturing their sheep?”

17“Yes,” the man told him. “They have moved on from here, but I
heard them say, ‘Let’s go on to Dothan.’” So Joseph followed his
brothers to Dothan and found them there.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO SLAVERY

18When Joseph’s brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in
the distance. As he approached, they made plans to kill him.
19“Here comes the dreamer!” they said. 20“Come on, let’s kill him
and throw him into one of these cisterns. We can tell our father, ‘A
wild animal has eaten him.’ Then we’ll see what becomes of his

dreams!”

21But when Reuben heard of their scheme, he came to Joseph’s
rescue. “Let’s not kill him,” he said. 22“Why should we shed any
blood? Let’s just throw him into this empty cistern here in the
wilderness. Then he’ll die without our laying a hand on him.”
Reuben was secretly planning to rescue Joseph and return him to
his father.

23So when Joseph arrived, his brothers ripped off the beautiful robe
he was wearing. 24Then they grabbed him and threw him into the
cistern. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it.
25Then, just as they were sitting down to eat, they looked up and
saw a caravan of camels in the distance coming toward them. It was
a group of Ishmaelite traders taking a load of gum, balm, and
aromatic resin from Gilead down to Egypt.

26Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain by killing our
brother? We’d have to cover up the crime.*27Instead of hurting him,
let’s sell him to those Ishmaelite traders. After all, he is our brother
—our own flesh and blood!” And his brothers agreed. 28So when the
Ishmaelites, who were Midianite traders, came by, Joseph’s brothers
pulled him out of the cistern and sold him to them for twenty
pieces* of silver. And the traders took him to Egypt.

29Some time later, Reuben returned to get Joseph out of the cistern.
When he discovered that Joseph was missing, he tore his clothes in
grief. 30Then he went back to his brothers and lamented, “The boy
is gone! What will I do now?”

31Then the brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph’s robe in
its blood. 32They sent the beautiful robe to their father with this
message: “Look at what we found. Doesn’t this robe belong to your
son?”

33 Their father recognized it immediately. “Yes,” he said, “it is my
son’s robe. A wild animal must have eaten him. Joseph has clearly
been torn to pieces!” 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes and dressed
himself in burlap. He mourned deeply for his son for a long time.
35 His family all tried to comfort him, but he refused to be
comforted. “I will go to my grave* mourning for my son,” he would
say, and then he would weep.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianite traders* arrived in Egypt, where they
sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.
Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

JESUS' FAMILY GENESIS 38:1-30

Genesis 38

JUDAH AND TAMAR

1About this time, Judah left home and moved to Adullam, where he
stayed with a man named Hirah. 2There he saw a Canaanite woman,
the daughter of Shua, and he married her. When he slept with her,
3she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and he named the
boy Er. 4Then she became pregnant again and gave birth to another
son, and she named him Onan. 5And when she gave birth to a third
son, she named him Shelah. At the time of Shelah's birth, they were

living at Kezib.

6In the course of time, Judah arranged for his firstborn son, Er, to
marry a young woman named Tamar. 7But Er was a wicked man in
the LORD's sight, so the LORD took his life. 8Then Judah said to Er's
brother Onan, "Go and marry Tamar, as our law requires of the
brother of a man who has died. You must produce an heir for your
brother."

9But Onan was not willing to have a child who would not be his
own heir. So whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife,
he spilled the semen on the ground. This prevented her from having
a child who would belong to his brother. 10But the LORD considered
it evil for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the LORD
took Onan's life, too.

11Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Go back to your
parents' home and remain a widow until my son Shelah is old
enough to marry you." (But Judah didn't really intend to do this
because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers.)
So Tamar went back to live in her father's home.

12Some years later Judah's wife died. After the time of mourning
was over, Judah and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went up to
Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep. 13Someone told
Tamar, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his
sheep."

14Tamar was aware that Shelah had grown up, but no arrangements
had been made for her to come and marry him. So she changed out
of her widow's clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise
herself. Then she sat beside the road at the entrance to the village
of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. 15Judah noticed her and
thought she was a prostitute, since she had covered her face. 16So he
stopped and propositioned her. "Let me have sex with you," he said,
not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law.

“How much will you pay to have sex with me?” Tamar asked.

17“I’ll send you a young goat from my flock,” Judah promised.

“But what will you give me to guarantee that you will send the goat?” she asked.

18“What kind of guarantee do you want?” he replied.

She answered, “Leave me your identification seal and its cord and the walking stick you are carrying.” So Judah gave them to her. Then he had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. 19Afterward she went back home, took off her veil, and put on her widow’s clothing as usual.

20Later Judah asked his friend Hirah the Adullamite to take the young goat to the woman and to pick up the things he had given her as his guarantee. But Hirah couldn’t find her. 21So he asked the men who lived there, “Where can I find the shrine prostitute who was sitting beside the road at the entrance to Enaim?”

“We’ve never had a shrine prostitute here,” they replied.

22So Hirah returned to Judah and told him, “I couldn’t find her anywhere, and the men of the village claim they’ve never had a shrine prostitute there.”

23“Then let her keep the things I gave her,” Judah said. “I sent the young goat as we agreed, but you couldn’t find her. We’d be the laughingstock of the village if we went back again to look for her.”

24About three months later, Judah was told, “Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has acted like a prostitute. And now, because of this, she’s pregnant.”

“Bring her out, and let her be burned!” Judah demanded.

25But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message
to her father-in-law: “The man who owns these things made me
pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and cord and walking stick are
these?”

26Judah recognized them immediately and said, “She is more
righteous than I am, because I didn’t arrange for her to marry my
son Shelah.” And Judah never slept with Tamar again.

27When the time came for Tamar to give birth, it was discovered
that she was carrying twins. 28While she was in labor, one of the
babies reached out his hand. The midwife grabbed it and tied a
scarlet string around the child’s wrist, announcing, “This one came
out first.” 29But then he pulled back his hand, and out came his
brother! “What!” the midwife exclaimed. “How did you break out
first?” So he was named Perez.*30Then the baby with the scarlet
string on his wrist was born, and he was named Zerah.*

Genesis 39

JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE

1When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

2The LORD was with Joseph, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. 3Potiphar noticed this and realized that the LORD was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. 4This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. 5From the day Joseph was put in charge of his master's household and property, the LORD began to bless Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs ran smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. 6So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!

Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, 7and Potiphar's wife soon began to look at him lustfully. "Come and

sleep with me," she demanded.

8But Joseph refused. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with
everything in his entire household. 9No one here has more authority
than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because
you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a
great sin against God."

10She kept putting pressure on Joseph day after day, but he refused
to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible.
11One day, however, no one else was around when he went in to do
his work. 12She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding,
"Come on, sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but he left his
cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.

13When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled,
14she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running.
"Look!" she said. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here
to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I
screamed. 15When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got
away, but he left his cloak behind with me."

16She kept the cloak with her until her husband came home. 17Then
she told him her story. "That Hebrew slave you've brought into our
house tried to come in and fool around with me," she said. 18"But
when I screamed, he ran outside, leaving his cloak with me!"

JOSEPH PUT IN PRISON

19Potiphar was furious when he heard his wife's story about how
Joseph had treated her. 20So he took Joseph and threw him into the
prison where the king's prisoners were held, and there he remained.
21But the LORD was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his
faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison
warden. 22Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the
other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison.
23The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of

everything. The LORD was with him and caused everything he did to succeed.

VISIONS GENESIS 40:1–41:36

Genesis 40

JOSEPH INTERPRETS TWO DREAMS

1Some time later, Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker
offended their royal master. 2Pharaoh became angry with these two
officials, 3and he put them in the prison where Joseph was, in the
palace of the captain of the guard. 4They remained in prison for
quite some time, and the captain of the guard assigned them to
Joseph, who looked after them.

5While they were in prison, Pharaoh's cup-bearer and baker each
had a dream one night, and each dream had its own meaning.
6When Joseph saw them the next morning, he noticed that they

both looked upset. 7"Why do you look so worried today?" he asked them.

8And they replied, "We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean."

"Interpreting dreams is God's business," Joseph replied. "Go ahead and tell me your dreams."

9So the chief cup-bearer told Joseph his dream first. "In my dream," he said, "I saw a grapevine in front of me. 10The vine had three branches that began to bud and blossom, and soon it produced clusters of ripe grapes. 11I was holding Pharaoh's wine cup in my hand, so I took a cluster of grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

12"This is what the dream means," Joseph said. "The three branches represent three days. 13Within three days Pharaoh will lift you up and restore you to your position as his chief cup-bearer. 14And please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place. 15For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in prison, but I did nothing to deserve it."

16When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given the first dream such a positive interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I had a dream, too. In my dream there were three baskets of white pastries stacked on my head. 17The top basket contained all kinds of pastries for Pharaoh, but the birds came and ate them from the basket on my head."

18"This is what the dream means," Joseph told him. "The three baskets also represent three days. 19Three days from now Pharaoh will lift you up and impale your body on a pole. Then birds will come and peck away at your flesh."

20 Pharaoh's birthday came three days later, and he prepared a
banquet for all his officials and staff. He summoned* his chief cup-
bearer and chief baker to join the other officials. 21 He then restored
the chief cup-bearer to his former position, so he could again hand
Pharaoh his cup. 22 But Pharaoh impaled the chief baker, just as
Joseph had predicted when he interpreted his dream. 23 Pharaoh's
chief cup-bearer, however, forgot all about Joseph, never giving
him another thought.

Genesis 41

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

1Two full years later, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing on the
bank of the Nile River. 2In his dream he saw seven fat, healthy cows
come up out of the river and begin grazing in the marsh grass.
3Then he saw seven more cows come up behind them from the Nile,
but these were scrawny and thin. These cows stood beside the fat
cows on the riverbank. 4Then the scrawny, thin cows ate the seven
healthy, fat cows! At this point in the dream, Pharaoh woke up.

5But he fell asleep again and had a second dream. This time he saw
seven heads of grain, plump and beautiful, growing on a single
stalk. 6Then seven more heads of grain appeared, but these were
shriveled and withered by the east wind. 7And these thin heads
swallowed up the seven plump, well-formed heads! Then Pharaoh
woke up again and realized it was a dream.

8The next morning Pharaoh was very disturbed by the dreams. So
he called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. When
Pharaoh told them his dreams, not one of them could tell him what

they meant.

9Finally, the king's chief cup-bearer spoke up. "Today I have been
reminded of my failure," he told Pharaoh. 10"Some time ago, you
were angry with the chief baker and me, and you imprisoned us in
the palace of the captain of the guard. 11One night the chief baker
and I each had a dream, and each dream had its own meaning.
12There was a young Hebrew man with us in the prison who was a
slave of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he
told us what each of our dreams meant. 13And everything happened
just as he had predicted. I was restored to my position as cup-
bearer, and the chief baker was executed and impaled on a pole."

14Pharaoh sent for Joseph at once, and he was quickly brought from
the prison. After he shaved and changed his clothes, he went in and
stood before Pharaoh. 15Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a
dream last night, and no one here can tell me what it means. But I
have heard that when you hear about a dream you can interpret it."

16"It is beyond my power to do this," Joseph replied. "But God can
tell you what it means and set you at ease."

17So Pharaoh told Joseph his dream. "In my dream," he said, "I was
standing on the bank of the Nile River, 18and I saw seven fat,
healthy cows come up out of the river and begin grazing in the
marsh grass. 19But then I saw seven sick-looking cows, scrawny and
thin, come up after them. I've never seen such sorry-looking
animals in all the land of Egypt. 20These thin, scrawny cows ate the
seven fat cows. 21But afterward you wouldn't have known it, for
they were still as thin and scrawny as before! Then I woke up.

22"In my dream I also saw seven heads of grain, full and beautiful,
growing on a single stalk. 23Then seven more heads of grain
appeared, but these were blighted, shriveled, and withered by the
east wind. 24And the shriveled heads swallowed the seven healthy
heads. I told these dreams to the magicians, but no one could tell
me what they mean."

25Joseph responded, “Both of Pharaoh’s dreams mean the same
thing. God is telling Pharaoh in advance what he is about to do.
26The seven healthy cows and the seven healthy heads of grain both
represent seven years of prosperity. 27The seven thin, scrawny cows
that came up later and the seven thin heads of grain, withered by
the east wind, represent seven years of famine.

28“This will happen just as I have described it, for God has revealed
to Pharaoh in advance what he is about to do. 29The next seven
years will be a period of great prosperity throughout the land of
Egypt. 30But afterward there will be seven years of famine so great
that all the prosperity will be forgotten in Egypt. Famine will
destroy the land. 31This famine will be so severe that even the
memory of the good years will be erased. 32As for having two
similar dreams, it means that these events have been decreed by
God, and he will soon make them happen.

33“Therefore, Pharaoh should find an intelligent and wise man and
put him in charge of the entire land of Egypt. 34Then Pharaoh
should appoint supervisors over the land and let them collect one-
fifth of all the crops during the seven good years. 35Have them
gather all the food produced in the good years that are just ahead
and bring it to Pharaoh’s storehouses. Store it away, and guard it so
there will be food in the cities. 36That way there will be enough to
eat when the seven years of famine come to the land of Egypt.
Otherwise this famine will destroy the land.”

JOSEPH MADE RULER OF EGYPT

37Joseph’s suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his
officials. 38So Pharaoh asked his officials, “Can we find anyone else
like this man so obviously filled with the spirit of God?” 39Then
Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has revealed the meaning of the
dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you
are. 40You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take
orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank
higher than yours.”

41Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the entire
land of Egypt.” 42Then Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his
hand and placed it on Joseph’s finger. He dressed him in fine linen
clothing and hung a gold chain around his neck. 43Then he had
Joseph ride in the chariot reserved for his second-in-command. And
wherever Joseph went, the command was shouted, “Kneel down!”
So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all Egypt. 44And Pharaoh said to
him, “I am Pharaoh, but no one will lift a hand or foot in the entire
land of Egypt without your approval.”

45Then Pharaoh gave Joseph a new Egyptian name, Zaphenath-
paneah.* He also gave him a wife, whose name was Asenath. She
was the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On.* So Joseph took
charge of the entire land of Egypt. 46He was thirty years old when
he began serving in the court of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. And
when Joseph left Pharaoh’s presence, he inspected the entire land of
Egypt.

47As predicted, for seven years the land produced bumper crops.
48During those years, Joseph gathered all the crops grown in Egypt
and stored the grain from the surrounding fields in the cities. 49He
piled up huge amounts of grain like sand on the seashore. Finally,
he stopped keeping records because there was too much to measure.

50During this time, before the first of the famine years, two sons
were born to Joseph and his wife, Asenath, the daughter of
Potiphera, the priest of On. 51Joseph named his older son
Manasseh,* for he said, “God has made me forget all my troubles
and everyone in my father’s family.” 52Joseph named his second son
Ephraim,* for he said, “God has made me fruitful in this land of my
grief.”

53At last the seven years of bumper crops throughout the land of
Egypt came to an end. 54Then the seven years of famine began, just
as Joseph had predicted. The famine also struck all the surrounding

countries, but throughout Egypt there was plenty of food.
55Eventually, however, the famine spread throughout the land of
Egypt as well. And when the people cried out to Pharaoh for food,
he told them, “Go to Joseph, and do whatever he tells you.” 56So
with severe famine everywhere, Joseph opened up the storehouses
and distributed grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe
throughout the land of Egypt. 57And people from all around came to
Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe
throughout the world.

Genesis 42

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

1When Jacob heard that grain was available in Egypt, he said to his
sons, "Why are you standing around looking at one another? 2I have
heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there, and buy enough grain
to keep us alive. Otherwise we'll die."

3So Joseph's ten older brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain.
4But Jacob wouldn't let Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin, go
with them, for fear some harm might come to him. 5So Jacob's* sons
arrived in Egypt along with others to buy food, for the famine was
in Canaan as well.

6Since Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling
grain to all the people, it was to him that his brothers came. When
they arrived, they bowed before him with their faces to the ground.
7Joseph recognized his brothers instantly, but he pretended to be a
stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where are you from?" he
demanded.

“From the land of Canaan,” they replied. “We have come to buy food.”

8Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they didn’t recognize him. 9And he remembered the dreams he’d had about them many years before. He said to them, “You are spies! You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become.”

10“No, my lord!” they exclaimed. “Your servants have simply come to buy food. 11We are all brothers—members of the same family. We are honest men, sir! We are not spies!”

12“Yes, you are!” Joseph insisted. “You have come to see how vulnerable our land has become.”

13“Sir,” they said, “there are actually twelve of us. We, your servants, are all brothers, sons of a man living in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is back there with our father right now, and one of our brothers is no longer with us.”

14But Joseph insisted, “As I said, you are spies! 15This is how I will test your story. I swear by the life of Pharaoh that you will never leave Egypt unless your youngest brother comes here! 16One of you must go and get your brother. I’ll keep the rest of you here in prison. Then we’ll find out whether or not your story is true. By the life of Pharaoh, if it turns out that you don’t have a younger brother, then I’ll know you are spies.”

17So Joseph put them all in prison for three days. 18On the third day Joseph said to them, “I am a God-fearing man. If you do as I say, you will live. 19If you really are honest men, choose one of your brothers to remain in prison. The rest of you may go home with grain for your starving families. 20But you must bring your youngest brother back to me. This will prove that you are telling the truth, and you will not die.” To this they agreed.

21Speaking among themselves, they said, “Clearly we are being
punished because of what we did to Joseph long ago. We saw his
anguish when he pleaded for his life, but we wouldn’t listen. That’s
why we’re in this trouble.”

22“Didn’t I tell you not to sin against the boy?” Reuben asked. “But
you wouldn’t listen. And now we have to answer for his blood!”

23Of course, they didn’t know that Joseph understood them, for he
had been speaking to them through an interpreter. 24Now he turned
away from them and began to weep. When he regained his
composure, he spoke to them again. Then he chose Simeon from
among them and had him tied up right before their eyes.

25Joseph then ordered his servants to fill the men’s sacks with grain,
but he also gave secret instructions to return each brother’s
payment at the top of his sack. He also gave them supplies for their
journey home. 26So the brothers loaded their donkeys with the grain
and headed for home.

27But when they stopped for the night and one of them opened his
sack to get grain for his donkey, he found his money in the top of
his sack. 28“Look!” he exclaimed to his brothers. “My money has
been returned; it’s here in my sack!” Then their hearts sank.
Trembling, they said to each other, “What has God done to us?”

29When the brothers came to their father, Jacob, in the land of
Canaan, they told him everything that had happened to them.
30“The man who is governor of the land spoke very harshly to us,”
they told him. “He accused us of being spies scouting the land. 31But
we said, ‘We are honest men, not spies. 32We are twelve brothers,
sons of one father. One brother is no longer with us, and the
youngest is at home with our father in the land of Canaan.’

33“Then the man who is governor of the land told us, ‘This is how I
will find out if you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers here

with me, and take grain for your starving families and go on home.
34But you must bring your youngest brother back to me. Then I will
know you are honest men and not spies. Then I will give you back
your brother, and you may trade freely in the land.'"

35As they emptied out their sacks, there in each man's sack was the
bag of money he had paid for the grain! The brothers and their
father were terrified when they saw the bags of money. 36Jacob
exclaimed, "You are robbing me of my children! Joseph is gone!
Simeon is gone! And now you want to take Benjamin, too.
Everything is going against me!"

37Then Reuben said to his father, "You may kill my two sons if I
don't bring Benjamin back to you. I'll be responsible for him, and I
promise to bring him back."

38But Jacob replied, "My son will not go down with you. His
brother Joseph is dead, and he is all I have left. If anything should
happen to him on your journey, you would send this grieving,
white-haired man to his grave.*"

Genesis 43

THE BROTHERS RETURN TO EGYPT

1But the famine continued to ravage the land of Canaan. 2When the
grain they had brought from Egypt was almost gone, Jacob said to
his sons, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

3But Judah said, “The man was serious when he warned us, ‘You
won’t see my face again unless your brother is with you.’ 4If you
send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy more food. 5But if
you don’t let Benjamin go, we won’t go either. Remember, the man
said, ‘You won’t see my face again unless your brother is with you.’”

6“Why were you so cruel to me?” Jacob* moaned. “Why did you tell
him you had another brother?”

7“The man kept asking us questions about our family,” they replied.
“He asked, ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?’
So we answered his questions. How could we know he would say,
‘Bring your brother down here’?”

8Judah said to his father, “Send the boy with me, and we will be on
our way. Otherwise we will all die of starvation—and not only we,
but you and our little ones. 9I personally guarantee his safety. You
may hold me responsible if I don’t bring him back to you. Then let
me bear the blame forever. 10If we hadn’t wasted all this time, we
could have gone and returned twice by now.”

11So their father, Jacob, finally said to them, “If it can’t be avoided,
then at least do this. Pack your bags with the best products of this
land. Take them down to the man as gifts—balm, honey, gum,
aromatic resin, pistachio nuts, and almonds. 12Also take double the
money that was put back in your sacks, as it was probably
someone’s mistake. 13Then take your brother, and go back to the
man. 14May God Almighty* give you mercy as you go before the
man, so that he will release Simeon and let Benjamin return. But if I
must lose my children, so be it.”

15So the men packed Jacob’s gifts and double the money and
headed off with Benjamin. They finally arrived in Egypt and
presented themselves to Joseph. 16When Joseph saw Benjamin with
them, he said to the manager of his household, “These men will eat

with me this noon. Take them inside the palace. Then go slaughter an animal, and prepare a big feast." 17So the man did as Joseph told him and took them into Joseph's palace.

18The brothers were terrified when they saw that they were being taken into Joseph's house. "It's because of the money someone put in our sacks last time we were here," they said. "He plans to pretend that we stole it. Then he will seize us, make us slaves, and take our donkeys."

A FEAST AT JOSEPH'S PALACE

19The brothers approached the manager of Joseph's household and spoke to him at the entrance to the palace. 20"Sir," they said, "we came to Egypt once before to buy food. 21But as we were returning home, we stopped for the night and opened our sacks. Then we discovered that each man's money—the exact amount paid—was in the top of his sack! Here it is; we have brought it back with us. 22We also have additional money to buy more food. We have no idea who put our money in our sacks."

23"Relax. Don't be afraid," the household manager told them. "Your God, the God of your father, must have put this treasure into your sacks. I know I received your payment." Then he released Simeon and brought him out to them.

24The manager then led the men into Joseph's palace. He gave them water to wash their feet and provided food for their donkeys. 25They were told they would be eating there, so they prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon.

26When Joseph came home, they gave him the gifts they had brought him, then bowed low to the ground before him. 27After greeting them, he asked, "How is your father, the old man you spoke about? Is he still alive?"

28“Yes,” they replied. “Our father, your servant, is alive and well.”
And they bowed low again.

29Then Joseph looked at his brother Benjamin, the son of his own
mother. “Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?”
Joseph asked. “May God be gracious to you, my son.” 30Then Joseph
hurried from the room because he was overcome with emotion for
his brother. He went into his private room, where he broke down
and wept. 31After washing his face, he came back out, keeping
himself under control. Then he ordered, “Bring out the food!”

32The waiters served Joseph at his own table, and his brothers were
served at a separate table. The Egyptians who ate with Joseph sat at
their own table, because Egyptians despise Hebrews and refuse to
eat with them. 33Joseph told each of his brothers where to sit, and
to their amazement, he seated them according to age, from oldest to
youngest. 34And Joseph filled their plates with food from his own
table, giving Benjamin five times as much as he gave the others. So
they feasted and drank freely with him.

Genesis 44

JOSEPH'S SILVER CUP

1When his brothers were ready to leave, Joseph gave these
instructions to his palace manager: "Fill each of their sacks with as
much grain as they can carry, and put each man's money back into
his sack. 2Then put my personal silver cup at the top of the youngest
brother's sack, along with the money for his grain." So the manager
did as Joseph instructed him.

3The brothers were up at dawn and were sent on their journey with
their loaded donkeys. 4But when they had gone only a short
distance and were barely out of the city, Joseph said to his palace
manager, "Chase after them and stop them. When you catch up
with them, ask them, 'Why have you repaid my kindness with such
evil? 5Why have you stolen my master's silver cup,* which he uses
to predict the future? What a wicked thing you have done!'"

6When the palace manager caught up with the men, he spoke to
them as he had been instructed.

7“What are you talking about?” the brothers responded. “We are
your servants and would never do such a thing! 8Didn’t we return
the money we found in our sacks? We brought it back all the way
from the land of Canaan. Why would we steal silver or gold from
your master’s house? 9If you find his cup with any one of us, let that
man die. And all the rest of us, my lord, will be your slaves.”

10“That’s fair,” the man replied. “But only the one who stole the cup
will be my slave. The rest of you may go free.”

11They all quickly took their sacks from the backs of their donkeys
and opened them. 12The palace manager searched the brothers’
sacks, from the oldest to the youngest. And the cup was found in
Benjamin’s sack! 13When the brothers saw this, they tore their
clothing in despair. Then they loaded their donkeys again and
returned to the city.

14Joseph was still in his palace when Judah and his brothers
arrived, and they fell to the ground before him. 15“What have you
done?” Joseph demanded. “Don’t you know that a man like me can
predict the future?”

16Judah answered, “Oh, my lord, what can we say to you? How can
we explain this? How can we prove our innocence? God is
punishing us for our sins. My lord, we have all returned to be your
slaves—all of us, not just our brother who had your cup in his
sack.”

17“No,” Joseph said. “I would never do such a thing! Only the man
who stole the cup will be my slave. The rest of you may go back to
your father in peace.”

JUDAH SPEAKS FOR HIS BROTHERS

18Then Judah stepped forward and said, “Please, my lord, let your
servant say just one word to you. Please, do not be angry with me,

even though you are as powerful as Pharaoh himself.

19“My lord, previously you asked us, your servants, ‘Do you have a
father or a brother?’ 20And we responded, ‘Yes, my lord, we have a
father who is an old man, and his youngest son is a child of his old
age. His full brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s
children, and his father loves him very much.’

21“And you said to us, ‘Bring him here so I can see him with my
own eyes.’ 22But we said to you, ‘My lord, the boy cannot leave his
father, for his father would die.’ 23But you told us, ‘Unless your
youngest brother comes with you, you will never see my face
again.’

24“So we returned to your servant, our father, and told him what
you had said. 25Later, when he said, ‘Go back again and buy us
more food,’ 26we replied, ‘We can’t go unless you let our youngest
brother go with us. We’ll never get to see the man’s face unless our
youngest brother is with us.’

27“Then my father said to us, ‘As you know, my wife had two sons,
28and one of them went away and never returned. Doubtless he was
torn to pieces by some wild animal. I have never seen him since.
29Now if you take his brother away from me, and any harm comes
to him, you will send this grieving, white-haired man to his grave.*’

30“And now, my lord, I cannot go back to my father without the
boy. Our father’s life is bound up in the boy’s life. 31If he sees that
the boy is not with us, our father will die. We, your servants, will
indeed be responsible for sending that grieving, white-haired man
to his grave. 32My lord, I guaranteed to my father that I would take
care of the boy. I told him, ‘If I don’t bring him back to you, I will
bear the blame forever.’

33“So please, my lord, let me stay here as a slave instead of the boy,
and let the boy return with his brothers. 34For how can I return to

my father if the boy is not with me? I couldn't bear to see the anguish this would cause my father!"

Genesis 45

JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY

1Joseph could stand it no longer. There were many people in the room, and he said to his attendants, "Out, all of you!" So he was alone with his brothers when he told them who he was. 2Then he broke down and wept. He wept so loudly the Egyptians could hear him, and word of it quickly carried to Pharaoh's palace.

3"I am Joseph!" he said to his brothers. "Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them. 4"Please, come closer," he said to them. So they came closer. And he said again, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt. 5But don't be upset, and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives. 6This famine that has ravaged the land for two years will last five more years, and there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7God has sent me ahead of you to keep you and your

families alive and to preserve many survivors.*8So it was God who sent me here, not you! And he is the one who made me an adviser* to Pharaoh—the manager of his entire palace and the governor of all Egypt.

9"Now hurry back to my father and tell him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me master over all the land of Egypt. So come down to me immediately! 10You can live in the region of Goshen, where you can be near me with all your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and everything you own. 11I will take care of you there, for there are still five years of famine ahead of us. Otherwise you, your household, and all your animals will starve.'"

12Then Joseph added, "Look! You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that I really am Joseph! 13Go tell my father of my honored position here in Egypt. Describe for him everything you have seen, and then bring my father here quickly." 14Weeping with joy, he embraced Benjamin, and Benjamin did the same. 15Then Joseph kissed each of his brothers and wept over them, and after that they began talking freely with him.

PHARAOH INVITES JACOB TO EGYPT

16The news soon reached Pharaoh's palace: "Joseph's brothers have arrived!" Pharaoh and his officials were all delighted to hear this.

17Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'This is what you must do: Load your pack animals, and hurry back to the land of Canaan. 18Then get your father and all of your families, and return here to me. I will give you the very best land in Egypt, and you will eat from the best that the land produces.'"

19Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Take wagons from the land of Egypt to carry your little children and your wives, and bring your father here. 20Don't worry about your personal belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'"

21So the sons of Jacob* did as they were told. Joseph provided them
with wagons, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he gave them
supplies for the journey. 22And he gave each of them new clothes—
but to Benjamin he gave five changes of clothes and 300 pieces* of
silver. 23He also sent his father ten male donkeys loaded with the
finest products of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain
and bread and other supplies he would need on his journey.

24So Joseph sent his brothers off, and as they left, he called after
them, “Don’t quarrel about all this along the way!” 25And they left
Egypt and returned to their father, Jacob, in the land of Canaan.

26“Joseph is still alive!” they told him. “And he is governor of all
the land of Egypt!” Jacob was stunned at the news—he couldn’t
believe it. 27But when they repeated to Jacob everything Joseph had
told them, and when he saw the wagons Joseph had sent to carry
him, their father’s spirits revived.

28Then Jacob exclaimed, “It must be true! My son Joseph is alive! I
must go and see him before I die.”

Genesis 46

JACOB'S JOURNEY TO EGYPT

1So Jacob* set out for Egypt with all his possessions. And when he
came to Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father,
Isaac. 2During the night God spoke to him in a vision. "Jacob!
Jacob!" he called.

"Here I am," Jacob replied.

3"I am God,* the God of your father," the voice said. "Do not be
afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make your family into a
great nation. 4I will go with you down to Egypt, and I will bring you
back again. You will die in Egypt, but Joseph will be with you to
close your eyes."

5So Jacob left Beersheba, and his sons took him to Egypt. They
carried him and their little ones and their wives in the wagons
Pharaoh had provided for them. 6They also took all their livestock
and all the personal belongings they had acquired in the land of

Canaan. So Jacob and his entire family went to Egypt—7sons and grandsons, daughters and granddaughters—all his descendants.

8These are the names of the descendants of Israel—the sons of Jacob—who went to Egypt: Reuben was Jacob's oldest son. 9The sons of Reuben were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

10The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul. (Shaul's mother was a Canaanite woman.)

11The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

12The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (though Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

13The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puah,* Jashub,* and Shimron.

14The sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

15These were the sons of Leah and Jacob who were born in Paddan-aram, in addition to their daughter, Dinah. The number of Jacob's descendants (male and female) through Leah was thirty-three.

16The sons of Gad were Zephon,* Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

17The sons of Asher were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Their sister was Serah. Beriah's sons were Heber and Malkiel.

18These were the sons of Zilpah, the servant given to Leah by her

father, Laban. The number of Jacob's descendants through Zilpah was sixteen.

19The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

20Joseph's sons, born in the land of Egypt, were Manasseh and Ephraim. Their mother was Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On.*

21Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

22These were the sons of Rachel and Jacob. The number of Jacob's descendants through Rachel was fourteen.

23The son of Dan was Hushim.

24The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

25These were the sons of Bilhah, the servant given to Rachel by her father, Laban. The number of Jacob's descendants through Bilhah was seven.

26The total number of Jacob's direct descendants who went with him to Egypt, not counting his sons' wives, was sixty-six. 27In addition, Joseph had two sons* who were born in Egypt. So altogether, there were seventy* members of Jacob's family in the land of Egypt.

JACOB'S FAMILY ARRIVES IN GOSHEN

28As they neared their destination, Jacob sent Judah ahead to meet Joseph and get directions to the region of Goshen. And when they

finally arrived there, 29Joseph prepared his chariot and traveled to
Goshen to meet his father, Jacob. When Joseph arrived, he
embraced his father and wept, holding him for a long time.
30Finally, Jacob said to Joseph, “Now I am ready to die, since I have
seen your face again and know you are still alive.”

31And Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s entire family, “I
will go to Pharaoh and tell him, ‘My brothers and my father’s entire
family have come to me from the land of Canaan. 32These men are
shepherds, and they raise livestock. They have brought with them
their flocks and herds and everything they own.’”

33Then he said, “When Pharaoh calls for you and asks you about
your occupation, 34you must tell him, ‘We, your servants, have
raised livestock all our lives, as our ancestors have always done.’
When you tell him this, he will let you live here in the region of
Goshen, for the Egyptians despise shepherds.”

Genesis 47

JACOB BLESSES PHARAOH

1Then Joseph went to see Pharaoh and told him, “My father and my
brothers have arrived from the land of Canaan. They have come
with all their flocks and herds and possessions, and they are now in
the region of Goshen.”

2Joseph took five of his brothers with him and presented them to
Pharaoh. 3And Pharaoh asked the brothers, “What is your
occupation?”

They replied, “We, your servants, are shepherds, just like our
ancestors. 4We have come to live here in Egypt for a while, for there
is no pasture for our flocks in Canaan. The famine is very severe
there. So please, we request permission to live in the region of
Goshen.”

5Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Now that your father and brothers
have joined you here, 6choose any place in the entire land of Egypt
for them to live. Give them the best land of Egypt. Let them live in
the region of Goshen. And if any of them have special skills, put
them in charge of my livestock, too.”

7Then Joseph brought in his father, Jacob, and presented him to
Pharaoh. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

8“How old are you?” Pharaoh asked him.

9Jacob replied, “I have traveled this earth for 130 hard years. But
my life has been short compared to the lives of my ancestors.”
10Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh again before leaving his court.

11So Joseph assigned the best land of Egypt—the region of Rameses
—to his father and his brothers, and he settled them there, just as
Pharaoh had commanded. 12And Joseph provided food for his father
and his brothers in amounts appropriate to the number of their
dependents, including the smallest children.

JOSEPH’S LEADERSHIP IN THE FAMINE

13Meanwhile, the famine became so severe that all the food was
used up, and people were starving throughout the lands of Egypt
and Canaan. 14By selling grain to the people, Joseph eventually
collected all the money in Egypt and Canaan, and he put the money
in Pharaoh’s treasury. 15When the people of Egypt and Canaan ran
out of money, all the Egyptians came to Joseph. “Our money is
gone!” they cried. “But please give us food, or we will die before
your very eyes!”

16Joseph replied, “Since your money is gone, bring me your
livestock. I will give you food in exchange for your livestock.” 17So
they brought their livestock to Joseph in exchange for food. In
exchange for their horses, flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle,

and donkeys, Joseph provided them with food for another year.

18But that year ended, and the next year they came again and said,
“We cannot hide the truth from you, my lord. Our money is gone,
and all our livestock and cattle are yours. We have nothing left to
give but our bodies and our land. 19Why should we die before your
very eyes? Buy us and our land in exchange for food; we offer our
land and ourselves as slaves for Pharaoh. Just give us grain so we
may live and not die, and so the land does not become empty and
desolate.”

20So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. All the
Egyptians sold him their fields because the famine was so severe,
and soon all the land belonged to Pharaoh. 21As for the people, he
made them all slaves,* from one end of Egypt to the other. 22The
only land he did not buy was the land belonging to the priests. They
received an allotment of food directly from Pharaoh, so they didn’t
need to sell their land.

23Then Joseph said to the people, “Look, today I have bought you
and your land for Pharaoh. I will provide you with seed so you can
plant the fields. 24Then when you harvest it, one-fifth of your crop
will belong to Pharaoh. You may keep the remaining four-fifths as
seed for your fields and as food for you, your households, and your
little ones.”

25“You have saved our lives!” they exclaimed. “May it please you,
my lord, to let us be Pharaoh’s servants.” 26Joseph then issued a
decree still in effect in the land of Egypt, that Pharaoh should
receive one-fifth of all the crops grown on his land. Only the land
belonging to the priests was not given to Pharaoh.

27Meanwhile, the people of Israel settled in the region of Goshen in
Egypt. There they acquired property, and they were fruitful, and
their population grew rapidly. 28Jacob lived for seventeen years
after his arrival in Egypt, so he lived 147 years in all.

29As the time of his death drew near, Jacob* called for his son
Joseph and said to him, “Please do me this favor. Put your hand
under my thigh and swear that you will treat me with unfailing love
by honoring this last request: Do not bury me in Egypt. 30When I
die, please take my body out of Egypt and bury me with my
ancestors.”

So Joseph promised, “I will do as you ask.”

31“Swear that you will do it,” Jacob insisted. So Joseph gave his
oath, and Jacob bowed humbly at the head of his bed.*

Genesis 48

JACOB BLESSES MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM

1One day not long after this, word came to Joseph, “Your father is
failing rapidly.” So Joseph went to visit his father, and he took with
him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

2When Joseph arrived, Jacob was told, “Your son Joseph has come
to see you.” So Jacob* gathered his strength and sat up in his bed.

3Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty* appeared to me at Luz in the
land of Canaan and blessed me. 4He said to me, ‘I will make you

fruitful, and I will multiply your descendants. I will make you a multitude of nations. And I will give this land of Canaan to your descendants* after you as an everlasting possession.'

5"Now I am claiming as my own sons these two boys of yours, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born here in the land of Egypt before I arrived. They will be my sons, just as Reuben and Simeon are. 6But any children born to you in the future will be your own, and they will inherit land within the territories of their brothers Ephraim and Manasseh.

7"Long ago, as I was returning from Paddan-aram,* Rachel died in the land of Canaan. We were still on the way, some distance from Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). So with great sorrow I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath."

8Then Jacob looked over at the two boys. "Are these your sons?" he asked.

9"Yes," Joseph told him, "these are the sons God has given me here in Egypt."

And Jacob said, "Bring them closer to me, so I can bless them."

10Jacob was half blind because of his age and could hardly see. So Joseph brought the boys close to him, and Jacob kissed and embraced them. 11Then Jacob said to Joseph, "I never thought I would see your face again, but now God has let me see your children, too!"

BLESSINGS GENESIS 48:12-22

12Joseph moved the boys, who were at their grandfather's knees,
and he bowed with his face to the ground. 13Then he positioned the
boys in front of Jacob. With his right hand he directed Ephraim
toward Jacob's left hand, and with his left hand he put Manasseh at
Jacob's right hand. 14But Jacob crossed his arms as he reached out
to lay his hands on the boys' heads. He put his right hand on the
head of Ephraim, though he was the younger boy, and his left hand
on the head of Manasseh, though he was the firstborn. 15Then he
blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my
grandfather Abraham and my father, Isaac, walked— the God who
has been my shepherd all my life, to this very day,

16the Angel who has redeemed me from all harm— may he bless
these boys.
May they preserve my name and the names of Abraham and Isaac.
And may their descendants multiply greatly throughout the earth."

17But Joseph was upset when he saw that his father placed his right
hand on Ephraim's head. So Joseph lifted it to move it from
Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18"No, my father," he said.
"This one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head."

19But his father refused. "I know, my son; I know," he replied.
"Manasseh will also become a great people, but his younger brother
will become even greater. And his descendants will become a
multitude of nations."

20So Jacob blessed the boys that day with this blessing: "The people
of Israel will use your names when they give a blessing. They will
say, 'May God make you as prosperous as Ephraim and Manasseh.'"
In this way, Jacob put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

21Then Jacob said to Joseph, "Look, I am about to die, but God will
be with you and will take you back to Canaan, the land of your
ancestors. 22And beyond what I have given your brothers, I am

giving you an extra portion of the land* that I took from the Amorites with my sword and bow."

Genesis 49

JACOB'S LAST WORDS TO HIS SONS

1Then Jacob called together all his sons and said, "Gather around
me, and I will tell you what will happen to each of you in the days
to come.

2"Come and listen, you sons of Jacob; listen to Israel, your father.

3"Reuben, you are my firstborn, my strength, the child of my
vigorous youth.
You are first in rank and first in power.

4But you are as unruly as a flood, and you will be first no longer.
For you went to bed with my wife; you defiled my marriage couch.

5"Simeon and Levi are two of a kind; their weapons are instruments
of violence.

6May I never join in their meetings; may I never be a party to their
plans.
For in their anger they murdered men, and they crippled oxen just
for sport.

7A curse on their anger, for it is fierce; a curse on their wrath, for it
is cruel.
I will scatter them among the descendants of Jacob; I will disperse
them throughout Israel.

THE MESSIAH GENESIS 49:8-12

8 “Judah, your brothers will praise you.
You will grasp your enemies by the neck.
All your relatives will bow before you.

9 Judah, my son, is a young lion that has finished eating its prey.
Like a lion he crouches and lies down; like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from his descendants,*
until the coming of the one to whom it belongs,*
the one whom all nations will honor.

11 He ties his foal to a grapevine, the colt of his donkey to a choice vine.
He washes his clothes in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth are whiter than milk.

13 “Zebulun will settle by the seashore and will be a harbor for ships;
his borders will extend to Sidon.

14 “Issachar is a sturdy donkey, resting between two saddlepacks.*

15 When he sees how good the countryside is and how pleasant the land, he will bend his shoulder to the load and submit himself to hard labor.

16 “Dan will govern his people, like any other tribe in Israel.

17Dan will be a snake beside the road, a poisonous viper along the
path that bites the horse's hooves so its rider is thrown off.

18I trust in you for salvation, O LORD!

19"Gad will be attacked by marauding bands, but he will attack
them when they retreat.

20"Asher will dine on rich foods and produce food fit for kings.

21"Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns.

22"Joseph is the foal of a wild donkey, the foal of a wild donkey at a
spring— one of the wild donkeys on the ridge.*

23Archers attacked him savagely; they shot at him and harassed
him.

24But his bow remained taut, and his arms were strengthened by the
hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the Shepherd, the Rock of
Israel.

25May the God of your father help you; may the Almighty bless you
with the blessings of the heavens above, and blessings of the watery
depths below, and blessings of the breasts and womb.

26May my fatherly blessings on you surpass the blessings of my
ancestors,*
reaching to the heights of the eternal hills.
May these blessings rest on the head of Joseph, who is a prince
among his brothers.

27"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, devouring his enemies in the
morning and dividing his plunder in the evening."

28These are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father
said as he told his sons good-bye. He blessed each one with an
appropriate message.

JACOB'S DEATH AND BURIAL

29Then Jacob instructed them, "Soon I will die and join my
ancestors. Bury me with my father and grandfather in the cave in
the field of Ephron the Hittite. 30This is the cave in the field of
Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, that Abraham bought from
Ephron the Hittite as a permanent burial site. 31There Abraham and
his wife Sarah are buried. There Isaac and his wife, Rebekah, are
buried. And there I buried Leah. 32It is the plot of land and the cave
that my grandfather Abraham bought from the Hittites."

33When Jacob had finished this charge to his sons, he drew his feet
into the bed, breathed his last, and joined his ancestors in death.

FORGIVENESS GENESIS 50:1-21

Genesis 50

1Joseph threw himself on his father and wept over him and kissed
him. 2Then Joseph told the physicians who served him to embalm
his father's body; so Jacob* was embalmed. 3The embalming process
took the usual forty days. And the Egyptians mourned his death for
seventy days.

4When the period of mourning was over, Joseph approached
Pharaoh's advisers and said, "Please do me this favor and speak to
Pharaoh on my behalf. 5Tell him that my father made me swear an
oath. He said to me, 'Listen, I am about to die. Take my body back
to the land of Canaan, and bury me in the tomb I prepared for
myself.' So please allow me to go and bury my father. After his
burial, I will return without delay."

6Pharaoh agreed to Joseph's request. "Go and bury your father, as
he made you promise," he said. 7So Joseph went up to bury his
father. He was accompanied by all of Pharaoh's officials, all the
senior members of Pharaoh's household, and all the senior officers
of Egypt. 8Joseph also took his entire household and his brothers
and their households. But they left their little children and flocks
and herds in the land of Goshen. 9A great number of chariots and
charioteers accompanied Joseph.

10When they arrived at the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan
River, they held a very great and solemn memorial service, with a

seven-day period of mourning for Joseph's father. 11The local residents, the Canaanites, watched them mourning at the threshing floor of Atad. Then they renamed that place (which is near the Jordan) Abel-mizraim,* for they said, "This is a place of deep mourning for these Egyptians."

12So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them. 13They carried his body to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre. This is the cave that Abraham had bought as a permanent burial site from Ephron the Hittite.

JOSEPH REASSURES HIS BROTHERS

14After burying Jacob, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had accompanied him to his father's burial. 15But now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers became fearful. "Now Joseph will show his anger and pay us back for all the wrong we did to him," they said.

16So they sent this message to Joseph: "Before your father died, he instructed us 17to say to you: 'Please forgive your brothers for the great wrong they did to you—for their sin in treating you so cruelly.' So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to forgive our sin." When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept. 18Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before Joseph. "Look, we are your slaves!" they said.

19But Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? 20You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. 21No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children." So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them.

THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

22So Joseph and his brothers and their families continued to live in

Egypt. Joseph lived to the age of 110. 23He lived to see three generations of descendants of his son Ephraim, and he lived to see the birth of the children of Manasseh's son Makir, whom he claimed as his own.*

24"Soon I will die," Joseph told his brothers, "but God will surely come to help you and lead you out of this land of Egypt. He will bring you back to the land he solemnly promised to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

25Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath, and he said, "When God comes to help you and lead you back, you must take my bones with you." 26So Joseph died at the age of 110. The Egyptians embalmed him, and his body was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Exodus

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

WELCOME TO

EXODUS

Exodus has some of the most amazing stories in the Bible: baby Moses rescued from the river, the burning bush, the ten plagues, and the crossing of the Red Sea. God's people have become a large nation, but they are enslaved by the brutal Egyptians. God uses

Moses to miraculously lead the Hebrews out of Egypt and across the sea. When they arrive at Mount Sinai, God gives them the Ten Commandments and the beginnings of his law to guide this newly freed people. Together, these stories show us how God began to separate his people from all other nations, claiming them for himself and then showing them how to worship him and live in his presence. In doing so, he continues to fulfill his plan and his purposes in the world.

3 STOPS

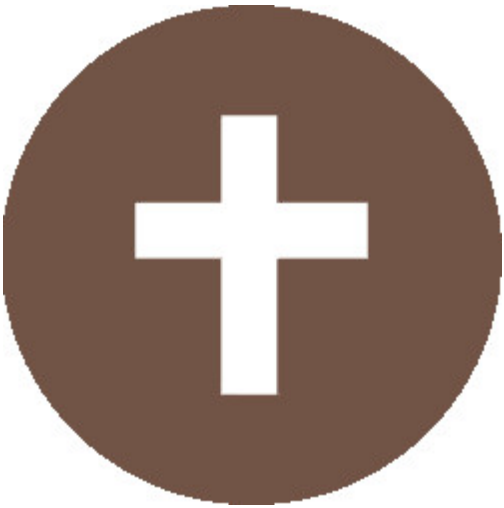
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Three major stories in Exodus show how God frees the Hebrew slaves and selects them to be his holy people. Your next stop is at Exodus 1:8.

11 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: A variety of stories highlights God's plan and purpose for his people. These stories are filled with drama and action that will move you quickly through this part of your journey. Your next stop is at Exodus 1:1.

20 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: As you cover most of Exodus, you'll see God's spectacular power and glory, as well as his love, patience, and forgiveness in dealing with his people. Your next stop is at Exodus 1:1.

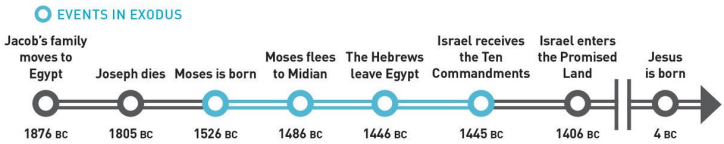


FINDING JESUS IN EXODUS

The entire story of Exodus is about God saving his people—from slavery in Egypt, from Pharaoh's army, and from starvation and thirst in the wilderness. Exodus's theme of salvation points to Jesus, who came to bring salvation to the lost.

Jesus is found throughout Exodus. He is the ultimate Passover Lamb, whose blood was shed to save us from the consequences of disobedience to God. The manna that Israel eats in the wilderness, sustaining them when they have no other food, points to Jesus—the Bread of Life. In Exodus, God's glory descends to live among the people in the newly built Tabernacle, just as Jesus descended into our world and made his home among us. God reveals himself in all

these ways to show his nature to his people and to provide a glimpse of Jesus, the Savior to come.



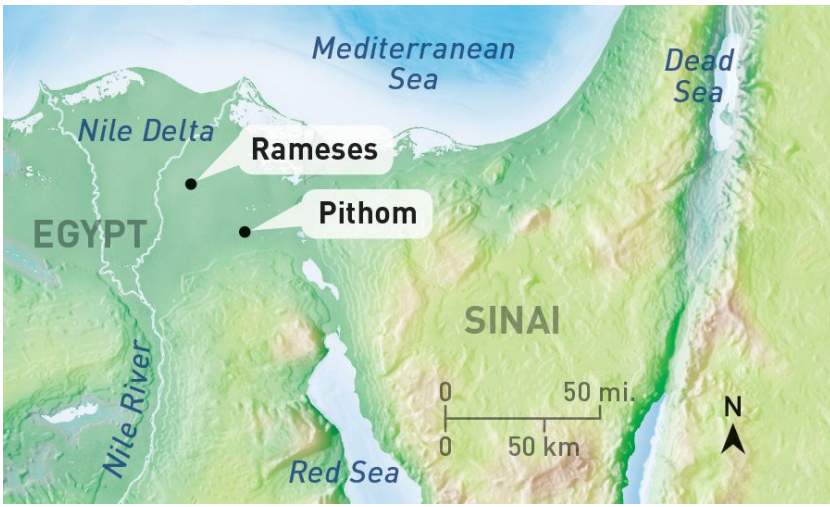
Exodus 1

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

1These are the names of the sons of Israel (that is, Jacob) who
moved to Egypt with their father, each with his family: 2Reuben,
Simeon, Levi, Judah, 3Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, 4Dan, Naphtali,
Gad, and Asher. 5In all, Jacob had seventy* descendants in Egypt,
including Joseph, who was already there.

6In time, Joseph and all of his brothers died, ending that entire
generation. 7But their descendants, the Israelites, had many children
and grandchildren. In fact, they multiplied so greatly that they
became extremely powerful and filled the land.

8Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing
about Joseph or what he had done. 9He said to his people, “Look,
the people of Israel now outnumber us and are stronger than we
are. 10We must make a plan to keep them from growing even more.
If we don’t, and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and
fight against us. Then they will escape from the country.*”



PITHOM AND RAMESES

11So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed
brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with
crushing labor. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and
Rameses as supply centers for the king. 12But the more the
Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and
spread, and the more alarmed the Egyptians became. 13So the
Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. 14They made
their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and
do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their
demands.

15Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew
midwives, Shiphrah and Puah: 16“When you help the Hebrew
women as they give birth, watch as they deliver.* If the baby is a
boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live.” 17But because the midwives
feared God, they refused to obey the king’s orders. They allowed the
boys to live, too.

18So the king of Egypt called for the midwives. “Why have you done
this?” he demanded. “Why have you allowed the boys to live?”

19“The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women,” the
midwives replied. “They are more vigorous and have their babies so
quickly that we cannot get there in time.”

20So God was good to the midwives, and the Israelites continued to
multiply, growing more and more powerful. 21And because the
midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

22Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Throw every
newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls
live.”

Exodus 2

THE BIRTH OF MOSES

1About this time, a man and woman from the tribe of Levi got
married. 2The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She
saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three
months. 3But when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket
made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She
put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the
bank of the Nile River. 4The baby’s sister then stood at a distance,
watching to see what would happen to him.

5Soon Pharaoh’s daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her
attendants walked along the riverbank. When the princess saw the
basket among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it for her. 6When
the princess opened it, she saw the baby. The little boy was crying,
and she felt sorry for him. “This must be one of the Hebrew
children,” she said.

7Then the baby's sister approached the princess. "Should I go and
find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" she
asked.

8"Yes, do!" the princess replied. So the girl went and called the
baby's mother.

9"Take this baby and nurse him for me," the princess told the baby's
mother. "I will pay you for your help." So the woman took her baby
home and nursed him.

10Later, when the boy was older, his mother brought him back to
Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. The princess
named him Moses,* for she explained, "I lifted him out of the
water."

MOSES ESCAPES TO MIDIAN

11Many years later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to visit
his own people, the Hebrews, and he saw how hard they were
forced to work. During his visit, he saw an Egyptian beating one of
his fellow Hebrews. 12After looking in all directions to make sure no
one was watching, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in
the sand.

13The next day, when Moses went out to visit his people again, he
saw two Hebrew men fighting. "Why are you beating up your
friend?" Moses said to the one who had started the fight.

14The man replied, “Who appointed you to be our prince and judge?
Are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday?”

MIDIAN

Then Moses was afraid, thinking, “Everyone knows what I did.”
15And sure enough, Pharaoh heard what had happened, and he tried
to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the
land of Midian.

When Moses arrived in Midian, he sat down beside a well. 16Now
the priest of Midian had seven daughters who came as usual to
draw water and fill the water troughs for their father’s flocks. 17But
some other shepherds came and chased them away. So Moses
jumped up and rescued the girls from the shepherds. Then he drew

water for their flocks.

18When the girls returned to Reuel, their father, he asked, “Why are
you back so soon today?”

19“An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds,” they answered.
“And then he drew water for us and watered our flocks.”

20“Then where is he?” their father asked. “Why did you leave him
there? Invite him to come and eat with us.”

21Moses accepted the invitation, and he settled there with him. In
time, Reuel gave Moses his daughter Zipporah to be his wife. 22Later
she gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom,* for he
explained, “I have been a foreigner in a foreign land.”

23Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites
continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for
help, and their cry rose up to God. 24God heard their groaning, and
he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
25He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to
act.*

WHO, ME? EXODUS 3:1–4:17

Exodus 3

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

1One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro,* the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai,* the mountain of God. 2There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. 3"This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it."

4When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here I am!" Moses replied.

5"Do not come any closer," the LORD warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. 6I am the God of your father*—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

7Then the LORD told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. 8So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. 9Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. 10Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt."

11But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh?
Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

12God answered, “I will be with you. And this is your sign that I am
the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out
of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain.”

13But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them,
‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me,
‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

14God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.* Say this to the people of
Israel: I AM has sent me to you.” 15God also said to Moses, “Say this
to the people of Israel: Yahweh,* the God of your ancestors—the
God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent
me to you.

This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.

16“Now go and call together all the elders of Israel. Tell them,
‘Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac,
and Jacob—has appeared to me. He told me, “I have been watching
closely, and I see how the Egyptians are treating you. 17I have
promised to rescue you from your oppression in Egypt. I will lead
you to a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the
Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites
now live.”’

18“The elders of Israel will accept your message. Then you and the
elders must go to the king of Egypt and tell him, ‘The LORD, the
God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So please let us take a three-
day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD, our
God.’

19“But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a

mighty hand forces him.*20So I will raise my hand and strike the
Egyptians, performing all kinds of miracles among them. Then at
last he will let you go. 21And I will cause the Egyptians to look
favorably on you. They will give you gifts when you go so you will
not leave empty-handed. 22Every Israelite woman will ask for
articles of silver and gold and fine clothing from her Egyptian
neighbors and from the foreign women in their houses. You will
dress your sons and daughters with these, stripping the Egyptians of
their wealth."

Exodus 4

SIGNS OF THE LORD'S POWER

1But Moses protested again, "What if they won't believe me or listen
to me? What if they say, 'The LORD never appeared to you'?"

2Then the LORD asked him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A shepherd's staff," Moses replied.

3"Throw it down on the ground," the LORD told him. So Moses
threw down the staff, and it turned into a snake! Moses jumped
back.

4Then the LORD told him, "Reach out and grab its tail." So Moses
reached out and grabbed it, and it turned back into a shepherd's
staff in his hand.

5"Perform this sign," the LORD told him. "Then they will believe
that the LORD, the God of their ancestors—the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—really has appeared to
you."

6Then the LORD said to Moses, “Now put your hand inside your
cloak.” So Moses put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it
out again, his hand was white as snow with a severe skin
disease.*7“Now put your hand back into your cloak,” the LORD said.
So Moses put his hand back in, and when he took it out again, it
was as healthy as the rest of his body.

8The LORD said to Moses, “If they do not believe you and are not
convinced by the first miraculous sign, they will be convinced by
the second sign. 9And if they don’t believe you or listen to you even
after these two signs, then take some water from the Nile River and
pour it out on the dry ground. When you do, the water from the
Nile will turn to blood on the ground.”

10But Moses pleaded with the LORD, “O Lord, I’m not very good
with words. I never have been, and I’m not now, even though you
have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.”

11Then the LORD asked Moses, “Who makes a person’s mouth? Who
decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear,
see or do not see? Is it not I, the LORD? 12Now go! I will be with
you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.”

13But Moses again pleaded, “Lord, please! Send anyone else.”

14Then the LORD became angry with Moses. “All right,” he said.
“What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he speaks well.
And look! He is on his way to meet you now. He will be delighted
to see you. 15Talk to him, and put the words in his mouth. I will be
with both of you as you speak, and I will instruct you both in what
to do. 16Aaron will be your spokesman to the people. He will be
your mouthpiece, and you will stand in the place of God for him,
telling him what to say. 17And take your shepherd’s staff with you,
and use it to perform the miraculous signs I have shown you.”

MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT

18So Moses went back home to Jethro, his father-in-law. “Please let me return to my relatives in Egypt,” Moses said. “I don’t even know if they are still alive.”

“Go in peace,” Jethro replied.

19Before Moses left Midian, the LORD said to him, “Return to Egypt, for all those who wanted to kill you have died.”

20So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey, and headed back to the land of Egypt. In his hand he carried the staff of God.

21And the LORD told Moses, “When you arrive back in Egypt, go to
Pharaoh and perform all the miracles I have empowered you to do.
But I will harden his heart so he will refuse to let the people go.
22Then you will tell him, ‘This is what the LORD says: Israel is my
firstborn son. 23I commanded you, “Let my son go, so he can
worship me.” But since you have refused, I will now kill your
firstborn son!’”

24On the way to Egypt, at a place where Moses and his family had
stopped for the night, the LORD confronted him and was about to
kill him. 25But Moses’ wife, Zipporah, took a flint knife and
circumcised her son. She touched his feet* with the foreskin and
said, “Now you are a bridegroom of blood to me.” 26(When she said
“a bridegroom of blood,” she was referring to the circumcision.)
After that, the LORD left him alone.

27Now the LORD had said to Aaron, “Go out into the wilderness to
meet Moses.” So Aaron went and met Moses at the mountain of
God, and he embraced him. 28Moses then told Aaron everything the
LORD had commanded him to say. And he told him about the
miraculous signs the LORD had commanded him to perform.

29Then Moses and Aaron returned to Egypt and called all the elders
of Israel together. 30Aaron told them everything the LORD had told
Moses, and Moses performed the miraculous signs as they watched.
31Then the people of Israel were convinced that the LORD had sent
Moses and Aaron. When they heard that the LORD was concerned
about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and
worshiped.

Exodus 5

MOSES AND AARON SPEAK TO PHARAOH

1After this presentation to Israel’s leaders, Moses and Aaron went
and spoke to Pharaoh. They told him, “This is what the LORD, the

God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness.”

2“Is that so?” retorted Pharaoh. “And who is the LORD? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don’t know the LORD, and I will not let Israel go.”

3But Aaron and Moses persisted. “The God of the Hebrews has met with us,” they declared. “So let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness so we can offer sacrifices to the LORD our God. If we don’t, he will kill us with a plague or with the sword.”

4Pharaoh replied, “Moses and Aaron, why are you distracting the people from their tasks? Get back to work! 5Look, there are many of your people in the land, and you are stopping them from their work.”

MAKING BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW

6That same day Pharaoh sent this order to the Egyptian slave drivers and the Israelite foremen: 7“Do not supply any more straw for making bricks. Make the people get it themselves! 8But still require them to make the same number of bricks as before. Don’t reduce the quota. They are lazy. That’s why they are crying out, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to our God.’ 9Load them down with more work. Make them sweat! That will teach them to listen to lies!”

10So the slave drivers and foremen went out and told the people: “This is what Pharaoh says: I will not provide any more straw for you. 11Go and get it yourselves. Find it wherever you can. But you must produce just as many bricks as before!” 12So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt in search of stubble to use as straw.

13Meanwhile, the Egyptian slave drivers continued to push hard. “Meet your daily quota of bricks, just as you did when we provided

you with straw!” they demanded. 14Then they whipped the Israelite foremen they had put in charge of the work crews. “Why haven’t you met your quotas either yesterday or today?” they demanded.

15So the Israelite foremen went to Pharaoh and pleaded with him. “Please don’t treat your servants like this,” they begged. 16“We are given no straw, but the slave drivers still demand, ‘Make bricks!’ We are being beaten, but it isn’t our fault! Your own people are to blame!”

17But Pharaoh shouted, “You’re just lazy! Lazy! That’s why you’re saying, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifices to the LORD.’ 18Now get back to work! No straw will be given to you, but you must still produce the full quota of bricks.”

19The Israelite foremen could see that they were in serious trouble when they were told, “You must not reduce the number of bricks you make each day.” 20As they left Pharaoh’s court, they confronted Moses and Aaron, who were waiting outside for them. 21The foremen said to them, “May the LORD judge and punish you for making us stink before Pharaoh and his officials. You have put a sword into their hands, an excuse to kill us!”

22Then Moses went back to the LORD and protested, “Why have you brought all this trouble on your own people, Lord? Why did you send me? 23Ever since I came to Pharaoh as your spokesman, he has been even more brutal to your people. And you have done nothing to rescue them!”

Exodus 6

PROMISES OF DELIVERANCE

1Then the LORD told Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to
Pharaoh. When he feels the force of my strong hand, he will let the
people go. In fact, he will force them to leave his land!”

2And God said to Moses, “I am Yahweh—‘the LORD.’*3I appeared to
Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as El-Shaddai—‘God Almighty’*—
but I did not reveal my name, Yahweh, to them. 4And I reaffirmed
my covenant with them. Under its terms, I promised to give them
the land of Canaan, where they were living as foreigners. 5You can
be sure that I have heard the groans of the people of Israel, who are
now slaves to the Egyptians. And I am well aware of my covenant
with them.

6“Therefore, say to the people of Israel: ‘I am the LORD. I will free
you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in
Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of

judgment. 7I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your
God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God who has
freed you from your oppression in Egypt. 8I will bring you into the
land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to
you as your very own possession. I am the LORD!'"

9So Moses told the people of Israel what the LORD had said, but
they refused to listen anymore. They had become too discouraged
by the brutality of their slavery.

10Then the LORD said to Moses, 11"Go back to Pharaoh, the king of
Egypt, and tell him to let the people of Israel leave his country."

12"But LORD!" Moses objected. "My own people won't listen to me
anymore. How can I expect Pharaoh to listen? I'm such a clumsy
speaker!*"

13But the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them orders for
the Israelites and for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. The LORD
commanded Moses and Aaron to lead the people of Israel out of
Egypt.

THE ANCESTORS OF MOSES AND AARON

14These are the ancestors of some of the clans of Israel: The sons of
Reuben, Israel's oldest son, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.
Their descendants became the clans of Reuben.

15The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul. (Shaul's mother was a Canaanite woman.) Their descendants became the clans of Simeon.

16These are the descendants of Levi, as listed in their family records: The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. (Levi lived to be 137 years old.)

17The descendants of Gershon included Libni and Shimei, each of whom became the ancestor of a clan.

18The descendants of Kohath included Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. (Kohath lived to be 133 years old.)

19The descendants of Merari included Mahli and Mushi.

These are the clans of the Levites, as listed in their family records.

20Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, and she gave birth to his sons, Aaron and Moses. (Amram lived to be 137 years old.)

21The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zicri.

22The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

23Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she gave birth to his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

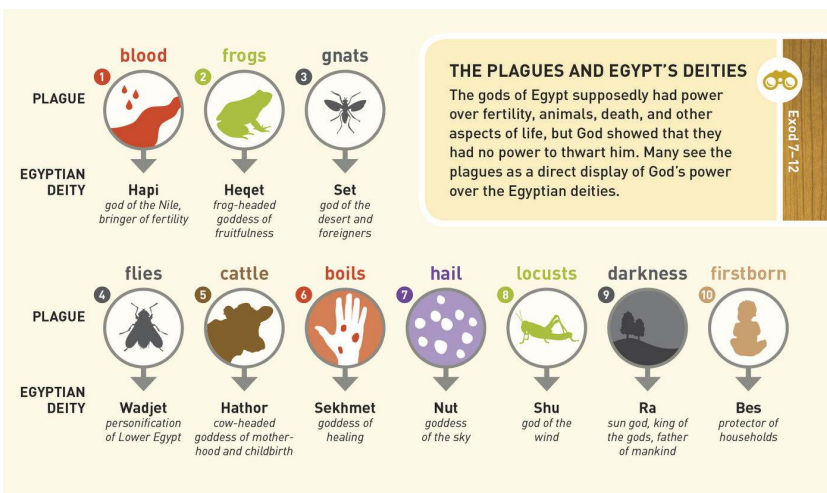
24The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. Their descendants became the clans of Korah.

25Eleazar son of Aaron married one of the daughters of Putiel, and she gave birth to his son, Phinehas.

These are the ancestors of the Levite families, listed according to their clans.

26The Aaron and Moses named in this list are the same ones to whom the LORD said, “Lead the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt like an army.” 27It was Moses and Aaron who spoke to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, about leading the people of Israel out of Egypt.

28When the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, 29he said to him, “I am the LORD! Tell Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, everything I am telling you.” 30But Moses argued with the LORD, saying, “I can’t do it! I’m such a clumsy speaker! Why should Pharaoh listen to me?”



THE PLAGUES AND EGYPT'S DEITIES

Exodus 7

AARON'S STAFF BECOMES A SERPENT

1Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pay close attention to this. I will
make you seem like God to Pharaoh, and your brother, Aaron, will
be your prophet. 2Tell Aaron everything I command you, and Aaron
must command Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave his country.
3But I will make Pharaoh’s heart stubborn so I can multiply my
miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. 4Even then
Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you. So I will bring down my fist on
Egypt. Then I will rescue my forces—my people, the Israelites—
from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment. 5When I raise
my powerful hand and bring out the Israelites, the Egyptians will
know that I am the LORD.”

6So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them.
7Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron was eighty-three when they
made their demands to Pharaoh.

8Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 9“Pharaoh will demand,
‘Show me a miracle.’ When he does this, say to Aaron, ‘Take your
staff and throw it down in front of Pharaoh, and it will become a
serpent.*’”

10So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did what the LORD had
commanded them. Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and
his officials, and it became a serpent! 11Then Pharaoh called in his
own wise men and sorcerers, and these Egyptian magicians did the
same thing with their magic. 12They threw down their staffs, which
also became serpents! But then Aaron’s staff swallowed up their
staffs. 13Pharaoh’s heart, however, remained hard. He still refused to
listen, just as the LORD had predicted.

A PLAGUE OF BLOOD

14Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn,* and
he still refuses to let the people go. 15So go to Pharaoh in the
morning as he goes down to the river. Stand on the bank of the Nile
and meet him there. Be sure to take along the staff that turned into

a snake. 16Then announce to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the
Hebrews, has sent me to tell you, “Let my people go, so they can
worship me in the wilderness.” Until now, you have refused to
listen to him. 17So this is what the LORD says: “I will show you that
I am the LORD.” Look! I will strike the water of the Nile with this
staff in my hand, and the river will turn to blood. 18The fish in it
will die, and the river will stink. The Egyptians will not be able to
drink any water from the Nile.’”

19Then the LORD said to Moses: “Tell Aaron, ‘Take your staff and
raise your hand over the waters of Egypt—all its rivers, canals,
ponds, and all the reservoirs. Turn all the water to blood.
Everywhere in Egypt the water will turn to blood, even the water
stored in wooden bowls and stone pots.’”

THE NILE DELTA

20So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them. As
Pharaoh and all of his officials watched, Aaron raised his staff and

struck the water of the Nile. Suddenly, the whole river turned to blood! 21The fish in the river died, and the water became so foul that the Egyptians couldn't drink it. There was blood everywhere throughout the land of Egypt. 22But again the magicians of Egypt used their magic, and they, too, turned water into blood. So Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted. 23Pharaoh returned to his palace and put the whole thing out of his mind. 24Then all the Egyptians dug along the riverbank to find drinking water, for they couldn't drink the water from the Nile.

25Seven days passed from the time the LORD struck the Nile.

Exodus 8

A PLAGUE OF FROGS

1*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go back to Pharaoh and announce to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. 2If you refuse to let them go, I will send a plague of frogs across your entire land. 3The Nile River will swarm with frogs. They will come up out of the river and into your palace, even into your bedroom and onto your bed! They will enter the houses of your officials and your people. They will even jump into your ovens and your kneading bowls. 4Frogs will jump on you, your people, and all your officials.'"

5*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Raise the staff in your hand over all the rivers, canals, and ponds of Egypt, and bring up

frogs over all the land.'" 6So Aaron raised his hand over the waters of Egypt, and frogs came up and covered the whole land! 7But the magicians were able to do the same thing with their magic. They, too, caused frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.

8Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and begged, "Plead with the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people. I will let your people go, so they can offer sacrifices to the LORD."

9"You set the time!" Moses replied. "Tell me when you want me to pray for you, your officials, and your people. Then you and your houses will be rid of the frogs. They will remain only in the Nile River."

10"Do it tomorrow," Pharaoh said.

"All right," Moses replied, "it will be as you have said. Then you will know that there is no one like the LORD our God. 11The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials, and your people. They will remain only in the Nile River."

12So Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh's palace, and Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs he had inflicted on Pharaoh. 13And the LORD did just what Moses had predicted. The frogs in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields all died. 14The Egyptians piled them into great heaps, and a terrible stench filled the land. 15But when Pharaoh saw that relief had come, he became stubborn.* He refused to listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had predicted.

A PLAGUE OF GNATS

16So the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Raise your staff and strike the ground. The dust will turn into swarms of gnats throughout the land of Egypt.'" 17So Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded them. When Aaron raised his hand and struck the ground with his staff, gnats infested the entire land,

covering the Egyptians and their animals. All the dust in the land of Egypt turned into gnats. 18Pharaoh's magicians tried to do the same thing with their secret arts, but this time they failed. And the gnats covered everyone, people and animals alike.

19"This is the finger of God!" the magicians exclaimed to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh's heart remained hard. He wouldn't listen to them, just as the LORD had predicted.

A PLAGUE OF FLIES

20Then the LORD told Moses, "Get up early in the morning and stand in Pharaoh's way as he goes down to the river. Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so they can worship

me. 21If you refuse, then I will send swarms of flies on you, your officials, your people, and all the houses. The Egyptian homes will be filled with flies, and the ground will be covered with them. 22But this time I will spare the region of Goshen, where my people live. No flies will be found there. Then you will know that I am the LORD and that I am present even in the heart of your land. 23I will make a clear distinction between* my people and your people. This miraculous sign will happen tomorrow.'"

24And the LORD did just as he had said. A thick swarm of flies filled Pharaoh's palace and the houses of his officials. The whole land of Egypt was thrown into chaos by the flies.

25Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. "All right! Go ahead and offer sacrifices to your God," he said. "But do it here in this land."

26But Moses replied, "That wouldn't be right. The Egyptians detest the sacrifices that we offer to the LORD our God. Look, if we offer our sacrifices here where the Egyptians can see us, they will stone us. 27We must take a three-day trip into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, just as he has commanded us."

28"All right, go ahead," Pharaoh replied. "I will let you go into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God. But don't go too far away. Now hurry and pray for me."

29Moses answered, "As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the LORD, and tomorrow the swarms of flies will disappear from you and your officials and all your people. But I am warning you, Pharaoh, don't lie to us again and refuse to let the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

30So Moses left Pharaoh's palace and pleaded with the LORD to remove all the flies. 31And the LORD did as Moses asked and caused the swarms of flies to disappear from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. Not a single fly remained. 32But Pharaoh again became

stubborn and refused to let the people go.

Exodus 9

A PLAGUE AGAINST LIVESTOCK

1"Go back to Pharaoh," the LORD commanded Moses. "Tell him,
'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my
people go, so they can worship me. 2If you continue to hold them
and refuse to let them go, 3the hand of the LORD will strike all your
livestock—your horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep, and goats—
with a deadly plague. 4But the LORD will again make a distinction
between the livestock of the Israelites and that of the Egyptians. Not
a single one of Israel's animals will die! 5The LORD has already set
the time for the plague to begin. He has declared that he will strike
the land tomorrow.'"

6And the LORD did just as he had said. The next morning all the
livestock of the Egyptians died, but the Israelites didn't lose a single
animal. 7Pharaoh sent his officials to investigate, and they
discovered that the Israelites had not lost a single animal! But even
so, Pharaoh's heart remained stubborn,* and he still refused to let
the people go.

A PLAGUE OF FESTERING BOILS

8Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of soot
from a brick kiln, and have Moses toss it into the air while Pharaoh
watches. 9The ashes will spread like fine dust over the whole land of
Egypt, causing festering boils to break out on people and animals
throughout the land."

10So they took soot from a brick kiln and went and stood before
Pharaoh. As Pharaoh watched, Moses threw the soot into the air,
and boils broke out on people and animals alike. 11Even the
magicians were unable to stand before Moses, because the boils had
broken out on them and all the Egyptians. 12But the LORD hardened

Pharaoh's heart, and just as the LORD had predicted to Moses, Pharaoh refused to listen.

A PLAGUE OF HAIL

13Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh. Tell him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so they can worship me. 14If you don't, I will send more plagues on you* and your officials and your people. Then you will know that there is no one like me in all the earth. 15By now I could have lifted my hand and struck you and your people with a plague to wipe you off the face of the earth. 16But I have spared you for a purpose—to show you my power* and to spread my fame throughout the earth. 17But you still lord it over my people and refuse to let them go. 18So tomorrow at this time I will send a hailstorm more devastating than any in all the history of Egypt. 19Quick! Order your livestock and servants to come in from the fields to find shelter. Any person or animal left outside will die when the hail falls.'"

20Some of Pharaoh's officials were afraid because of what the LORD had said. They quickly brought their servants and livestock in from the fields. 21But those who paid no attention to the word of the LORD left theirs out in the open.

22Then the LORD said to Moses, "Lift your hand toward the sky so hail may fall on the people, the livestock, and all the plants throughout the land of Egypt."

23So Moses lifted his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed toward the earth. The LORD sent a tremendous hailstorm against all the land of Egypt. 24Never in all the history of Egypt had there been a storm like that, with such devastating hail and continuous lightning. 25It left all of Egypt in ruins. The hail struck down everything in the open field—people, animals, and plants alike. Even the trees were destroyed. 26The only place without hail was the region of Goshen, where the people of

Israel lived.

27Then Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron. “This time I
have sinned,” he confessed. “The LORD is the righteous one, and
my people and I are wrong. 28Please beg the LORD to end this
terrifying thunder and hail. We’ve had enough. I will let you go;
you don’t need to stay any longer.”

29“All right,” Moses replied. “As soon as I leave the city, I will lift
my hands and pray to the LORD. Then the thunder and hail will
stop, and you will know that the earth belongs to the LORD. 30But I
know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God.”

31(All the flax and barley were ruined by the hail, because the
barley had formed heads and the flax was budding. 32But the wheat
and the emmer wheat were spared, because they had not yet
sprouted from the ground.)

33So Moses left Pharaoh’s court and went out of the city. When he
lifted his hands to the LORD, the thunder and hail stopped, and the
downpour ceased. 34But when Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail, and
thunder had stopped, he and his officials sinned again, and Pharaoh
again became stubborn.*35Because his heart was hard, Pharaoh
refused to let the people leave, just as the LORD had predicted
through Moses.

Exodus 10

A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

1Then the LORD said to Moses, “Return to Pharaoh and make your
demands again. I have made him and his officials stubborn* so I can
display my miraculous signs among them. 2I’ve also done it so you
can tell your children and grandchildren about how I made a
mockery of the Egyptians and about the signs I displayed among
them—and so you will know that I am the LORD.”

3So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “This is what the
LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: How long will you refuse to
submit to me? Let my people go, so they can worship me. 4If you
refuse, watch out! For tomorrow I will bring a swarm of locusts on
your country. 5They will cover the land so that you won’t be able to
see the ground. They will devour what little is left of your crops
after the hailstorm, including all the trees growing in the fields.
6They will overrun your palaces and the homes of your officials and
all the houses in Egypt. Never in the history of Egypt have your
ancestors seen a plague like this one!” And with that, Moses turned
and left Pharaoh.

7Pharaoh's officials now came to Pharaoh and appealed to him.
"How long will you let this man hold us hostage? Let the men go to
worship the LORD their God! Don't you realize that Egypt lies in
ruins?"

8So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "All right," he
told them, "go and worship the LORD your God. But who exactly
will be going with you?"

9Moses replied, "We will all go—young and old, our sons and
daughters, and our flocks and herds. We must all join together in
celebrating a festival to the LORD."

10Pharaoh retorted, "The LORD will certainly need to be with you if
I let you take your little ones! I can see through your evil plan.
11Never! Only the men may go and worship the LORD, since that is
what you requested." And Pharaoh threw them out of the palace.

12Then the LORD said to Moses, "Raise your hand over the land of
Egypt to bring on the locusts. Let them cover the land and devour
every plant that survived the hailstorm."

13So Moses raised his staff over Egypt, and the LORD caused an east
wind to blow over the land all that day and through the night.
When morning arrived, the east wind had brought the locusts.
14And the locusts swarmed over the whole land of Egypt, settling in
dense swarms from one end of the country to the other. It was the
worst locust plague in Egyptian history, and there has never been
another one like it. 15For the locusts covered the whole country and
darkened the land. They devoured every plant in the fields and all
the fruit on the trees that had survived the hailstorm. Not a single
leaf was left on the trees and plants throughout the land of Egypt.

16Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron. "I have sinned
against the LORD your God and against you," he confessed.
17"Forgive my sin, just this once, and plead with the LORD your

God to take away this death from me.”

18So Moses left Pharaoh’s court and pleaded with the LORD. 19The
LORD responded by shifting the wind, and the strong west wind
blew the locusts into the Red Sea.* Not a single locust remained in
all the land of Egypt. 20But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart
again, so he refused to let the people go.

A PLAGUE OF DARKNESS

21Then the LORD said to Moses, “Lift your hand toward heaven, and
the land of Egypt will be covered with a darkness so thick you can
feel it.” 22So Moses lifted his hand to the sky, and a deep darkness
covered the entire land of Egypt for three days. 23During all that
time the people could not see each other, and no one moved. But
there was light as usual where the people of Israel lived.

24Finally, Pharaoh called for Moses. “Go and worship the LORD,” he
said. “But leave your flocks and herds here. You may even take your
little ones with you.”

25“No,” Moses said, “you must provide us with animals for sacrifices
and burnt offerings to the LORD our God. 26All our livestock must
go with us, too; not a hoof can be left behind. We must choose our
sacrifices for the LORD our God from among these animals. And we
won’t know how we are to worship the LORD until we get there.”

27But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart once more, and he would
not let them go. 28“Get out of here!” Pharaoh shouted at Moses. “I’m
warning you. Never come back to see me again! The day you see
my face, you will die!”

29“Very well,” Moses replied. “I will never see your face again.”

Exodus 11

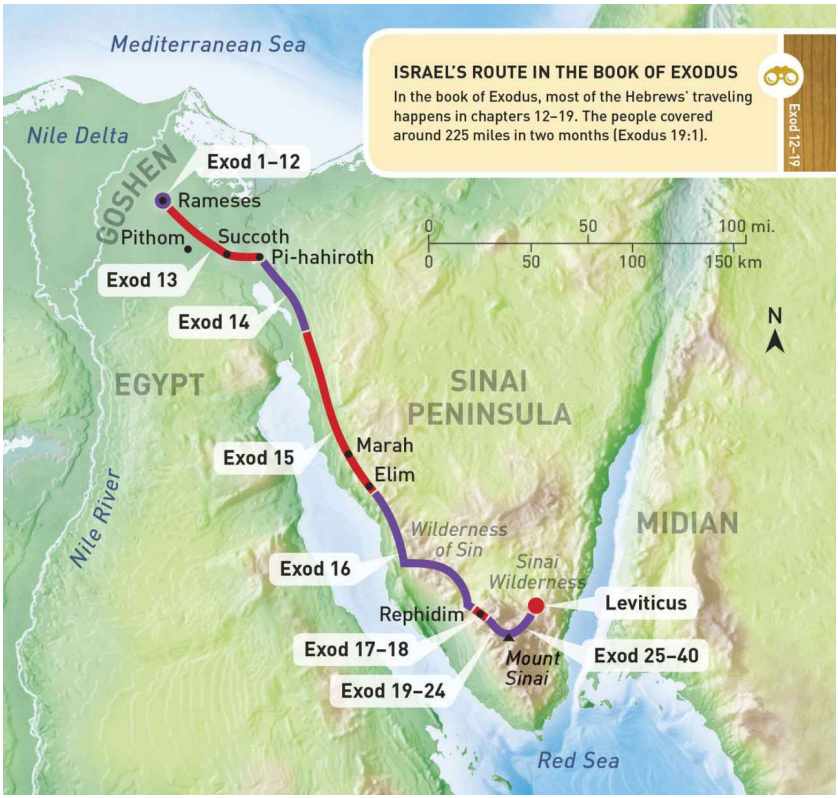
DEATH FOR EGYPT’S FIRSTBORN

1Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will strike Pharaoh and the land
of Egypt with one more blow. After that, Pharaoh will let you leave
this country. In fact, he will be so eager to get rid of you that he
will force you all to leave. 2Tell all the Israelite men and women to
ask their Egyptian neighbors for articles of silver and gold.” 3(Now
the LORD had caused the Egyptians to look favorably on the people
of Israel. And Moses was considered a very great man in the land of
Egypt, respected by Pharaoh’s officials and the Egyptian people
alike.)

4Moses had announced to Pharaoh, “This is what the LORD says: At
midnight tonight I will pass through the heart of Egypt. 5All the
firstborn sons will die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest son
of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, to the oldest son of his lowliest
servant girl who grinds the flour. Even the firstborn of all the
livestock will die. 6Then a loud wail will rise throughout the land of
Egypt, a wail like no one has heard before or will ever hear again.
7But among the Israelites it will be so peaceful that not even a dog
will bark. Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction
between the Egyptians and the Israelites. 8All the officials of Egypt

will run to me and fall to the ground before me. ‘Please leave!’ they will beg. ‘Hurry! And take all your followers with you.’ Only then will I go!” Then, burning with anger, Moses left Pharaoh.

9Now the LORD had told Moses earlier, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, but then I will do even more mighty miracles in the land of Egypt.” 10Moses and Aaron performed these miracles in Pharaoh’s presence, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he wouldn’t let the Israelites leave the country.



ISRAEL'S ROUTE IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Exodus 12

THE FIRST PASSOVER

1While the Israelites were still in the land of Egypt, the LORD gave
the following instructions to Moses and Aaron: 2"From now on, this
month will be the first month of the year for you. 3Announce to the
whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each
family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one
animal for each household. 4If a family is too small to eat a whole
animal, let them share with another family in the neighborhood.
Divide the animal according to the size of each family and how
much they can eat. 5The animal you select must be a one-year-old

male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects.

6“Take special care of this chosen animal until the evening of the
fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the
community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at
twilight. 7They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the
sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the
animal. 8That same night they must roast the meat over a fire and
eat it along with bitter salad greens and bread made without yeast.
9Do not eat any of the meat raw or boiled in water. The whole
animal—including the head, legs, and internal organs—must be
roasted over a fire. 10Do not leave any of it until the next morning.
Burn whatever is not eaten before morning.

11“These are your instructions for eating this meal: Be fully
dressed,* wear your sandals, and carry your walking stick in your
hand. Eat the meal with urgency, for this is the LORD’s Passover.
12On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike
down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of
Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I
am the LORD! 13But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a
sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the
blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you
when I strike the land of Egypt.

14“This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to
generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the LORD.
This is a law for all time. 15For seven days the bread you eat must
be made without yeast. On the first day of the festival, remove
every trace of yeast from your homes. Anyone who eats bread made
with yeast during the seven days of the festival will be cut off from
the community of Israel. 16On the first day of the festival and again
on the seventh day, all the people must observe an official day for
holy assembly. No work of any kind may be done on these days
except in the preparation of food.

17“Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind
you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very
day. This festival will be a permanent law for you; celebrate this
day from generation to generation. 18The bread you eat must be
made without yeast from the evening of the fourteenth day of the
first month until the evening of the twenty-first day of that month.
19During those seven days, there must be no trace of yeast in your
homes. Anyone who eats anything made with yeast during this
week will be cut off from the community of Israel. These
regulations apply both to the foreigners living among you and to
the native-born Israelites. 20During those days you must not eat
anything made with yeast. Wherever you live, eat only bread made
without yeast.”

21Then Moses called all the elders of Israel together and said to
them, “Go, pick out a lamb or young goat for each of your families,
and slaughter the Passover animal. 22Drain the blood into a basin.
Then take a bundle of hyssop branches and dip it into the blood.
Brush the hyssop across the top and sides of the doorframes of your
houses. And no one may go out through the door until morning.
23For the LORD will pass through the land to strike down the
Egyptians. But when he sees the blood on the top and sides of the
doorframe, the LORD will pass over your home. He will not permit
his death angel to enter your house and strike you down.

24“Remember, these instructions are a permanent law that you and
your descendants must observe forever. 25When you enter the land
the LORD has promised to give you, you will continue to observe
this ceremony. 26Then your children will ask, ‘What does this
ceremony mean?’ 27And you will reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice
to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in
Egypt. And though he struck the Egyptians, he spared our
families.’” When Moses had finished speaking, all the people bowed
down to the ground and worshiped.

28So the people of Israel did just as the LORD had commanded
through Moses and Aaron. 29And that night at midnight, the LORD
struck down all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt, from the

firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, to the firstborn son of the prisoner in the dungeon. Even the firstborn of their livestock were killed. 30Pharaoh and all his officials and all the people of Egypt woke up during the night, and loud wailing was heard throughout the land of Egypt. There was not a single house where someone had not died.

ISRAEL'S EXODUS FROM EGYPT

31Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron during the night. "Get out!" he ordered. "Leave my people—and take the rest of the Israelites with you! Go and worship the LORD as you have requested. 32Take your flocks and herds, as you said, and be gone. Go, but bless me as you leave." 33All the Egyptians urged the people of Israel to get out of the land as quickly as possible, for they thought, "We will all die!"

34The Israelites took their bread dough before yeast was added. They wrapped their kneading boards in their cloaks and carried them on their shoulders. 35And the people of Israel did as Moses had instructed; they asked the Egyptians for clothing and articles of silver and gold. 36The LORD caused the Egyptians to look favorably on the Israelites, and they gave the Israelites whatever they asked for. So they stripped the Egyptians of their wealth!

37That night the people of Israel left Rameses and started for Succoth. There were about 600,000 men,* plus all the women and children. 38A rabble of non-Israelites went with them, along with great flocks and herds of livestock. 39For bread they baked flat cakes from the dough without yeast they had brought from Egypt. It was made without yeast because the people were driven out of Egypt in such a hurry that they had no time to prepare the bread or other food.

40The people of Israel had lived in Egypt* for 430 years. 41In fact, it was on the last day of the 430th year that all the LORD's forces left

the land. 42On this night the LORD kept his promise to bring his
people out of the land of Egypt. So this night belongs to him, and it
must be commemorated every year by all the Israelites, from
generation to generation.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PASSOVER

43Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “These are the
instructions for the festival of Passover. No outsiders are allowed to
eat the Passover meal. 44But any slave who has been purchased may
eat it if he has been circumcised. 45Temporary residents and hired
servants may not eat it. 46Each Passover lamb must be eaten in one
house. Do not carry any of its meat outside, and do not break any of
its bones. 47The whole community of Israel must celebrate this
Passover festival.

48“If there are foreigners living among you who want to celebrate
the LORD’s Passover, let all their males be circumcised. Only then
may they celebrate the Passover with you like any native-born
Israelite. But no uncircumcised male may ever eat the Passover
meal. 49This instruction applies to everyone, whether a native-born
Israelite or a foreigner living among you.”

50So all the people of Israel followed all the LORD’s commands to
Moses and Aaron. 51On that very day the LORD brought the people
of Israel out of the land of Egypt like an army.

Exodus 13

DEDICATION OF THE FIRSTBORN

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2"Dedicate to me every firstborn
among the Israelites. The first offspring to be born, of both humans
and animals, belongs to me."

3So Moses said to the people, "This is a day to remember forever—
the day you left Egypt, the place of your slavery. Today the LORD
has brought you out by the power of his mighty hand. (Remember,
eat no food containing yeast.) 4On this day in early spring, in the
month of Abib,* you have been set free. 5You must celebrate this
event in this month each year after the LORD brings you into the
land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites.
(He swore to your ancestors that he would give you this land—a
land flowing with milk and honey.) 6For seven days the bread you
eat must be made without yeast. Then on the seventh day, celebrate
a feast to the LORD. 7Eat bread without yeast during those seven
days. In fact, there must be no yeast bread or any yeast at all found
within the borders of your land during this time.

8"On the seventh day you must explain to your children, 'I am
celebrating what the LORD did for me when I left Egypt.' 9This
annual festival will be a visible sign to you, like a mark branded on
your hand or your forehead. Let it remind you always to recite this
teaching of the LORD: 'With a strong hand, the LORD rescued you
from Egypt.'*10So observe the decree of this festival at the appointed
time each year.

11“This is what you must do when the LORD fulfills the promise he
swore to you and to your ancestors. When he gives you the land
where the Canaanites now live, 12you must present all firstborn sons
and firstborn male animals to the LORD, for they belong to him. 13A
firstborn donkey may be bought back from the LORD by presenting
a lamb or young goat in its place. But if you do not buy it back, you
must break its neck. However, you must buy back every firstborn
son.

14“And in the future, your children will ask you, ‘What does all this
mean?’ Then you will tell them, ‘With the power of his mighty
hand, the LORD brought us out of Egypt, the place of our slavery.
15Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, so the LORD killed all the
firstborn males throughout the land of Egypt, both people and
animals. That is why I now sacrifice all the firstborn males to the
LORD—except that the firstborn sons are always bought back.’
16This ceremony will be like a mark branded on your hand or your
forehead. It is a reminder that the power of the LORD’s mighty
hand brought us out of Egypt.”

ISRAEL'S WILDERNESS DETOUR

17When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them
along the main road that runs through Philistine territory, even
though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land. God said,
"If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their
minds and return to Egypt." 18So God led them in a roundabout way
through the wilderness toward the Red Sea.* Thus the Israelites left
Egypt like an army ready for battle.*

19Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made
the sons of Israel swear to do this. He said, “God will certainly come
to help you. When he does, you must take my bones with you from
this place.”

20The Israelites left Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of
the wilderness. 21The LORD went ahead of them. He guided them
during the day with a pillar of cloud, and he provided light at night
with a pillar of fire. This allowed them to travel by day or by night.
22And the LORD did not remove the pillar of cloud or pillar of fire
from its place in front of the people.

Exodus 14

1Then the LORD gave these instructions to Moses: 2“Order the
Israelites to turn back and camp by Pi-hahiroth between Migdol and
the sea. Camp there along the shore, across from Baal-zephon.
3Then Pharaoh will think, ‘The Israelites are confused. They are
trapped in the wilderness!’ 4And once again I will harden Pharaoh’s
heart, and he will chase after you.* I have planned this in order to
display my glory through Pharaoh and his whole army. After this
the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD!” So the Israelites
camped there as they were told.

THE EGYPTIANS PURSUE ISRAEL

5When word reached the king of Egypt that the Israelites had fled,
Pharaoh and his officials changed their minds. “What have we
done, letting all those Israelite slaves get away?” they asked. 6So
Pharaoh harnessed his chariot and called up his troops. 7He took
with him 600 of Egypt’s best chariots, along with the rest of the
chariots of Egypt, each with its commander. 8The LORD hardened
the heart of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, so he chased after the
people of Israel, who had left with fists raised in defiance. 9The
Egyptians chased after them with all the forces in Pharaoh’s army—
all his horses and chariots, his charioteers, and his troops. The

Egyptians caught up with the people of Israel as they were camped beside the shore near Pi-hahiroth, across from Baal-zephon.

10As Pharaoh approached, the people of Israel looked up and panicked when they saw the Egyptians overtaking them. They cried out to the LORD, 11and they said to Moses, “Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren’t there enough graves for us in Egypt? What have you done to us? Why did you make us leave Egypt? 12Didn’t we tell you this would happen while we were still in Egypt? We said, ‘Leave us alone! Let us be slaves to the Egyptians. It’s better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness!’”

13But Moses told the people, “Don’t be afraid. Just stand still and watch the LORD rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. 14The LORD himself will fight for you. Just stay calm.”

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

15Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving! 16Pick up your staff and raise your hand over the sea. Divide the water so the Israelites can walk through the middle of the sea on dry ground. 17And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they will charge in after the Israelites. My great glory will be displayed through Pharaoh and his troops, his chariots, and his charioteers. 18When my glory is displayed through them, all Egypt will see my glory and know that I am the LORD!”

19Then the angel of God, who had been leading the people of Israel, moved to the rear of the camp. The pillar of cloud also moved from the front and stood behind them. 20The cloud settled between the Egyptian and Israelite camps. As darkness fell, the cloud turned to fire, lighting up the night. But the Egyptians and Israelites did not approach each other all night.

21Then Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the LORD opened

up a path through the water with a strong east wind. The wind blew all that night, turning the seabed into dry land. 22So the people of Israel walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on each side!

23Then the Egyptians—all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and charioteers—chased them into the middle of the sea. 24But just before dawn the LORD looked down on the Egyptian army from the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw their forces into total confusion. 25He twisted* their chariot wheels, making their chariots difficult to drive. "Let's get out of here—away from these Israelites!" the Egyptians shouted. "The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt!"

26When all the Israelites had reached the other side, the LORD said to Moses, "Raise your hand over the sea again. Then the waters will rush back and cover the Egyptians and their chariots and charioteers." 27So as the sun began to rise, Moses raised his hand over the sea, and the water rushed back into its usual place. The Egyptians tried to escape, but the LORD swept them into the sea. 28Then the waters returned and covered all the chariots and charioteers—the entire army of Pharaoh. Of all the Egyptians who had chased the Israelites into the sea, not a single one survived.

29But the people of Israel had walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, as the water stood up like a wall on both sides. 30That is how the LORD rescued Israel from the hand of the Egyptians that day. And the Israelites saw the bodies of the Egyptians washed up on the seashore. 31When the people of Israel saw the mighty power that the LORD had unleashed against the Egyptians, they were filled with awe before him. They put their faith in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

SONGS EXODUS 15:1-21

Exodus 15

A SONG OF DELIVERANCE

1Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD: “I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; he has hurled both horse and rider into the sea.

2The LORD is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him— my father’s God, and I will

exalt him!

3The LORD is a warrior; Yahweh* is his name!

4Pharaoh's chariots and army he has hurled into the sea.
The finest of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea.*

5The deep waters gushed over them; they sank to the bottom like a stone.

6"Your right hand, O LORD, is glorious in power.
Your right hand, O LORD, smashes the enemy.

7In the greatness of your majesty, you overthrow those who rise against you.
You unleash your blazing fury; it consumes them like straw.

8At the blast of your breath, the waters piled up!
The surging waters stood straight like a wall; in the heart of the sea the deep waters became hard.

9"The enemy boasted, 'I will chase them and catch up with them.
I will plunder them and consume them.
I will flash my sword; my powerful hand will destroy them.'

10But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them.
They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11"Who is like you among the gods, O LORD— glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?

12You raised your right hand, and the earth swallowed our enemies.

13"With your unfailing love you lead the people you have redeemed.
In your might, you guide them to your sacred home.

14The peoples hear and tremble; anguish grips those who live in Philistia.

15The leaders of Edom are terrified; the nobles of Moab tremble.

All who live in Canaan melt away;

16terror and dread fall upon them.
The power of your arm makes them lifeless as stone until your
people pass by, O LORD, until the people you purchased pass by.

17You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain—
the place, O LORD, reserved for your own dwelling, the sanctuary,
O Lord, that your hands have established.

18The LORD will reign forever and ever!"

19When Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and charioteers rushed into the sea, the LORD brought the water crashing down on them. But the people of Israel had walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground!

20Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine and led all the women as they played their tambourines and danced.
21And Miriam sang this song: "Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; he has hurled both horse and rider into the sea."

BITTER WATER AT MARAH

22Then Moses led the people of Israel away from the Red Sea, and they moved out into the desert of Shur. They traveled in this desert for three days without finding any water. 23When they came to the oasis of Marah, the water was too bitter to drink. So they called the place Marah (which means "bitter").

24Then the people complained and turned against Moses. "What are we going to drink?" they demanded. 25So Moses cried out to the LORD for help, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water, and this made the water good to drink.

It was there at Marah that the LORD set before them the following decree as a standard to test their faithfulness to him. 26He said, "If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do

what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you.”

ELIM

27After leaving Marah, the Israelites traveled on to the oasis of Elim, where they found twelve springs and seventy palm trees. They camped there beside the water.

Exodus 16

MANNA AND QUAIL FROM HEAVEN

1Then the whole community of Israel set out from Elim and
journeyed into the wilderness of Sin,* between Elim and Mount
Sinai. They arrived there on the fifteenth day of the second month,
one month after leaving the land of Egypt.*2There, too, the whole
community of Israel complained about Moses and Aaron.

3"If only the LORD had killed us back in Egypt," they moaned.
"There we sat around pots filled with meat and ate all the bread we
wanted. But now you have brought us into this wilderness to starve
us all to death."

4Then the LORD said to Moses, "Look, I'm going to rain down food
from heaven for you. Each day the people can go out and pick up as
much food as they need for that day. I will test them in this to see
whether or not they will follow my instructions. 5On the sixth day
they will gather food, and when they prepare it, there will be twice
as much as usual."

6So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “By evening
you will realize it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of
Egypt. 7In the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because
he has heard your complaints, which are against him, not against
us. What have we done that you should complain about us?” 8Then
Moses added, “The LORD will give you meat to eat in the evening
and bread to satisfy you in the morning, for he has heard all your
complaints against him. What have we done? Yes, your complaints
are against the LORD, not against us.”

9Then Moses said to Aaron, “Announce this to the entire community
of Israel: ‘Present yourselves before the LORD, for he has heard
your complaining.’” 10And as Aaron spoke to the whole community
of Israel, they looked out toward the wilderness. There they could
see the awesome glory of the LORD in the cloud.

11Then the LORD said to Moses, 12“I have heard the Israelites’
complaints. Now tell them, ‘In the evening you will have meat to
eat, and in the morning you will have all the bread you want. Then
you will know that I am the LORD your God.’”

13That evening vast numbers of quail flew in and covered the camp.
And the next morning the area around the camp was wet with dew.
14When the dew evaporated, a flaky substance as fine as frost
blanketed the ground. 15The Israelites were puzzled when they saw
it. “What is it?” they asked each other. They had no idea what it
was.

And Moses told them, “It is the food the LORD has given you to eat.
16These are the LORD’s instructions: Each household should gather
as much as it needs. Pick up two quarts* for each person in your
tent.”

17So the people of Israel did as they were told. Some gathered a lot,
some only a little. 18But when they measured it out,* everyone had
just enough. Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and
those who gathered only a little had enough. Each family had just

what it needed.

19Then Moses told them, “Do not keep any of it until morning.”
20But some of them didn’t listen and kept some of it until morning.
But by then it was full of maggots and had a terrible smell. Moses
was very angry with them.

21After this the people gathered the food morning by morning, each
family according to its need. And as the sun became hot, the flakes
they had not picked up melted and disappeared. 22On the sixth day,
they gathered twice as much as usual—four quarts* for each person
instead of two. Then all the leaders of the community came and
asked Moses for an explanation. 23He told them, “This is what the
LORD commanded: Tomorrow will be a day of complete rest, a holy
Sabbath day set apart for the LORD. So bake or boil as much as you
want today, and set aside what is left for tomorrow.”

24So they put some aside until morning, just as Moses had
commanded. And in the morning the leftover food was wholesome
and good, without maggots or odor. 25Moses said, “Eat this food
today, for today is a Sabbath day dedicated to the LORD. There will
be no food on the ground today. 26You may gather the food for six
days, but the seventh day is the Sabbath. There will be no food on
the ground that day.”

27Some of the people went out anyway on the seventh day, but they
found no food. 28The LORD asked Moses, “How long will these
people refuse to obey my commands and instructions? 29They must
realize that the Sabbath is the LORD’s gift to you. That is why he
gives you a two-day supply on the sixth day, so there will be
enough for two days. On the Sabbath day you must each stay in
your place. Do not go out to pick up food on the seventh day.” 30So
the people did not gather any food on the seventh day.

31The Israelites called the food manna.* It was white like coriander
seed, and it tasted like honey wafers.

32 Then Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded: Fill a
two-quart container with manna to preserve it for your descendants.
Then later generations will be able to see the food I gave you in the
wilderness when I set you free from Egypt.”

33 Moses said to Aaron, “Get a jar and fill it with two quarts of
manna. Then put it in a sacred place before the LORD to preserve it
for all future generations.” 34 Aaron did just as the LORD had
commanded Moses. He eventually placed it in the Ark of the
Covenant—in front of the stone tablets inscribed with the terms of
the covenant.* 35 So the people of Israel ate manna for forty years
until they arrived at the land where they would settle. They ate
manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

36 The container used to measure the manna was an omer, which
was one-tenth of an ephah; it held about two quarts.*

Exodus 17

WATER FROM THE ROCK

1At the LORD's command, the whole community of Israel left the
wilderness of Sin* and moved from place to place. Eventually they
camped at Rephidim, but there was no water there for the people to
drink. 2So once more the people complained against Moses. "Give us
water to drink!" they demanded.

"Quiet!" Moses replied. "Why are you complaining against me? And
why are you testing the LORD?"

3But tormented by thirst, they continued to argue with Moses. "Why
did you bring us out of Egypt? Are you trying to kill us, our
children, and our livestock with thirst?"

4Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What should I do with these
people? They are ready to stone me!"

5The LORD said to Moses, "Walk out in front of the people. Take
your staff, the one you used when you struck the water of the Nile,

and call some of the elders of Israel to join you. 6I will stand before
you on the rock at Mount Sinai.* Strike the rock, and water will
come gushing out. Then the people will be able to drink." So Moses
struck the rock as he was told, and water gushed out as the elders
looked on.

7Moses named the place Massah (which means "test") and Meribah
(which means "arguing") because the people of Israel argued with
Moses and tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD here with us or
not?"

ISRAEL DEFEATS THE AMALEKITES

8While the people of Israel were still at Rephidim, the warriors of
Amalek attacked them. 9Moses commanded Joshua, "Choose some
men to go out and fight the army of Amalek for us. Tomorrow, I
will stand at the top of the hill, holding the staff of God in my
hand."

10So Joshua did what Moses had commanded and fought the army
of Amalek. Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of
a nearby hill. 11As long as Moses held up the staff in his hand, the
Israelites had the advantage. But whenever he dropped his hand,
the Amalekites gained the advantage. 12Moses' arms soon became so
tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a
stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses,
holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset. 13As a
result, Joshua overwhelmed the army of Amalek in battle.

14After the victory, the LORD instructed Moses, "Write this down on
a scroll as a permanent reminder, and read it aloud to Joshua: I will
erase the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 15Moses built an
altar there and named it Yahweh-Nissi (which means "the LORD is
my banner"). 16He said, "They have raised their fist against the
LORD's throne, so now* the LORD will be at war with Amalek
generation after generation."

Exodus 18

JETHRO'S VISIT TO MOSES

1Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about
everything God had done for Moses and his people, the Israelites.
He heard especially about how the LORD had rescued them from
Egypt.

2Earlier, Moses had sent his wife, Zipporah, and his two sons back
to Jethro, who had taken them in. 3(Moses' first son was named
Gershom,* for Moses had said when the boy was born, "I have been
a foreigner in a foreign land." 4His second son was named Eliezer,*
for Moses had said, "The God of my ancestors was my helper; he
rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh.") 5Jethro, Moses' father-in-

law, now came to visit Moses in the wilderness. He brought Moses' wife and two sons with him, and they arrived while Moses and the people were camped near the mountain of God. 6Jethro had sent a message to Moses, saying, "I, Jethro, your father-in-law, am coming to see you with your wife and your two sons."

7So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. He bowed low and kissed him. They asked about each other's welfare and then went into Moses' tent. 8Moses told his father-in-law everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and Egypt on behalf of Israel. He also told about all the hardships they had experienced along the way and how the LORD had rescued his people from all their troubles. 9Jethro was delighted when he heard about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel as he rescued them from the hand of the Egyptians.

10"Praise the LORD," Jethro said, "for he has rescued you from the Egyptians and from Pharaoh. Yes, he has rescued Israel from the powerful hand of Egypt! 11I know now that the LORD is greater than all other gods, because he rescued his people from the oppression of the proud Egyptians."

12Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God. Aaron and all the elders of Israel came out and joined him in a sacrificial meal in God's presence.

JETHRO'S WISE ADVICE

13The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people's disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening.

14When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, "What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?"

15Moses replied, “Because the people come to me to get a ruling
from God. 16When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the
one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform
the people of God’s decrees and give them his instructions.”

17“This is not good!” Moses’ father-in-law exclaimed. 18“You’re
going to wear yourself out—and the people, too. This job is too
heavy a burden for you to handle all by yourself. 19Now listen to
me, and let me give you a word of advice, and may God be with
you. You should continue to be the people’s representative before
God, bringing their disputes to him. 20Teach them God’s decrees,
and give them his instructions. Show them how to conduct their
lives. 21But select from all the people some capable, honest men
who fear God and hate bribes. Appoint them as leaders over groups
of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. 22They should always
be available to solve the people’s common disputes, but have them
bring the major cases to you. Let the leaders decide the smaller
matters themselves. They will help you carry the load, making the
task easier for you. 23If you follow this advice, and if God
commands you to do so, then you will be able to endure the
pressures, and all these people will go home in peace.”

24Moses listened to his father-in-law’s advice and followed his
suggestions. 25He chose capable men from all over Israel and
appointed them as leaders over the people. He put them in charge
of groups of one thousand, one hundred, fifty, and ten. 26These men
were always available to solve the people’s common disputes. They
brought the major cases to Moses, but they took care of the smaller
matters themselves.

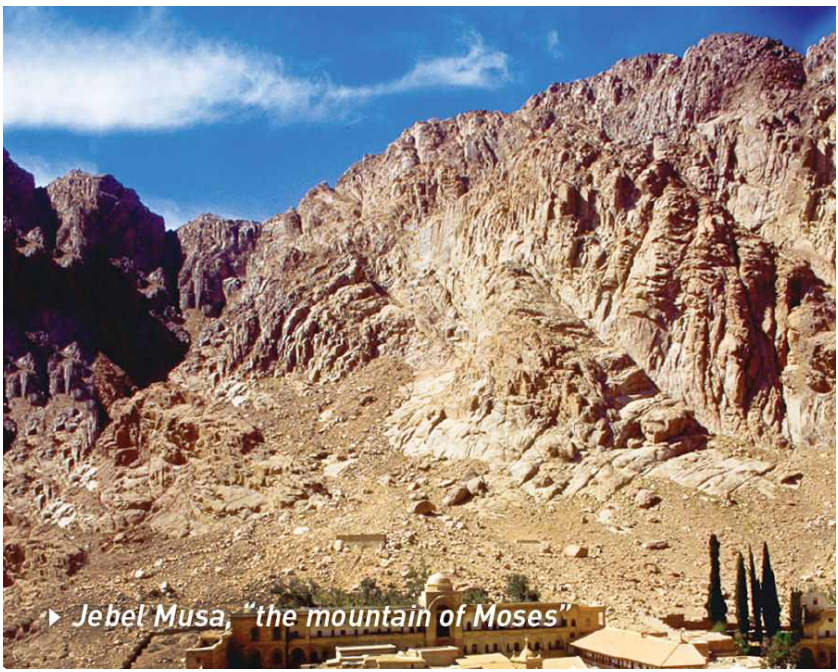
27Soon after this, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, who
returned to his own land.

▸ *The region of Sinai*

WILDERNESS OF SINAI

Exodus 19

THE LORD REVEALS HIMSELF AT SINAI 1**EXACTLY TWO MONTHS AFTER THE ISRAELITES LEFT EGYPT,* THEY ARRIVED IN THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI.** 2**AFTER BREAKING CAMP AT REPHIDIM, THEY CAME TO THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI AND SET UP CAMP THERE AT THE BASE OF MOUNT SINAI.**



MOUNT SINAI

3Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; announce it to the descendants

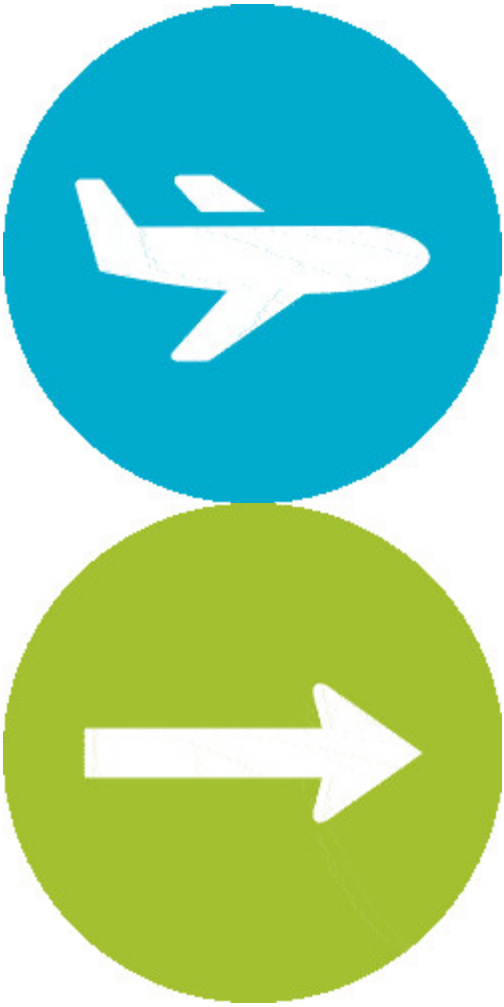
of Israel: 4‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know
how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. 5Now
if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own
special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the
earth belongs to me. 6And you will be my kingdom of priests, my
holy nation.’ This is the message you must give to the people of
Israel.”

7So Moses returned from the mountain and called together the
elders of the people and told them everything the LORD had
commanded him. 8And all the people responded together, “We will
do everything the LORD has commanded.” So Moses brought the
people’s answer back to the LORD.

9Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will come to you in a thick cloud,
Moses, so the people themselves can hear me when I speak with
you. Then they will always trust you.”

Moses told the LORD what the people had said. 10Then the LORD
told Moses, “Go down and prepare the people for my arrival.
Consecrate them today and tomorrow, and have them wash their
clothing. 11Be sure they are ready on the third day, for on that day
the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai as all the people watch.
12Mark off a boundary all around the mountain. Warn the people,
‘Be careful! Do not go up on the mountain or even touch its
boundaries. Anyone who touches the mountain will certainly be put
to death. 13No hand may touch the person or animal that crosses the
boundary; instead, stone them or shoot them with arrows. They
must be put to death.’ However, when the ram’s horn sounds a long
blast, then the people may go up on the mountain.*”

14So Moses went down to the people. He consecrated them for
worship, and they washed their clothes. 15He told them, “Get ready
for the third day, and until then abstain from having sexual
intercourse.”



16On the morning of the third day, thunder roared and lightning
flashed, and a dense cloud came down on the mountain. There was
a long, loud blast from a ram's horn, and all the people trembled.
17Moses led them out from the camp to meet with God, and they
stood at the foot of the mountain. 18All of Mount Sinai was covered
with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of
fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln,
and the whole mountain shook violently. 19As the blast of the ram's
horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God thundered his

reply. 20The LORD came down on the top of Mount Sinai and called
Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses climbed the mountain.

21Then the LORD told Moses, “Go back down and warn the people
not to break through the boundaries to see the LORD, or they will
die. 22Even the priests who regularly come near to the LORD must
purify themselves so that the LORD does not break out and destroy
them.”

23“But LORD,” Moses protested, “the people cannot come up to
Mount Sinai. You already warned us. You told me, ‘Mark off a
boundary all around the mountain to set it apart as holy.’”

24But the LORD said, “Go down and bring Aaron back up with you.
In the meantime, do not let the priests or the people break through
to approach the LORD, or he will break out and destroy them.”

25So Moses went down to the people and told them what the LORD
had said.

Exodus 20

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THE COVENANT COMMUNITY

1Then God gave the people all these instructions*:

2“I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of
Egypt, the place of your slavery.

3“You must not have any other god but me.

4“You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of

anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5You must not
bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am
a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other
gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire
family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations
of those who reject me. 6But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand
generations on those* who love me and obey my commands.

7"You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD
will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

8"Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9You
have six days each week for your ordinary work, 10but the seventh
day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On
that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes
you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your
livestock, and any foreigners living among you. 11For in six days the
LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them;
but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the
Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

12"Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life
in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

13"You must not murder.

14"You must not commit adultery.

15"You must not steal.

16“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.

17“You must not covet your neighbor’s house. You must not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”

18When the people heard the thunder and the loud blast of the ram’s horn, and when they saw the flashes of lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain, they stood at a distance, trembling with fear.

19And they said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen. But don’t let God speak directly to us, or we will die!”

20“Don’t be afraid,” Moses answered them, “for God has come in this way to test you, and so that your fear of him will keep you from sinning!”

21As the people stood in the distance, Moses approached the dark cloud where God was.

PROPER USE OF ALTARS

22And the LORD said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: You saw for yourselves that I spoke to you from heaven. 23Remember, you must not make any idols of silver or gold to rival me.

24“Build for me an altar made of earth, and offer your sacrifices to
me—your burnt offerings and peace offerings, your sheep and
goats, and your cattle. Build my altar wherever I cause my name to
be remembered, and I will come to you and bless you. 25If you use
stones to build my altar, use only natural, uncut stones. Do not
shape the stones with a tool, for that would make the altar unfit for
holy use. 26And do not approach my altar by going up steps. If you
do, someone might look up under your clothing and see your
nakedness.

Exodus 21

FAIR TREATMENT OF SLAVES

1“These are the regulations you must present to Israel.

2“If you buy a Hebrew slave, he may serve for no more than six
years. Set him free in the seventh year, and he will owe you nothing
for his freedom. 3If he was single when he became your slave, he
shall leave single. But if he was married before he became a slave,
then his wife must be freed with him.

4“If his master gave him a wife while he was a slave and they had
sons or daughters, then only the man will be free in the seventh
year, but his wife and children will still belong to his master. 5But
the slave may declare, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children.
I don’t want to go free.’ 6If he does this, his master must present him
before God.* Then his master must take him to the door or doorpost
and publicly pierce his ear with an awl. After that, the slave will
serve his master for life.

7“When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she will not be freed at
the end of six years as the men are. 8If she does not satisfy her
owner, he must allow her to be bought back again. But he is not
allowed to sell her to foreigners, since he is the one who broke the
contract with her. 9But if the slave’s owner arranges for her to
marry his son, he may no longer treat her as a slave but as a
daughter.

10“If a man who has married a slave wife takes another wife for
himself, he must not neglect the rights of the first wife to food,
clothing, and sexual intimacy. 11If he fails in any of these three
obligations, she may leave as a free woman without making any
payment.

CASES OF PERSONAL INJURY

12“Anyone who assaults and kills another person must be put to
death. 13But if it was simply an accident permitted by God, I will
appoint a place of refuge where the slayer can run for safety.
14However, if someone deliberately kills another person, then the
slayer must be dragged even from my altar and be put to death.

15“Anyone who strikes father or mother must be put to death.

16“Kidnappers must be put to death, whether they are caught in
possession of their victims or have already sold them as slaves.

17“Anyone who dishonors* father or mother must be put to death.

18“Now suppose two men quarrel, and one hits the other with a
stone or fist, and the injured person does not die but is confined to
bed. 19If he is later able to walk outside again, even with a crutch,
the assailant will not be punished but must compensate his victim
for lost wages and provide for his full recovery.

20“If a man beats his male or female slave with a club and the slave
dies as a result, the owner must be punished. 21But if the slave
recovers within a day or two, then the owner shall not be punished,
since the slave is his property.

22“Now suppose two men are fighting, and in the process they
accidentally strike a pregnant woman so she gives birth
prematurely.* If no further injury results, the man who struck the
woman must pay the amount of compensation the woman’s
husband demands and the judges approve. 23But if there is further
injury, the punishment must match the injury: a life for a life, 24an
eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a
foot, 25a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a
bruise.

26“If a man hits his male or female slave in the eye and the eye is
blinded, he must let the slave go free to compensate for the eye.
27And if a man knocks out the tooth of his male or female slave, he
must let the slave go free to compensate for the tooth.

28“If an ox* gores a man or woman to death, the ox must be stoned,
and its flesh may not be eaten. In such a case, however, the owner
will not be held liable. 29But suppose the ox had a reputation for
goring, and the owner had been informed but failed to keep it
under control. If the ox then kills someone, it must be stoned, and
the owner must also be put to death. 30However, the dead person’s
relatives may accept payment to compensate for the loss of life. The
owner of the ox may redeem his life by paying whatever is
demanded.

31“The same regulation applies if the ox gores a boy or a girl. 32But
if the ox gores a slave, either male or female, the animal’s owner
must pay the slave’s owner thirty silver coins,* and the ox must be
stoned.

33“Suppose someone digs or uncovers a pit and fails to cover it, and
then an ox or a donkey falls into it. 34The owner of the pit must pay
full compensation to the owner of the animal, but then he gets to
keep the dead animal.

35“If someone’s ox injures a neighbor’s ox and the injured ox dies,
then the two owners must sell the live ox and divide the price
equally between them. They must also divide the dead animal. 36But
if the ox had a reputation for goring, yet its owner failed to keep it
under control, he must pay full compensation—a live ox for the
dead one—but he may keep the dead ox.

Exodus 22

PROTECTION OF PROPERTY

1* “If someone steals an ox* or sheep and then kills or sells it, the
thief must pay back five oxen for each ox stolen, and four sheep for
each sheep stolen.

2* “If a thief is caught in the act of breaking into a house and is
struck and killed in the process, the person who killed the thief is
not guilty of murder. 3But if it happens in daylight, the one who
killed the thief is guilty of murder.

“A thief who is caught must pay in full for everything he stole. If he
cannot pay, he must be sold as a slave to pay for his theft. 4If
someone steals an ox or a donkey or a sheep and it is found in the
thief’s possession, then the thief must pay double the value of the
stolen animal.

5“If an animal is grazing in a field or vineyard and the owner lets it
stray into someone else’s field to graze, then the animal’s owner
must pay compensation from the best of his own grain or grapes.

6“If you are burning thornbushes and the fire gets out of control and spreads into another person’s field, destroying the sheaves or the uncut grain or the whole crop, the one who started the fire must pay for the lost crop.

7“Suppose someone leaves money or goods with a neighbor for safekeeping, and they are stolen from the neighbor’s house. If the thief is caught, the compensation is double the value of what was stolen. 8But if the thief is not caught, the neighbor must appear before God,* who will determine if he stole the property.

9“Suppose there is a dispute between two people who both claim to own a particular ox, donkey, sheep, article of clothing, or any lost property. Both parties must come before God, and the person whom God declares* guilty must pay double compensation to the other.

10“Now suppose someone leaves a donkey, ox, sheep, or any other animal with a neighbor for safekeeping, but it dies or is injured or is taken away, and no one sees what happened. 11The neighbor must then take an oath in the presence of the LORD. If the LORD confirms that the neighbor did not steal the property, the owner must accept the verdict, and no payment will be required. 12But if the animal was indeed stolen, the guilty person must pay compensation to the owner. 13If it was torn to pieces by a wild animal, the remains of the carcass must be shown as evidence, and no compensation will be required.

14“If someone borrows an animal from a neighbor and it is injured or dies when the owner is absent, the person who borrowed it must pay full compensation. 15But if the owner was present, no compensation is required. And no compensation is required if the animal was rented, for this loss is covered by the rental fee.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

16“If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to anyone and has

sex with her, he must pay the customary bride price and marry her.
17But if her father refuses to let him marry her, the man must still
pay him an amount equal to the bride price of a virgin.

18“You must not allow a sorceress to live.

19“Anyone who has sexual relations with an animal must certainly
be put to death.

20“Anyone who sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be
destroyed.*

21“You must not mistreat or oppress foreigners in any way.
Remember, you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of
Egypt.

22“You must not exploit a widow or an orphan. 23If you exploit them
in any way and they cry out to me, then I will certainly hear their
cry. 24My anger will blaze against you, and I will kill you with the
sword. Then your wives will be widows and your children
fatherless.

25“If you lend money to any of my people who are in need, do not
charge interest as a money lender would. 26If you take your
neighbor’s cloak as security for a loan, you must return it before
sunset. 27This coat may be the only blanket your neighbor has. How
can a person sleep without it? If you do not return it and your
neighbor cries out to me for help, then I will hear, for I am
merciful.

28“You must not dishonor God or curse any of your rulers.

29“You must not hold anything back when you give me offerings

from your crops and your wine.

“You must give me your firstborn sons.

30“You must also give me the firstborn of your cattle, sheep, and goats. But leave the newborn animal with its mother for seven days; then give it to me on the eighth day.

31“You must be my holy people. Therefore, do not eat any animal that has been torn up and killed by wild animals. Throw it to the dogs.

Exodus 23

A CALL FOR JUSTICE

1“You must not pass along false rumors. You must not cooperate with evil people by lying on the witness stand.

2“You must not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you are called to testify in a dispute, do not be swayed by the crowd to twist justice. 3And do not slant your testimony in favor of a person just because that person is poor.

4“If you come upon your enemy’s ox or donkey that has strayed away, take it back to its owner. 5If you see that the donkey of someone who hates you has collapsed under its load, do not walk by. Instead, stop and help.

6“In a lawsuit, you must not deny justice to the poor.

7“Be sure never to charge anyone falsely with evil. Never sentence an innocent or blameless person to death, for I never declare a

guilty person to be innocent.

8“Take no bribes, for a bribe makes you ignore something that you clearly see. A bribe makes even a righteous person twist the truth.

9“You must not oppress foreigners. You know what it’s like to be a foreigner, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.

10“Plant and harvest your crops for six years, 11but let the land be renewed and lie uncultivated during the seventh year. Then let the poor among you harvest whatever grows on its own. Leave the rest for wild animals to eat. The same applies to your vineyards and olive groves.

12“You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but on the seventh day you must stop working. This gives your ox and your donkey a chance to rest. It also allows your slaves and the foreigners living among you to be refreshed.

13“Pay close attention to all my instructions. You must not call on the name of any other gods. Do not even speak their names.

THREE ANNUAL FESTIVALS

14“Each year you must celebrate three festivals in my honor. 15First, celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days the bread you eat must be made without yeast, just as I commanded you. Celebrate this festival annually at the appointed time in early spring, in the month of Abib,* for that is the anniversary of your departure from Egypt. No one may appear before me without an offering.

16“Second, celebrate the Festival of Harvest,* when you bring me
the first crops of your harvest.

“Finally, celebrate the Festival of the Final Harvest* at the end of
the harvest season, when you have harvested all the crops from
your fields. 17At these three times each year, every man in Israel
must appear before the Sovereign, the LORD.

18“You must not offer the blood of my sacrificial offerings together
with any baked goods containing yeast. And do not leave the fat
from the festival offerings until the next morning.

19“As you harvest your crops, bring the very best of the first harvest
to the house of the LORD your God.

“You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.

ANGELS EXODUS 23:20-33

A PROMISE OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE

20"See, I am sending an angel before you to protect you on your
journey and lead you safely to the place I have prepared for you.
21Pay close attention to him, and obey his instructions. Do not rebel
against him, for he is my representative, and he will not forgive
your rebellion. 22But if you are careful to obey him, following all my
instructions, then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will
oppose those who oppose you. 23For my angel will go before you
and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites,
Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites, so you may live there. And I will
destroy them completely. 24You must not worship the gods of these
nations or serve them in any way or imitate their evil practices.
Instead, you must utterly destroy them and smash their sacred
pillars.

25"You must serve only the LORD your God. If you do, I* will bless
you with food and water, and I will protect you from illness. 26There
will be no miscarriages or infertility in your land, and I will give
you long, full lives.

27"I will send my terror ahead of you and create panic among all
the people whose lands you invade. I will make all your enemies
turn and run. 28I will send terror* ahead of you to drive out the
Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites. 29But I will not drive them out in a
single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild
animals would multiply and threaten you. 30I will drive them out a

little at a time until your population has increased enough to take possession of the land. 31And I will fix your boundaries from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea,* and from the eastern wilderness to the Euphrates River.* I will hand over to you the people now living in the land, and you will drive them out ahead of you.

32"Make no treaties with them or their gods. 33They must not live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me. If you serve their gods, you will be caught in the trap of idolatry."

Exodus 24

ISRAEL ACCEPTS THE LORD'S COVENANT

1Then the LORD instructed Moses: "Come up here to me, and bring along Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of Israel's elders. All of you must worship from a distance. 2Only Moses is allowed to come near to the LORD. The others must not come near, and none of the other people are allowed to climb up the mountain with him."

3Then Moses went down to the people and repeated all the instructions and regulations the LORD had given him. All the people answered with one voice, "We will do everything the LORD has commanded."

4Then Moses carefully wrote down all the LORD's instructions. Early the next morning Moses got up and built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He also set up twelve pillars, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. 5Then he sent some of the young Israelite men to present burnt offerings and to sacrifice bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. 6Moses drained half the blood from these animals into basins. The other half he splattered against the altar.

7Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people. Again they all responded, "We will do everything the LORD has commanded. We will obey."

8Then Moses took the blood from the basins and splattered it over
the people, declaring, “Look, this blood confirms the covenant the
LORD has made with you in giving you these instructions.”

9Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel
climbed up the mountain. 10There they saw the God of Israel. Under
his feet there seemed to be a surface of brilliant blue lapis lazuli, as
clear as the sky itself. 11And though these nobles of Israel gazed
upon God, he did not destroy them. In fact, they ate a covenant
meal, eating and drinking in his presence!

12Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain.
Stay there, and I will give you the tablets of stone on which I have
inscribed the instructions and commands so you can teach the
people.” 13So Moses and his assistant Joshua set out, and Moses
climbed up the mountain of God.

14Moses told the elders, “Stay here and wait for us until we come
back. Aaron and Hur are here with you. If anyone has a dispute
while I am gone, consult with them.”

15Then Moses climbed up the mountain, and the cloud covered it.
16And the glory of the LORD settled down on Mount Sinai, and the
cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day the LORD called to
Moses from inside the cloud. 17To the Israelites at the foot of the
mountain, the glory of the LORD appeared at the summit like a
consuming fire. 18Then Moses disappeared into the cloud as he
climbed higher up the mountain. He remained on the mountain
forty days and forty nights.

Exodus 25

OFFERINGS FOR THE TABERNACLE

1The LORD said to Moses, 2“Tell the people of Israel to bring me
their sacred offerings. Accept the contributions from all whose
hearts are moved to offer them. 3Here is a list of sacred offerings
you may accept from them: gold, silver, and bronze;

4blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth;

5tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather; acacia wood;

6olive oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and the fragrant
incense;

7onyx stones, and other gemstones to be set in the ephod and the
priest’s chestpiece.

8“Have the people of Israel build me a holy sanctuary so I can live
among them. 9You must build this Tabernacle and its furnishings
exactly according to the pattern I will show you.

PLANS FOR THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

10“Have the people make an Ark of acacia wood—a sacred chest 45
inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high.*11Overlay it inside
and outside with pure gold, and run a molding of gold all around it.
12Cast four gold rings and attach them to its four feet, two rings on
each side. 13Make poles from acacia wood, and overlay them with

gold. 14Insert the poles into the rings at the sides of the Ark to carry
it. 15These carrying poles must stay inside the rings; never remove
them. 16When the Ark is finished, place inside it the stone tablets
inscribed with the terms of the covenant,* which I will give to you.

17"Then make the Ark's cover—the place of atonement—from pure
gold. It must be 45 inches long and 27 inches wide.*18Then make
two cherubim from hammered gold, and place them on the two
ends of the atonement cover. 19Mold the cherubim on each end of
the atonement cover, making it all of one piece of gold. 20The
cherubim will face each other and look down on the atonement
cover. With their wings spread above it, they will protect it. 21Place
inside the Ark the stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the
covenant, which I will give to you. Then put the atonement cover
on top of the Ark. 22I will meet with you there and talk to you from
above the atonement cover between the gold cherubim that hover
over the Ark of the Covenant.* From there I will give you my
commands for the people of Israel.

PLANS FOR THE TABLE

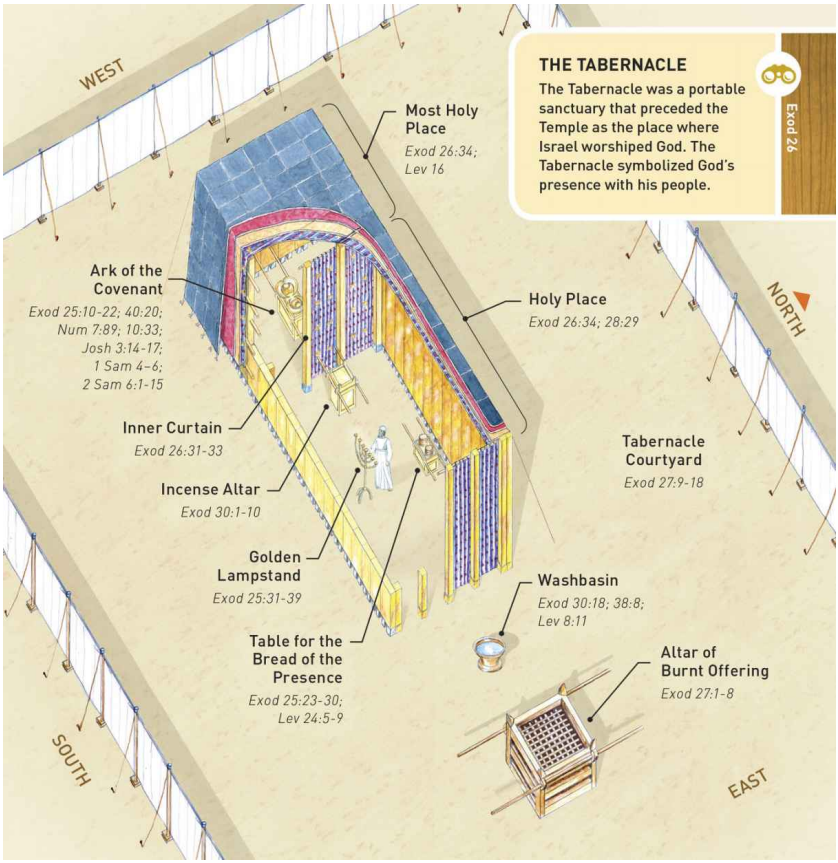
23"Then make a table of acacia wood, 36 inches long, 18 inches
wide, and 27 inches high.*24Overlay it with pure gold and run a
gold molding around the edge. 25Decorate it with a 3-inch border*
all around, and run a gold molding along the border. 26Make four
gold rings for the table and attach them at the four corners next to
the four legs. 27Attach the rings near the border to hold the poles
that are used to carry the table. 28Make these poles from acacia
wood, and overlay them with gold. 29Make special containers of
pure gold for the table—bowls, ladles, pitchers, and jars—to be
used in pouring out liquid offerings. 30Place the Bread of the
Presence on the table to remain before me at all times.

PLANS FOR THE LAMPSTAND

31"Make a lampstand of pure, hammered gold. Make the entire

lampstand and its decorations of one piece—the base, center stem, lamp cups, buds, and petals. 32Make it with six branches going out from the center stem, three on each side. 33Each of the six branches will have three lamp cups shaped like almond blossoms, complete with buds and petals. 34Craft the center stem of the lampstand with four lamp cups shaped like almond blossoms, complete with buds and petals. 35There will also be an almond bud beneath each pair of branches where the six branches extend from the center stem. 36The almond buds and branches must all be of one piece with the center stem, and they must be hammered from pure gold. 37Then make the seven lamps for the lampstand, and set them so they reflect their light forward. 38The lamp snuffers and trays must also be made of pure gold. 39You will need 75 pounds* of pure gold for the lampstand and its accessories.

40“Be sure that you make everything according to the pattern I have shown you here on the mountain.



THE TABERNACLE

Exodus 26

PLANS FOR THE TABERNACLE

1 "Make the Tabernacle from ten curtains of finely woven linen.
Decorate the curtains with blue, purple, and scarlet thread and with
skillfully embroidered cherubim. 2 These ten curtains must all be
exactly the same size—42 feet long and 6 feet wide.* 3 Join five of
these curtains together to make one long curtain, then join the
other five into a second long curtain. 4 Put loops of blue yarn along
the edge of the last curtain in each set. 5 The fifty loops along the

edge of one curtain are to match the fifty loops along the edge of the other curtain. 6Then make fifty gold clasps and fasten the long curtains together with the clasps. In this way, the Tabernacle will be made of one continuous piece.

7“Make eleven curtains of goat-hair cloth to serve as a tent covering for the Tabernacle. 8These eleven curtains must all be exactly the same size—45 feet long and 6 feet wide.* 9Join five of these curtains together to make one long curtain, and join the other six into a second long curtain. Allow 3 feet of material from the second set of curtains to hang over the front* of the sacred tent. 10Make fifty loops for one edge of each large curtain. 11Then make fifty bronze clasps, and fasten the loops of the long curtains with the clasps. In this way, the tent covering will be made of one continuous piece. 12The remaining 3 feet* of this tent covering will be left to hang over the back of the Tabernacle. 13Allow 18 inches* of remaining material to hang down over each side, so the Tabernacle is completely covered. 14Complete the tent covering with a protective layer of tanned ram skins and a layer of fine goatskin leather.

15“For the framework of the Tabernacle, construct frames of acacia wood. 16Each frame must be 15 feet high and 27 inches wide,* 17with two pegs under each frame. Make all the frames identical. 18Make twenty of these frames to support the curtains on the south side of the Tabernacle. 19Also make forty silver bases—two bases under each frame, with the pegs fitting securely into the bases. 20For the north side of the Tabernacle, make another twenty frames, 21with their forty silver bases, two bases under each frame. 22Make six frames for the rear—the west side of the Tabernacle— 23along with two additional frames to reinforce the rear corners of the Tabernacle. 24These corner frames will be matched at the bottom and firmly attached at the top with a single ring, forming a single corner unit. Make both of these corner units the same way. 25So there will be eight frames at the rear of the Tabernacle, set in sixteen silver bases—two bases under each frame.

26“Make crossbars of acacia wood to link the frames, five crossbars for the north side of the Tabernacle 27and five for the south side.

Also make five crossbars for the rear of the Tabernacle, which will face west. 28The middle crossbar, attached halfway up the frames, will run all the way from one end of the Tabernacle to the other. 29Overlay the frames with gold, and make gold rings to hold the crossbars. Overlay the crossbars with gold as well.

30“Set up this Tabernacle according to the pattern you were shown on the mountain.

31“For the inside of the Tabernacle, make a special curtain of finely woven linen. Decorate it with blue, purple, and scarlet thread and with skillfully embroidered cherubim. 32Hang this curtain on gold hooks attached to four posts of acacia wood. Overlay the posts with gold, and set them in four silver bases. 33Hang the inner curtain from clasps, and put the Ark of the Covenant* in the room behind it. This curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

34“Then put the Ark’s cover—the place of atonement—on top of the Ark of the Covenant inside the Most Holy Place. 35Place the table outside the inner curtain on the north side of the Tabernacle, and place the lampstand across the room on the south side.

36“Make another curtain for the entrance to the sacred tent. Make it of finely woven linen and embroider it with exquisite designs, using blue, purple, and scarlet thread. 37Craft five posts from acacia wood. Overlay them with gold, and hang the curtain from them with gold hooks. Cast five bronze bases for the posts.

Exodus 27

PLANS FOR THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING

1“Using acacia wood, construct a square altar 7 1/2 feet wide, 7 1/2
feet long, and 4 1/2 feet high.*2Make horns for each of its four
corners so that the horns and altar are all one piece. Overlay the
altar with bronze. 3Make ash buckets, shovels, basins, meat forks,
and firepans, all of bronze. 4Make a bronze grating for it, and attach
four bronze rings at its four corners. 5Install the grating halfway
down the side of the altar, under the ledge. 6For carrying the altar,
make poles from acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze.
7Insert the poles through the rings on the two sides of the altar.
8The altar must be hollow, made from planks. Build it just as you
were shown on the mountain.

PLANS FOR THE COURTYARD

9“Then make the courtyard for the Tabernacle, enclosed with
curtains made of finely woven linen. On the south side, make the
curtains 150 feet long.*10They will be held up by twenty posts set
securely in twenty bronze bases. Hang the curtains with silver
hooks and rings. 11Make the curtains the same on the north side—
150 feet of curtains held up by twenty posts set securely in bronze
bases. Hang the curtains with silver hooks and rings. 12The curtains
on the west end of the courtyard will be 75 feet long,* supported by
ten posts set into ten bases. 13The east end of the courtyard, the
front, will also be 75 feet long. 14The courtyard entrance will be on
the east end, flanked by two curtains. The curtain on the right side
will be 22 1/2 feet long,* supported by three posts set into three
bases. 15The curtain on the left side will also be 22 1/2 feet long,
supported by three posts set into three bases.

16“For the entrance to the courtyard, make a curtain that is 30 feet
long.* Make it from finely woven linen, and decorate it with
beautiful embroidery in blue, purple, and scarlet thread. Support it
with four posts, each securely set in its own base. 17All the posts

around the courtyard must have silver rings and hooks and bronze bases. 18So the entire courtyard will be 150 feet long and 75 feet wide, with curtain walls 7 1/2 feet high,* made from finely woven linen. The bases for the posts will be made of bronze.

19"All the articles used in the rituals of the Tabernacle, including all the tent pegs used to support the Tabernacle and the courtyard curtains, must be made of bronze.

LIGHT FOR THE TABERNACLE

20"Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to keep the lamps burning continually. 21The lampstand will stand in the Tabernacle, in front of the inner curtain that shields the Ark of the Covenant.* Aaron and his sons must keep the lamps burning in the LORD's presence all night. This is a permanent law for the people of Israel, and it must be observed from generation to generation.

Exodus 28

CLOTHING FOR THE PRIESTS

1“Call for your brother, Aaron, and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar,
and Ithamar. Set them apart from the rest of the people of Israel so
they may minister to me and be my priests. 2Make sacred garments
for Aaron that are glorious and beautiful. 3Instruct all the skilled
craftsmen whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom. Have them
make garments for Aaron that will distinguish him as a priest set
apart for my service. 4These are the garments they are to make: a
chestpiece, an ephod, a robe, a patterned tunic, a turban, and a
sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother,
Aaron, and his sons to wear when they serve me as priests. 5So give
them fine linen cloth, gold thread, and blue, purple, and scarlet
thread.

DESIGN OF THE EPHOD

6“The craftsmen must make the ephod of finely woven linen and
skillfully embroider it with gold and with blue, purple, and scarlet
thread. 7It will consist of two pieces, front and back, joined at the
shoulders with two shoulder-pieces. 8The decorative sash will be
made of the same materials: finely woven linen embroidered with
gold and with blue, purple, and scarlet thread.

9“Take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the
tribes of Israel. 10Six names will be on each stone, arranged in the
order of the births of the original sons of Israel. 11Engrave these
names on the two stones in the same way a jeweler engraves a seal.
Then mount the stones in settings of gold filigree. 12Fasten the two
stones on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod as a reminder that Aaron
represents the people of Israel. Aaron will carry these names on his
shoulders as a constant reminder whenever he goes before the
LORD. 13Make the settings of gold filigree, 14then braid two cords of
pure gold and attach them to the filigree settings on the shoulders
of the ephod.

DESIGN OF THE CHESTPIECE

15“Then, with great skill and care, make a chestpiece to be worn for

seeking a decision from God.* Make it to match the ephod, using
finely woven linen embroidered with gold and with blue, purple,
and scarlet thread. 16Make the chestpiece of a single piece of cloth
folded to form a pouch nine inches* square. 17Mount four rows of
gemstones* on it. The first row will contain a red carnelian, a pale-
green peridot, and an emerald. 18The second row will contain a
turquoise, a blue lapis lazuli, and a white moonstone. 19The third
row will contain an orange jacinth, an agate, and a purple
amethyst. 20The fourth row will contain a blue-green beryl, an onyx,
and a green jasper. All these stones will be set in gold filigree.
21Each stone will represent one of the twelve sons of Israel, and the
name of that tribe will be engraved on it like a seal.

22"To attach the chestpiece to the ephod, make braided cords of
pure gold thread. 23Then make two gold rings and attach them to
the top corners of the chestpiece. 24Tie the two gold cords to the
two rings on the chestpiece. 25Tie the other ends of the cords to the
gold settings on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod. 26Then make two
more gold rings and attach them to the inside edges of the
chestpiece next to the ephod. 27And make two more gold rings and
attach them to the front of the ephod, below the shoulder-pieces,
just above the knot where the decorative sash is fastened to the
ephod. 28Then attach the bottom rings of the chestpiece to the rings
on the ephod with blue cords. This will hold the chestpiece securely
to the ephod above the decorative sash.

29"In this way, Aaron will carry the names of the tribes of Israel on
the sacred chestpiece* over his heart when he goes into the Holy
Place. This will be a continual reminder that he represents the
people when he comes before the LORD. 30Insert the Urim and
Thummim into the sacred chestpiece so they will be carried over
Aaron's heart when he goes into the LORD's presence. In this way,
Aaron will always carry over his heart the objects used to determine
the LORD's will for his people whenever he goes in before the
LORD.

ADDITIONAL CLOTHING FOR THE PRIESTS

31“Make the robe that is worn with the ephod from a single piece of
blue cloth, 32with an opening for Aaron’s head in the middle of it.
Reinforce the opening with a woven collar* so it will not tear.
33Make pomegranates out of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and
attach them to the hem of the robe, with gold bells between them.
34The gold bells and pomegranates are to alternate all around the
hem. 35Aaron will wear this robe whenever he ministers before the
LORD, and the bells will tinkle as he goes in and out of the LORD’s
presence in the Holy Place. If he wears it, he will not die.

36“Next make a medallion of pure gold, and engrave it like a seal
with these words: HOLY TO THE LORD. 37Attach the medallion
with a blue cord to the front of Aaron’s turban, where it must
remain. 38Aaron must wear it on his forehead so he may take on
himself any guilt of the people of Israel when they consecrate their
sacred offerings. He must always wear it on his forehead so the
LORD will accept the people.

39“Weave Aaron’s patterned tunic from fine linen cloth. Fashion the
turban from this linen as well. Also make a sash, and decorate it
with colorful embroidery.

40“For Aaron’s sons, make tunics, sashes, and special head coverings
that are glorious and beautiful. 41Clothe your brother, Aaron, and
his sons with these garments, and then anoint and ordain them.
Consecrate them so they can serve as my priests. 42Also make linen
undergarments for them, to be worn next to their bodies, reaching
from their hips to their thighs. 43These must be worn whenever
Aaron and his sons enter the Tabernacle* or approach the altar in
the Holy Place to perform their priestly duties. Then they will not
incur guilt and die. This is a permanent law for Aaron and all his
descendants after him.

Exodus 29

DEDICATION OF THE PRIESTS

1"This is the ceremony you must follow when you consecrate Aaron
and his sons to serve me as priests: Take a young bull and two rams
with no defects. 2Then, using choice wheat flour and no yeast, make
loaves of bread, thin cakes mixed with olive oil, and wafers spread
with oil. 3Place them all in a single basket, and present them at the
entrance of the Tabernacle, along with the young bull and the two
rams.

4"Present Aaron and his sons at the entrance of the Tabernacle,* and
wash them with water. 5Dress Aaron in his priestly garments—the
tunic, the robe worn with the ephod, the ephod itself, and the
chestpiece. Then wrap the decorative sash of the ephod around him.
6Place the turban on his head, and fasten the sacred medallion to
the turban. 7Then anoint him by pouring the anointing oil over his
head. 8Next present his sons, and dress them in their tunics. 9Wrap
the sashes around the waists of Aaron and his sons, and put their
special head coverings on them. Then the right to the priesthood
will be theirs by law forever. In this way, you will ordain Aaron and
his sons.

10"Bring the young bull to the entrance of the Tabernacle, where
Aaron and his sons will lay their hands on its head. 11Then slaughter
the bull in the LORD's presence at the entrance of the Tabernacle.
12Put some of its blood on the horns of the altar with your finger,
and pour out the rest at the base of the altar. 13Take all the fat

around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat around them, and burn it all on the altar. 14Then take the rest of the bull, including its hide, meat, and dung, and burn it outside the camp as a sin offering.

15“Next Aaron and his sons must lay their hands on the head of one of the rams. 16Then slaughter the ram, and splatter its blood against all sides of the altar. 17Cut the ram into pieces, and wash off the internal organs and the legs. Set them alongside the head and the other pieces of the body, 18then burn the entire animal on the altar. This is a burnt offering to the LORD; it is a pleasing aroma, a special gift presented to the LORD.

19“Now take the other ram, and have Aaron and his sons lay their hands on its head. 20Then slaughter it, and apply some of its blood to the right earlobes of Aaron and his sons. Also put it on the thumbs of their right hands and the big toes of their right feet. Splatter the rest of the blood against all sides of the altar. 21Then take some of the blood from the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his sons and on their garments. In this way, they and their garments will be set apart as holy.

22“Since this is the ram for the ordination of Aaron and his sons, take the fat of the ram, including the fat of the broad tail, the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat around them, along with the right thigh. 23Then take one round loaf of bread, one thin cake mixed with olive oil, and one wafer from the basket of bread without yeast that was placed in the LORD’s presence. 24Put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons to be lifted up as a special offering to the LORD. 25Afterward take the various breads from their hands, and burn them on the altar along with the burnt offering. It is a pleasing aroma to the LORD, a special gift for him. 26Then take the breast of Aaron’s ordination ram, and lift it up in the LORD’s presence as a special offering to him. Then keep it as your own portion.

27“Set aside the portions of the ordination ram that belong to Aaron

and his sons. This includes the breast and the thigh that were lifted up before the LORD as a special offering. 28In the future, whenever the people of Israel lift up a peace offering, a portion of it must be set aside for Aaron and his descendants. This is their permanent right, and it is a sacred offering from the Israelites to the LORD.

29"Aaron's sacred garments must be preserved for his descendants who succeed him, and they will wear them when they are anointed and ordained. 30The descendant who succeeds him as high priest will wear these clothes for seven days as he ministers in the Tabernacle and the Holy Place.

31"Take the ram used in the ordination ceremony, and boil its meat in a sacred place. 32Then Aaron and his sons will eat this meat, along with the bread in the basket, at the Tabernacle entrance. 33They alone may eat the meat and bread used for their purification* in the ordination ceremony. No one else may eat them, for these things are set apart and holy. 34If any of the ordination meat or bread remains until the morning, it must be burned. It may not be eaten, for it is holy.

35"This is how you will ordain Aaron and his sons to their offices, just as I have commanded you. The ordination ceremony will go on for seven days. 36Each day you must sacrifice a young bull as a sin offering to purify them, making them right with the LORD.* Afterward, cleanse the altar by purifying it*; make it holy by anointing it with oil. 37Purify the altar, and consecrate it every day for seven days. After that, the altar will be absolutely holy, and whatever touches it will become holy.

38"These are the sacrifices you are to offer regularly on the altar. Each day, offer two lambs that are a year old, 39one in the morning and the other in the evening. 40With one of them, offer two quarts of choice flour mixed with one quart of pure oil of pressed olives; also, offer one quart of wine* as a liquid offering. 41Offer the other lamb in the evening, along with the same offerings of flour and wine as in the morning. It will be a pleasing aroma, a special gift

presented to the LORD.

42“These burnt offerings are to be made each day from generation
to generation. Offer them in the LORD’s presence at the Tabernacle
entrance; there I will meet with you and speak with you. 43I will
meet the people of Israel there, in the place made holy by my
glorious presence. 44Yes, I will consecrate the Tabernacle and the
altar, and I will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as
priests. 45Then I will live among the people of Israel and be their
God, 46and they will know that I am the LORD their God. I am the
one who brought them out of the land of Egypt so that I could live
among them. I am the LORD their God.

Exodus 30

PLANS FOR THE INCENSE ALTAR

1“Then make another altar of acacia wood for burning incense.
2Make it 18 inches square and 36 inches high,* with horns at the
corners carved from the same piece of wood as the altar itself.
3Overlay the top, sides, and horns of the altar with pure gold, and
run a gold molding around the entire altar. 4Make two gold rings,
and attach them on opposite sides of the altar below the gold
molding to hold the carrying poles. 5Make the poles of acacia wood
and overlay them with gold. 6Place the incense altar just outside the
inner curtain that shields the Ark of the Covenant,* in front of the
Ark’s cover—the place of atonement—that covers the tablets
inscribed with the terms of the covenant.* I will meet with you
there.

7“Every morning when Aaron maintains the lamps, he must burn
fragrant incense on the altar. 8And each evening when he lights the
lamps, he must again burn incense in the LORD’s presence. This
must be done from generation to generation. 9Do not offer any
unholy incense on this altar, or any burnt offerings, grain offerings,
or liquid offerings.

10“Once a year Aaron must purify* the altar by smearing its horns
with blood from the offering made to purify the people from their
sin. This will be a regular, annual event from generation to
generation, for this is the LORD’s most holy altar.”

MONEY FOR THE TABERNACLE

11Then the LORD said to Moses, 12“Whenever you take a census of
the people of Israel, each man who is counted must pay a ransom
for himself to the LORD. Then no plague will strike the people as
you count them. 13Each person who is counted must give a small
piece of silver as a sacred offering to the LORD. (This payment is
half a shekel,* based on the sanctuary shekel, which equals twenty
gerahs.) 14All who have reached their twentieth birthday must give
this sacred offering to the LORD. 15When this offering is given to the
LORD to purify your lives, making you right with him,* the rich
must not give more than the specified amount, and the poor must
not give less. 16Receive this ransom money from the Israelites, and
use it for the care of the Tabernacle.* It will bring the Israelites to
the LORD’s attention, and it will purify your lives.”

PLANS FOR THE WASHBASIN

17Then the LORD said to Moses, 18“Make a bronze washbasin with a
bronze stand. Place it between the Tabernacle and the altar, and fill
it with water. 19Aaron and his sons will wash their hands and feet
there. 20They must wash with water whenever they go into the
Tabernacle to appear before the LORD and when they approach the
altar to burn up their special gifts to the LORD—or they will die!
21They must always wash their hands and feet, or they will die. This
is a permanent law for Aaron and his descendants, to be observed
from generation to generation.”

THE ANOINTING OIL

22Then the LORD said to Moses, 23“Collect choice spices—12*1/2*
pounds of pure myrrh, 6*1/4* pounds of fragrant cinnamon, 6*1/4*

pounds of fragrant calamus,*24and 12 1/2 pounds of cassia*—as
measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel. Also get one gallon
of olive oil.*25Like a skilled incense maker, blend these ingredients
to make a holy anointing oil. 26Use this sacred oil to anoint the
Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, 27the table and all its utensils,
the lampstand and all its accessories, the incense altar, 28the altar of
burnt offering and all its utensils, and the washbasin with its stand.
29Consecrate them to make them absolutely holy. After this,
whatever touches them will also become holy.

30"Anoint Aaron and his sons also, consecrating them to serve me as
priests. 31And say to the people of Israel, 'This holy anointing oil is
reserved for me from generation to generation. 32It must never be
used to anoint anyone else, and you must never make any blend
like it for yourselves. It is holy, and you must treat it as holy.
33Anyone who makes a blend like it or anoints someone other than
a priest will be cut off from the community.'"

THE INCENSE

34Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather fragrant spices—resin
droplets, mollusk shell, and galbanum—and mix these fragrant
spices with pure frankincense, weighed out in equal amounts.
35Using the usual techniques of the incense maker, blend the spices
together and sprinkle them with salt to produce a pure and holy
incense. 36Grind some of the mixture into a very fine powder and
put it in front of the Ark of the Covenant,* where I will meet with
you in the Tabernacle. You must treat this incense as most holy.
37Never use this formula to make this incense for yourselves. It is
reserved for the LORD, and you must treat it as holy. 38Anyone who
makes incense like this for personal use will be cut off from the
community."

HOLY SPIRIT EXODUS 31:1-11

Exodus 31

CRAFTSMEN: BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2“Look, I have specifically chosen
Bezalel son of Uri, grandson of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3I have
filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, ability,
and expertise in all kinds of crafts. 4He is a master craftsman, expert
in working with gold, silver, and bronze. 5He is skilled in engraving
and mounting gemstones and in carving wood. He is a master at
every craft!

6“And I have personally appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the
tribe of Dan, to be his assistant. Moreover, I have given special skill
to all the gifted craftsmen so they can make all the things I have
commanded you to make:

7the Tabernacle;*
the Ark of the Covenant;*
the Ark’s cover—the place of atonement; all the furnishings of the
Tabernacle;

8the table and its utensils; the pure gold lampstand with all its
accessories; the incense altar;

9the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils; the washbasin with
its stand;

10the beautifully stitched garments—the sacred garments for Aaron
the priest, and the garments for his sons to wear as they minister as
priests;

11the anointing oil; the fragrant incense for the Holy Place.

The craftsmen must make everything as I have commanded you."

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SABBATH

12The LORD then gave these instructions to Moses: 13"Tell the
people of Israel: 'Be careful to keep my Sabbath day, for the
Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between me and you from
generation to generation. It is given so you may know that I am the
LORD, who makes you holy. 14You must keep the Sabbath day, for it
is a holy day for you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to
death; anyone who works on that day will be cut off from the
community. 15You have six days each week for your ordinary work,
but the seventh day must be a Sabbath day of complete rest, a holy
day dedicated to the LORD. Anyone who works on the Sabbath
must be put to death. 16The people of Israel must keep the Sabbath
day by observing it from generation to generation. This is a
covenant obligation for all time. 17It is a permanent sign of my
covenant with the people of Israel. For in six days the LORD made
heaven and earth, but on the seventh day he stopped working and
was refreshed.'"

18When the LORD finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he
gave him the two stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the
covenant,* written by the finger of God.

Exodus 32

THE GOLD CALF

1When the people saw how long it was taking Moses to come back
down the mountain, they gathered around Aaron. “Come on,” they
said, “make us some gods who can lead us. We don’t know what
happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land
of Egypt.”

2So Aaron said, “Take the gold rings from the ears of your wives
and sons and daughters, and bring them to me.”

3All the people took the gold rings from their ears and brought
them to Aaron. 4Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and
molded it into the shape of a calf. When the people saw it, they
exclaimed, “O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of the
land of Egypt!”

5Aaron saw how excited the people were, so he built an altar in
front of the calf. Then he announced, “Tomorrow will be a festival
to the LORD!”

6The people got up early the next morning to sacrifice burnt
offerings and peace offerings. After this, they celebrated with
feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry.

7The LORD told Moses, “Quick! Go down the mountain! Your
people whom you brought from the land of Egypt have corrupted
themselves. 8How quickly they have turned away from the way I
commanded them to live! They have melted down gold and made a
calf, and they have bowed down and sacrificed to it. They are
saying, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of the
land of Egypt.’”

9Then the LORD said, “I have seen how stubborn and rebellious
these people are. 10Now leave me alone so my fierce anger can blaze
against them, and I will destroy them. Then I will make you, Moses,
into a great nation.”

11But Moses tried to pacify the LORD his God. “O LORD!” he said.
“Why are you so angry with your own people whom you brought
from the land of Egypt with such great power and such a strong
hand? 12Why let the Egyptians say, ‘Their God rescued them with

the evil intention of slaughtering them in the mountains and wiping them from the face of the earth'? Turn away from your fierce anger. Change your mind about this terrible disaster you have threatened against your people! 13Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* You bound yourself with an oath to them, saying, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven. And I will give them all of this land that I have promised to your descendants, and they will possess it forever.'"

14So the LORD changed his mind about the terrible disaster he had threatened to bring on his people.

15Then Moses turned and went down the mountain. He held in his hands the two stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant.* They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. 16These tablets were God's work; the words on them were written by God himself.

17When Joshua heard the boisterous noise of the people shouting below them, he exclaimed to Moses, "It sounds like war in the camp!"

18But Moses replied, "No, it's not a shout of victory nor the wailing of defeat. I hear the sound of a celebration."

19When they came near the camp, Moses saw the calf and the dancing, and he burned with anger. He threw the stone tablets to the ground, smashing them at the foot of the mountain. 20He took the calf they had made and burned it. Then he ground it into powder, threw it into the water, and forced the people to drink it.

21Finally, he turned to Aaron and demanded, "What did these people do to you to make you bring such terrible sin upon them?"

22“Don’t get so upset, my lord,” Aaron replied. “You yourself know
how evil these people are. 23They said to me, ‘Make us gods who
will lead us. We don’t know what happened to this fellow Moses,
who brought us here from the land of Egypt.’ 24So I told them,
‘Whoever has gold jewelry, take it off.’ When they brought it to me,
I simply threw it into the fire—and out came this calf!”

25Moses saw that Aaron had let the people get completely out of
control, much to the amusement of their enemies.*26So he stood at
the entrance to the camp and shouted, “All of you who are on the
LORD’s side, come here and join me.” And all the Levites gathered
around him.

27Moses told them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says:
Each of you, take your swords and go back and forth from one end
of the camp to the other. Kill everyone—even your brothers,
friends, and neighbors.” 28The Levites obeyed Moses’ command, and
about 3,000 people died that day.

29Then Moses told the Levites, “Today you have ordained
yourselves* for the service of the LORD, for you obeyed him even
though it meant killing your own sons and brothers. Today you
have earned a blessing.”

MOSES INTERCEDES FOR ISRAEL

30The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a
terrible sin, but I will go back up to the LORD on the mountain.
Perhaps I will be able to obtain forgiveness* for your sin.”

31So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Oh, what a terrible sin
these people have committed. They have made gods of gold for
themselves. 32But now, if you will only forgive their sin—but if not,
erase my name from the record you have written!”

33But the LORD replied to Moses, “No, I will erase the name of
everyone who has sinned against me. 34Now go, lead the people to
the place I told you about. Look! My angel will lead the way before
you. And when I come to call the people to account, I will certainly
hold them responsible for their sins.”

35Then the LORD sent a great plague upon the people because they
had worshiped the calf Aaron had made.

FACING GOD EXODUS 33:1-23

Exodus 33

1The LORD said to Moses, “Get going, you and the people you
brought up from the land of Egypt. Go up to the land I swore to
give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I told them, ‘I will give this land
to your descendants.’ 2And I will send an angel before you to drive
out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and

Jebusites. 3Go up to this land that flows with milk and honey. But I will not travel among you, for you are a stubborn and rebellious people. If I did, I would surely destroy you along the way."

4When the people heard these stern words, they went into mourning and stopped wearing their jewelry and fine clothes. 5For the LORD had told Moses to tell them, "You are a stubborn and rebellious people. If I were to travel with you for even a moment, I would destroy you. Remove your jewelry and fine clothes while I decide what to do with you." 6So from the time they left Mount Sinai,* the Israelites wore no more jewelry or fine clothes.

7It was Moses' practice to take the Tent of Meeting* and set it up some distance from the camp. Everyone who wanted to make a

request of the LORD would go to the Tent of Meeting outside the camp.

8Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and stand in the entrances of their own tents. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside. 9As he went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at its entrance while the LORD spoke with Moses. 10When the people saw the cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they would stand and bow down in front of their own tents. 11Inside the Tent of Meeting, the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting.

MOSES SEES THE LORD'S GLORY

12One day Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Take these people up to the Promised Land.' But you haven't told me whom you will send with me. You have told me, 'I know you by name, and I look favorably on you.' 13If it is true that you look favorably on me, let me know your ways so I may understand you more fully and continue to enjoy your favor. And remember that this nation is your very own people."

14The LORD replied, "I will personally go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest—everything will be fine for you."

15Then Moses said, "If you don't personally go with us, don't make us leave this place. 16How will anyone know that you look favorably on me—on me and on your people—if you don't go with us? For your presence among us sets your people and me apart from all other people on the earth."

17The LORD replied to Moses, "I will indeed do what you have asked, for I look favorably on you, and I know you by name."

18Moses responded, “Then show me your glorious presence.”

19The LORD replied, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, Yahweh,* before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose. 20But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live.” 21The LORD continued, “Look, stand near me on this rock. 22As my glorious presence passes by, I will hide you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23Then I will remove my hand and let you see me from behind. But my face will not be seen.”

Exodus 34

A NEW COPY OF THE COVENANT

1Then the LORD told Moses, “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones. I will write on them the same words that were on the tablets you smashed. 2Be ready in the morning to climb up Mount Sinai and present yourself to me on the top of the mountain. 3No one else may come with you. In fact, no one is to appear anywhere on the mountain. Do not even let the flocks or herds graze near the mountain.”

4So Moses chiseled out two tablets of stone like the first ones. Early in the morning he climbed Mount Sinai as the LORD had commanded him, and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands.

5Then the LORD came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and he called out his own name, Yahweh.*6The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh!* The LORD!

The God of compassion and mercy!
I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

7I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations.*
I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin.
But I do not excuse the guilty.
I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren;
the entire family is affected— even children in the third and fourth generations."

8Moses immediately threw himself to the ground and worshiped.
9And he said, "O Lord, if it is true that I have found favor with you, then please travel with us. Yes, this is a stubborn and rebellious people, but please forgive our iniquity and our sins. Claim us as your own special possession."

10The LORD replied, "Listen, I am making a covenant with you in the presence of all your people. I will perform miracles that have never been performed anywhere in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people around you will see the power of the LORD—the awesome power I will display for you. 11But listen carefully to everything I command you today. Then I will go ahead of you and drive out the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

SKIP TO 34:27

12"Be very careful never to make a treaty with the people who live in the land where you are going. If you do, you will follow their evil ways and be trapped. 13Instead, you must break down their pagan altars, smash their sacred pillars, and cut down their Asherah poles. 14You must worship no other gods, for the LORD, whose very name is Jealous, is a God who is jealous about his relationship with you.

15"You must not make a treaty of any kind with the people living in the land. They lust after their gods, offering sacrifices to them. They will invite you to join them in their sacrificial meals, and you will go with them. 16Then you will accept their daughters, who sacrifice to other gods, as wives for your sons. And they will seduce your sons to commit adultery against me by worshiping other gods. 17You must not make any gods of molten metal for yourselves.

18“You must celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven
days the bread you eat must be made without yeast, just as I
commanded you. Celebrate this festival annually at the appointed
time in early spring, in the month of Abib,* for that is the
anniversary of your departure from Egypt.

19“The firstborn of every animal belongs to me, including the
firstborn males* from your herds of cattle and your flocks of sheep
and goats. 20A firstborn donkey may be bought back from the LORD
by presenting a lamb or young goat in its place. But if you do not
buy it back, you must break its neck. However, you must buy back
every firstborn son.

“No one may appear before me without an offering.

21“You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but on the
seventh day you must stop working, even during the seasons of
plowing and harvest.

22“You must celebrate the Festival of Harvest* with the first crop of
the wheat harvest, and celebrate the Festival of the Final Harvest*
at the end of the harvest season. 23Three times each year every man
in Israel must appear before the Sovereign, the LORD, the God of
Israel. 24I will drive out the other nations ahead of you and expand
your territory, so no one will covet and conquer your land while
you appear before the LORD your God three times each year.

25“You must not offer the blood of my sacrificial offerings together
with any baked goods containing yeast. And none of the meat of the
Passover sacrifice may be kept over until the next morning.

26“As you harvest your crops, bring the very best of the first harvest
to the house of the LORD your God.

“You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

27Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write down all these instructions,
for they represent the terms of the covenant I am making with you
and with Israel.”

28Moses remained there on the mountain with the LORD forty days
and forty nights. In all that time he ate no bread and drank no
water. And the LORD* wrote the terms of the covenant—the Ten
Commandments*—on the stone tablets.

29When Moses came down Mount Sinai carrying the two stone
tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant,* he wasn’t aware
that his face had become radiant because he had spoken to the
LORD. 30So when Aaron and the people of Israel saw the radiance of
Moses’ face, they were afraid to come near him.

31But Moses called out to them and asked Aaron and all the leaders
of the community to come over, and he talked with them. 32Then all
the people of Israel approached him, and Moses gave them all the
instructions the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai. 33When Moses
finished speaking with them, he covered his face with a veil. 34But
whenever he went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with the LORD,
he would remove the veil until he came out again. Then he would
give the people whatever instructions the LORD had given him,
35and the people of Israel would see the radiant glow of his face. So
he would put the veil over his face until he returned to speak with
the LORD.

Exodus 35

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SABBATH

1Then Moses called together the whole community of Israel and told
them, “These are the instructions the LORD has commanded you to
follow. 2You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but
the seventh day must be a Sabbath day of complete rest, a holy day
dedicated to the LORD. Anyone who works on that day must be put
to death. 3You must not even light a fire in any of your homes on
the Sabbath.”

OFFERINGS FOR THE TABERNACLE

4Then Moses said to the whole community of Israel, “This is what
the LORD has commanded: 5Take a sacred offering for the LORD.
Let those with generous hearts present the following gifts to the
LORD: gold, silver, and bronze;

6blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth;

7tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather; acacia wood;

8olive oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and the fragrant
incense;

9onyx stones, and other gemstones to be set in the ephod and the
priest’s chestpiece.

10“Come, all of you who are gifted craftsmen. Construct everything
that the LORD has commanded:

11the Tabernacle and its sacred tent, its covering, clasps, frames,
crossbars, posts, and bases;

12the Ark and its carrying poles; the Ark's cover—the place of
atonement; the inner curtain to shield the Ark;

13the table, its carrying poles, and all its utensils; the Bread of the
Presence;

14for light, the lampstand, its accessories, the lamp cups, and the
olive oil for lighting;

15the incense altar and its carrying poles; the anointing oil and
fragrant incense; the curtain for the entrance of the Tabernacle;

16the altar of burnt offering; the bronze grating of the altar and its
carrying poles and utensils; the washbasin with its stand;

17the curtains for the walls of the courtyard; the posts and their
bases; the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard;

18the tent pegs of the Tabernacle and courtyard and their ropes;

19the beautifully stitched garments for the priests to wear while
ministering in the Holy Place—the sacred garments for Aaron the
priest, and the garments for his sons to wear as they minister as
priests."

20So the whole community of Israel left Moses and returned to their
tents. 21All whose hearts were stirred and whose spirits were moved
came and brought their sacred offerings to the LORD. They brought
all the materials needed for the Tabernacle,* for the performance of
its rituals, and for the sacred garments. 22Both men and women
came, all whose hearts were willing. They brought to the LORD
their offerings of gold—brooches, earrings, rings from their fingers,
and necklaces. They presented gold objects of every kind as a
special offering to the LORD. 23All those who owned the following
items willingly brought them: blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine
linen and goat hair for cloth; and tanned ram skins and fine
goatskin leather. 24And all who had silver and bronze objects gave
them as a sacred offering to the LORD. And those who had acacia

wood brought it for use in the project.

25All the women who were skilled in sewing and spinning prepared
blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine linen cloth. 26All the
women who were willing used their skills to spin the goat hair into
yarn. 27The leaders brought onyx stones and the special gemstones
to be set in the ephod and the priest's chestpiece. 28They also
brought spices and olive oil for the light, the anointing oil, and the
fragrant incense. 29So the people of Israel—every man and woman
who was eager to help in the work the LORD had given them
through Moses—brought their gifts and gave them freely to the
LORD.

30Then Moses told the people of Israel, "The LORD has specifically
chosen Bezalel son of Uri, grandson of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.
31The LORD has filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God, giving him
great wisdom, ability, and expertise in all kinds of crafts. 32He is a
master craftsman, expert in working with gold, silver, and bronze.
33He is skilled in engraving and mounting gemstones and in carving
wood. He is a master at every craft. 34And the LORD has given both
him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability
to teach their skills to others. 35The LORD has given them special
skills as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple, and

scarlet thread on fine linen cloth, and weavers. They excel as craftsmen and as designers.

Exodus 36

1“The LORD has gifted Bezalel, Oholiab, and the other skilled craftsmen with wisdom and ability to perform any task involved in building the sanctuary. Let them construct and furnish the Tabernacle, just as the LORD has commanded.”

2So Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and all the others who were specially gifted by the LORD and were eager to get to work. 3Moses gave them the materials donated by the people of Israel as sacred offerings for the completion of the sanctuary. But the people continued to bring additional gifts each morning. 4Finally the craftsmen who were working on the sanctuary left their work. 5They went to Moses and reported, “The people have given more than enough materials to complete the job the LORD has commanded us to do!”

6So Moses gave the command, and this message was sent throughout the camp: “Men and women, don’t prepare any more gifts for the sanctuary. We have enough!” So the people stopped bringing their sacred offerings. 7Their contributions were more than enough to complete the whole project.

BUILDING THE TABERNACLE

8The skilled craftsmen made ten curtains of finely woven linen for the Tabernacle. Then Bezalel* decorated the curtains with blue, purple, and scarlet thread and with skillfully embroidered cherubim. 9All ten curtains were exactly the same size—42 feet long and 6 feet wide.*10Five of these curtains were joined together to make one long curtain, and the other five were joined to make a second long curtain. 11He made fifty loops of blue yarn and put them along the edge of the last curtain in each set. 12The fifty loops

along the edge of one curtain matched the fifty loops along the edge of the other curtain. 13Then he made fifty gold clasps and fastened the long curtains together with the clasps. In this way, the Tabernacle was made of one continuous piece.

14He made eleven curtains of goat-hair cloth to serve as a tent covering for the Tabernacle. 15These eleven curtains were all exactly the same size—45 feet long and 6 feet wide.*16Bezalel joined five of these curtains together to make one long curtain, and the other six were joined to make a second long curtain. 17He made fifty loops for the edge of each large curtain. 18He also made fifty bronze clasps to fasten the long curtains together. In this way, the tent covering was made of one continuous piece. 19He completed the tent covering with a layer of tanned ram skins and a layer of fine goatskin leather.

20For the framework of the Tabernacle, Bezalel constructed frames of acacia wood. 21Each frame was 15 feet high and 27 inches wide,*22with two pegs under each frame. All the frames were identical. 23He made twenty of these frames to support the curtains on the south side of the Tabernacle. 24He also made forty silver bases—two bases under each frame, with the pegs fitting securely into the bases. 25For the north side of the Tabernacle, he made another twenty frames, 26with their forty silver bases, two bases under each frame. 27He made six frames for the rear—the west side of the Tabernacle—28along with two additional frames to reinforce the rear corners of the Tabernacle. 29These corner frames were matched at the bottom and firmly attached at the top with a single ring, forming a single corner unit. Both of these corner units were made the same way. 30So there were eight frames at the rear of the Tabernacle, set in sixteen silver bases—two bases under each frame.

31Then he made crossbars of acacia wood to link the frames, five crossbars for the north side of the Tabernacle 32and five for the south side. He also made five crossbars for the rear of the Tabernacle, which faced west. 33He made the middle crossbar to attach halfway up the frames; it ran all the way from one end of the Tabernacle to the other. 34He overlaid the frames with gold and

made gold rings to hold the crossbars. Then he overlaid the crossbars with gold as well.

35For the inside of the Tabernacle, Bezalel made a special curtain of
finely woven linen. He decorated it with blue, purple, and scarlet
thread and with skillfully embroidered cherubim. 36For the curtain,
he made four posts of acacia wood and four gold hooks. He overlaid
the posts with gold and set them in four silver bases.

37Then he made another curtain for the entrance to the sacred tent.
He made it of finely woven linen and embroidered it with exquisite
designs using blue, purple, and scarlet thread. 38This curtain was
hung on gold hooks attached to five posts. The posts with their
decorated tops and hooks were overlaid with gold, and the five
bases were cast from bronze.

Exodus 37

BUILDING THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

1Next Bezalel made the Ark of acacia wood—a sacred chest 45
inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high.*2He overlaid it
inside and outside with pure gold, and he ran a molding of gold all
around it. 3He cast four gold rings and attached them to its four
feet, two rings on each side. 4Then he made poles from acacia wood
and overlaid them with gold. 5He inserted the poles into the rings at
the sides of the Ark to carry it.

6Then he made the Ark's cover—the place of atonement—from pure
gold. It was 45 inches long and 27 inches wide.*7He made two
cherubim from hammered gold and placed them on the two ends of
the atonement cover. 8He molded the cherubim on each end of the
atonement cover, making it all of one piece of gold. 9The cherubim
faced each other and looked down on the atonement cover. With
their wings spread above it, they protected it.

BUILDING THE TABLE

10Then Bezalel* made the table of acacia wood, 36 inches long, 18
inches wide, and 27 inches high.*11He overlaid it with pure gold
and ran a gold molding around the edge. 12He decorated it with a 3-
inch border* all around, and he ran a gold molding along the
border. 13Then he cast four gold rings for the table and attached
them at the four corners next to the four legs. 14The rings were
attached near the border to hold the poles that were used to carry
the table. 15He made these poles from acacia wood and overlaid
them with gold. 16Then he made special containers of pure gold for
the table—bowls, ladles, jars, and pitchers—to be used in pouring
out liquid offerings.

BUILDING THE LAMPSTAND

17Then Bezalel made the lampstand of pure, hammered gold. He
made the entire lampstand and its decorations of one piece—the
base, center stem, lamp cups, buds, and petals. 18The lampstand had
six branches going out from the center stem, three on each side.
19Each of the six branches had three lamp cups shaped like almond
blossoms, complete with buds and petals. 20The center stem of the
lampstand was crafted with four lamp cups shaped like almond
blossoms, complete with buds and petals. 21There was an almond
bud beneath each pair of branches where the six branches extended
from the center stem, all made of one piece. 22The almond buds and
branches were all of one piece with the center stem, and they were
hammered from pure gold.

23He also made seven lamps for the lampstand, lamp snuffers, and
trays, all of pure gold. 24The entire lampstand, along with its
accessories, was made from 75 pounds* of pure gold.

BUILDING THE INCENSE ALTAR

25Then Bezalel made the incense altar of acacia wood. It was 18

inches square and 36 inches high,* with horns at the corners carved from the same piece of wood as the altar itself. 26He overlaid the top, sides, and horns of the altar with pure gold, and he ran a gold molding around the entire altar. 27He made two gold rings and attached them on opposite sides of the altar below the gold molding to hold the carrying poles. 28He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

29Then he made the sacred anointing oil and the fragrant incense, using the techniques of a skilled incense maker.

Exodus 38

BUILDING THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING

1Next Bezalel* used acacia wood to construct the square altar of burnt offering. It was 7 1/2 feet wide, 7 1/2 feet long, and 4 1/2 feet high.*2He made horns for each of its four corners so that the horns and altar were all one piece. He overlaid the altar with bronze. 3Then he made all the altar utensils of bronze—the ash buckets, shovels, basins, meat forks, and firepans. 4Next he made a bronze grating and installed it halfway down the side of the altar, under the ledge. 5He cast four rings and attached them to the corners of the bronze grating to hold the carrying poles. 6He made the poles from acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. 7He inserted the poles through the rings on the sides of the altar. The altar was hollow and was made from planks.

BUILDING THE WASHBASIN

8Bezalel made the bronze washbasin and its bronze stand from bronze mirrors donated by the women who served at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*

BUILDING THE COURTYARD

9Then Bezalel made the courtyard, which was enclosed with
curtains made of finely woven linen. On the south side the curtains
were 150 feet long.* 10They were held up by twenty posts set
securely in twenty bronze bases. He hung the curtains with silver
hooks and rings. 11He made a similar set of curtains for the north
side—150 feet of curtains held up by twenty posts set securely in
bronze bases. He hung the curtains with silver hooks and rings.
12The curtains on the west end of the courtyard were 75 feet long,*
hung with silver hooks and rings and supported by ten posts set into
ten bases. 13The east end, the front, was also 75 feet long.

14The courtyard entrance was on the east end, flanked by two
curtains. The curtain on the right side was 22*1/2* feet long* and was
supported by three posts set into three bases. 15The curtain on the
left side was also 22*1/2* feet long and was supported by three posts
set into three bases. 16All the curtains used in the courtyard were
made of finely woven linen. 17Each post had a bronze base, and all
the hooks and rings were silver. The tops of the posts of the
courtyard were overlaid with silver, and the rings to hold up the
curtains were made of silver.

18He made the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard of finely
woven linen, and he decorated it with beautiful embroidery in blue,
purple, and scarlet thread. It was 30 feet long, and its height was
7*1/2* feet,* just like the curtains of the courtyard walls. 19It was
supported by four posts, each set securely in its own bronze base.
The tops of the posts were overlaid with silver, and the hooks and
rings were also made of silver.

20All the tent pegs used in the Tabernacle and courtyard were made
of bronze.

INVENTORY OF MATERIALS

21This is an inventory of the materials used in building the
Tabernacle of the Covenant.* The Levites compiled the figures, as
Moses directed, and Ithamar son of Aaron the priest served as
recorder. 22Bezalel son of Uri, grandson of Hur, of the tribe of
Judah, made everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.
23He was assisted by Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan,
a craftsman expert at engraving, designing, and embroidering with
blue, purple, and scarlet thread on fine linen cloth.

24The people brought special offerings of gold totaling 2,193
pounds,* as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel. This
gold was used throughout the Tabernacle.

25The whole community of Israel gave 7,545 pounds* of silver, as
measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel. 26This silver came
from the tax collected from each man registered in the census. (The
tax is one beka, which is half a shekel,* based on the sanctuary
shekel.) The tax was collected from 603,550 men who had reached
their twentieth birthday. 27The hundred bases for the frames of the
sanctuary walls and for the posts supporting the inner curtain
required 7,500 pounds of silver, about 75 pounds for each
base.*28The remaining 45 pounds* of silver was used to make the
hooks and rings and to overlay the tops of the posts.

29The people also brought as special offerings 5,310 pounds* of
bronze, 30which was used for casting the bases for the posts at the
entrance to the Tabernacle, and for the bronze altar with its bronze
grating and all the altar utensils. 31Bronze was also used to make
the bases for the posts that supported the curtains around the
courtyard, the bases for the curtain at the entrance of the courtyard,
and all the tent pegs for the Tabernacle and the courtyard.

Exodus 39

CLOTHING FOR THE PRIESTS

1The craftsmen made beautiful sacred garments of blue, purple, and
scarlet cloth—clothing for Aaron to wear while ministering in the
Holy Place, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MAKING THE EPHOD

2Bezalel* made the ephod of finely woven linen and embroidered it
with gold and with blue, purple, and scarlet thread. 3He made gold
thread by hammering out thin sheets of gold and cutting it into fine
strands. With great skill and care, he worked it into the fine linen
with the blue, purple, and scarlet thread.

4The ephod consisted of two pieces, front and back, joined at the
shoulders with two shoulder-pieces. 5The decorative sash was made
of the same materials: finely woven linen embroidered with gold
and with blue, purple, and scarlet thread, just as the LORD had
commanded Moses. 6They mounted the two onyx stones in settings
of gold filigree. The stones were engraved with the names of the
tribes of Israel, just as a seal is engraved. 7He fastened these stones
on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod as a reminder that the priest
represents the people of Israel. All this was done just as the LORD
had commanded Moses.

MAKING THE CHESTPIECE

8Bezalel made the chestpiece with great skill and care. He made it
to match the ephod, using finely woven linen embroidered with
gold and with blue, purple, and scarlet thread. 9He made the
chestpiece of a single piece of cloth folded to form a pouch nine
inches* square. 10They mounted four rows of gemstones* on it. The
first row contained a red carnelian, a pale-green peridot, and an
emerald. 11The second row contained a turquoise, a blue lapis
lazuli, and a white moonstone. 12The third row contained an orange
jacinth, an agate, and a purple amethyst. 13The fourth row
contained a blue-green beryl, an onyx, and a green jasper. All these

stones were set in gold filigree. 14Each stone represented one of the twelve sons of Israel, and the name of that tribe was engraved on it like a seal.

15To attach the chestpiece to the ephod, they made braided cords of pure gold thread. 16They also made two settings of gold filigree and two gold rings and attached them to the top corners of the chestpiece. 17They tied the two gold cords to the rings on the chestpiece. 18They tied the other ends of the cords to the gold settings on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod. 19Then they made two more gold rings and attached them to the inside edges of the chestpiece next to the ephod. 20Then they made two more gold rings and attached them to the front of the ephod, below the shoulder-pieces, just above the knot where the decorative sash was fastened to the ephod. 21They attached the bottom rings of the chestpiece to the rings on the ephod with blue cords. In this way, the chestpiece was held securely to the ephod above the decorative sash. All this was done just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

ADDITIONAL CLOTHING FOR THE PRIESTS

22Bezalel made the robe that is worn with the ephod from a single piece of blue woven cloth, 23with an opening for Aaron's head in the middle of it. The opening was reinforced with a woven collar* so it would not tear. 24They made pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and attached them to the hem of the robe. 25They also made bells of pure gold and placed them between the pomegranates along the hem of the robe, 26with bells and pomegranates alternating all around the hem. This robe was to be worn whenever the priest ministered before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

27They made tunics for Aaron and his sons from fine linen cloth. 28The turban and the special head coverings were made of fine linen, and the undergarments were also made of finely woven linen. 29The sashes were made of finely woven linen and embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet thread, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30Finally, they made the sacred medallion—the badge of holiness—
of pure gold. They engraved it like a seal with these words: HOLY
TO THE LORD. 31They attached the medallion with a blue cord to
Aaron's turban, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MOSES INSPECTS THE WORK

32And so at last the Tabernacle* was finished. The Israelites had
done everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 33And
they brought the entire Tabernacle to Moses: the sacred tent with
all its furnishings, clasps, frames, crossbars, posts, and bases;

34the tent coverings of tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather;
the inner curtain to shield the Ark;

35the Ark of the Covenant* and its carrying poles; the Ark's cover—
the place of atonement;

36the table and all its utensils; the Bread of the Presence;

37the pure gold lampstand with its symmetrical lamp cups, all its

accessories, and the olive oil for lighting;

38the gold altar; the anointing oil and fragrant incense; the curtain
for the entrance of the sacred tent;

39the bronze altar; the bronze grating and its carrying poles and
utensils; the washbasin with its stand;

40the curtains for the walls of the courtyard; the posts and their
bases; the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard; the ropes and
tent pegs; all the furnishings to be used in worship at the
Tabernacle;

41the beautifully stitched garments for the priests to wear while
ministering in the Holy Place—the sacred garments for Aaron the
priest, and the garments for his sons to wear as they minister as
priests.

42So the people of Israel followed all of the LORD's instructions to
Moses. 43Then Moses inspected all their work. When he found it had
been done just as the LORD had commanded him, he blessed them.

Exodus 40

THE TABERNACLE COMPLETED

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2"Set up the Tabernacle* on the first
day of the new year.*3Place the Ark of the Covenant* inside, and
install the inner curtain to enclose the Ark within the Most Holy
Place. 4Then bring in the table, and arrange the utensils on it. And
bring in the lampstand, and set up the lamps.

5"Place the gold incense altar in front of the Ark of the Covenant.
Then hang the curtain at the entrance of the Tabernacle. 6Place the
altar of burnt offering in front of the Tabernacle entrance. 7Set the
washbasin between the Tabernacle* and the altar, and fill it with
water. 8Then set up the courtyard around the outside of the tent,
and hang the curtain for the courtyard entrance.

9"Take the anointing oil and anoint the Tabernacle and all its
furnishings to consecrate them and make them holy. 10Anoint the
altar of burnt offering and its utensils to consecrate them. Then the
altar will become absolutely holy. 11Next anoint the washbasin and
its stand to consecrate them.

12"Present Aaron and his sons at the entrance of the Tabernacle, and
wash them with water. 13Dress Aaron with the sacred garments and
anoint him, consecrating him to serve me as a priest. 14Then present
his sons and dress them in their tunics. 15Anoint them as you did
their father, so they may also serve me as priests. With their
anointing, Aaron's descendants are set apart for the priesthood
forever, from generation to generation."

16Moses proceeded to do everything just as the LORD had
commanded him. 17So the Tabernacle was set up on the first day of
the first month of the second year. 18Moses erected the Tabernacle
by setting down its bases, inserting the frames, attaching the
crossbars, and setting up the posts. 19Then he spread the coverings
over the Tabernacle framework and put on the protective layers,
just as the LORD had commanded him.

20He took the stone tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant
and placed them* inside the Ark. Then he attached the carrying
poles to the Ark, and he set the Ark's cover—the place of atonement
—on top of it. 21Then he brought the Ark of the Covenant into the
Tabernacle and hung the inner curtain to shield it from view, just as
the LORD had commanded him.

22Next Moses placed the table in the Tabernacle, along the north
side of the Holy Place, just outside the inner curtain. 23And he
arranged the Bread of the Presence on the table before the LORD,
just as the LORD had commanded him.

24He set the lampstand in the Tabernacle across from the table on
the south side of the Holy Place. 25Then he lit the lamps in the
LORD's presence, just as the LORD had commanded him. 26He also
placed the gold incense altar in the Tabernacle, in the Holy Place in
front of the inner curtain. 27On it he burned the fragrant incense,
just as the LORD had commanded him.

28He hung the curtain at the entrance of the Tabernacle, 29and he
placed the altar of burnt offering near the Tabernacle entrance. On
it he offered a burnt offering and a grain offering, just as the LORD
had commanded him.

30Next Moses placed the washbasin between the Tabernacle and the
altar. He filled it with water so the priests could wash themselves.
31Moses and Aaron and Aaron's sons used water from it to wash
their hands and feet. 32Whenever they approached the altar and
entered the Tabernacle, they washed themselves, just as the LORD
had commanded Moses.

33Then he hung the curtains forming the courtyard around the
Tabernacle and the altar. And he set up the curtain at the entrance
of the courtyard. So at last Moses finished the work.

THE LORD'S GLORY FILLS THE TABERNACLE

34Then the cloud covered the Tabernacle, and the glory of the LORD
filled the Tabernacle. 35Moses could no longer enter the Tabernacle
because the cloud had settled down over it, and the glory of the
LORD filled the Tabernacle.

36Now whenever the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle, the people of
Israel would set out on their journey, following it. 37But if the cloud
did not rise, they remained where they were until it lifted. 38The
cloud of the LORD hovered over the Tabernacle during the day, and
at night fire glowed inside the cloud so the whole family of Israel
could see it. This continued throughout all their journeys.

Leviticus

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
22 23 24 25 26 27

WELCOME TO

LEVITICUS

Leviticus is often considered to be confusing and uninteresting. But Leviticus's purpose is more familiar to us than we might realize: Much of the book is actually a how-to manual. God told his people, "You must be holy because I, the LORD, am holy. I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own" (20:26). Leviticus was designed to be a handbook for God's people on how they should live in his presence. Many of the instructions were specific directions for the priests, a manual for how to make sacrifices;

perform sacred rituals; and celebrate festivals, special days, and special years. Because the priests' responsibilities also included the general well-being of the community, God also provided instructions on medical care, community safety, and interpersonal conflict.

By following the commands in Leviticus, the priests and the people learned how to put God first in every part of their lives.

0 STOPS

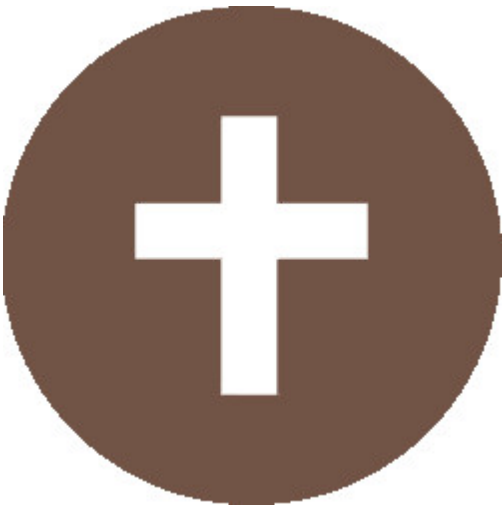
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over Leviticus without touching down. If you are curious about this book, glance through the section headings. You'll get an idea of what Leviticus contains and what holiness meant for God's people. Your next stop is at Numbers 9:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You'll have one stop in this book of instructions, where you'll run into one of the two great commandments: Love your neighbor as yourself. Afterward, you can always stay a little longer and read more. Your next stop is at Leviticus 19:1.

6 STOPS

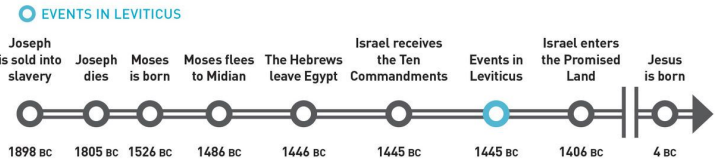
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll get a good idea of the variety of topics included in Leviticus. This book is full of guidance and instruction meant to draw the Hebrews close to God. Your next stop is at Leviticus 1:1.

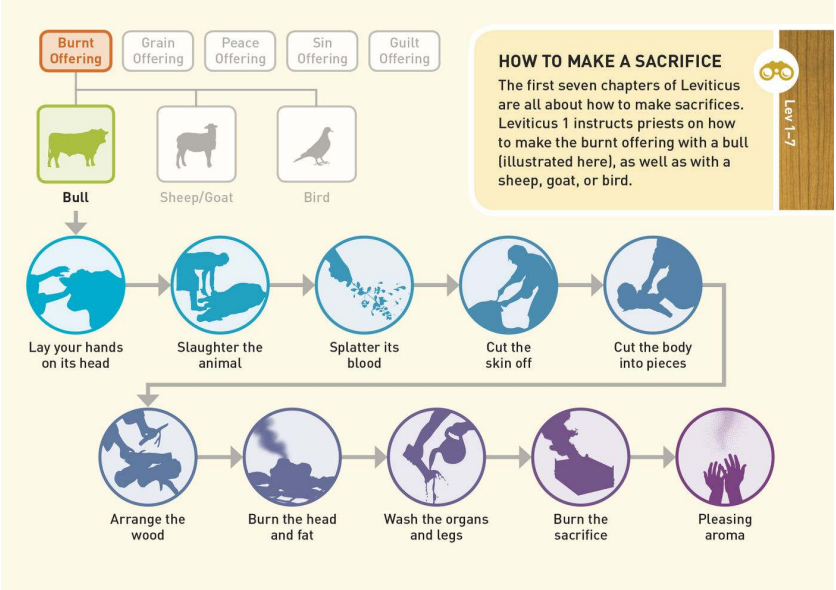


FINDING JESUS IN LEVITICUS

Jesus can be seen in Leviticus in the animals that are sacrificed so that the Hebrews can be in right relationship with God. In some very detailed instructions, God requires every sacrificial animal to have no defects and to be perfect and spotless. In the same way, Jesus was spotless, without sin or defect. He was the perfect sacrifice for all time. These sacrifices instituted in Leviticus highlight the price of sin and the priceless value of Jesus' death on the cross.
Leviticus also describes seven annual festivals that God wanted his

people to celebrate each year, and each one points to the salvation and provision that God ultimately gives his people in Jesus.





HOW TO MAKE A SACRIFICE

Leviticus 1

PROCEDURES FOR THE BURNT OFFERING

1The LORD called to Moses from the Tabernacle* and said to him,
2"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you present an animal as an offering to the LORD, you may take it from your herd of cattle or your flock of sheep and goats.

3"If the animal you present as a burnt offering is from the herd, it must be a male with no defects. Bring it to the entrance of the Tabernacle so you* may be accepted by the LORD. 4Lay your hand on the animal's head, and the LORD will accept its death in your place to purify you, making you right with him.*5Then slaughter the young bull in the LORD's presence, and Aaron's sons, the priests, will present the animal's blood by splattering it against all sides of the altar that stands at the entrance to the Tabernacle. 6Then skin

the animal and cut it into pieces. 7The sons of Aaron the priest will
build a wood fire on the altar. 8They will arrange the pieces of the
offering, including the head and fat, on the wood burning on the
altar. 9But the internal organs and the legs must first be washed
with water. Then the priest will burn the entire sacrifice on the
altar as a burnt offering. It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the
LORD.

10"If the animal you present as a burnt offering is from the flock, it
may be either a sheep or a goat, but it must be a male with no
defects. 11Slaughter the animal on the north side of the altar in the
LORD's presence, and Aaron's sons, the priests, will splatter its
blood against all sides of the altar. 12Then cut the animal in pieces,
and the priests will arrange the pieces of the offering, including the
head and fat, on the wood burning on the altar. 13But the internal
organs and the legs must first be washed with water. Then the
priest will burn the entire sacrifice on the altar as a burnt offering.
It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

14"If you present a bird as a burnt offering to the LORD, choose
either a turtledove or a young pigeon. 15The priest will take the bird
to the altar, wring off its head, and burn it on the altar. But first he
must drain its blood against the side of the altar. 16The priest must
also remove the crop and the feathers* and throw them in the ashes
on the east side of the altar. 17Then, grasping the bird by its wings,
the priest will tear the bird open, but without tearing it apart. Then
he will burn it as a burnt offering on the wood burning on the altar.
It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Leviticus 2

PROCEDURES FOR THE GRAIN OFFERING

1"When you present grain as an offering to the LORD, the offering
must consist of choice flour. You are to pour olive oil on it, sprinkle
it with frankincense, 2and bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests. The
priest will scoop out a handful of the flour moistened with oil,
together with all the frankincense, and burn this representative
portion on the altar. It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the
LORD. 3The rest of the grain offering will then be given to Aaron
and his sons. This offering will be considered a most holy part of
the special gifts presented to the LORD.

4"If your offering is a grain offering baked in an oven, it must be
made of choice flour, but without any yeast. It may be presented in
the form of thin cakes mixed with olive oil or wafers spread with
olive oil. 5If your grain offering is cooked on a griddle, it must be
made of choice flour mixed with olive oil but without any yeast.
6Break it in pieces and pour olive oil on it; it is a grain offering. 7If
your grain offering is prepared in a pan, it must be made of choice
flour and olive oil.

8"No matter how a grain offering for the LORD has been prepared,
bring it to the priest, who will present it at the altar. 9The priest will
take a representative portion of the grain offering and burn it on the
altar. It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 10The rest of
the grain offering will then be given to Aaron and his sons as their
food. This offering will be considered a most holy part of the special
gifts presented to the LORD.

11"Do not use yeast in preparing any of the grain offerings you
present to the LORD, because no yeast or honey may be burned as a
special gift presented to the LORD. 12You may add yeast and honey
to an offering of the first crops of your harvest, but these must
never be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.
13Season all your grain offerings with salt to remind you of God's
eternal covenant. Never forget to add salt to your grain offerings.

14“If you present a grain offering to the LORD from the first portion
of your harvest, bring fresh grain that is coarsely ground and
roasted on a fire. 15Put olive oil on this grain offering, and sprinkle
it with frankincense. 16The priest will take a representative portion
of the grain moistened with oil, together with all the frankincense,
and burn it as a special gift presented to the LORD.

Leviticus 3

PROCEDURES FOR THE PEACE OFFERING

1“If you present an animal from the herd as a peace offering to the
LORD, it may be a male or a female, but it must have no defects.
2Lay your hand on the animal’s head, and slaughter it at the
entrance of the Tabernacle.* Then Aaron’s sons, the priests, will
splatter its blood against all sides of the altar. 3The priest must
present part of this peace offering as a special gift to the LORD. This
includes all the fat around the internal organs, 4the two kidneys and
the fat around them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver.
These must be removed with the kidneys, 5and Aaron’s sons will
burn them on top of the burnt offering on the wood burning on the
altar. It is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

6“If you present an animal from the flock as a peace offering to the
LORD, it may be a male or a female, but it must have no defects. 7If
you present a sheep as your offering, bring it to the LORD, 8lay your
hand on its head, and slaughter it in front of the Tabernacle.
Aaron’s sons will then splatter the sheep’s blood against all sides of
the altar. 9The priest must present the fat of this peace offering as a
special gift to the LORD. This includes the fat of the broad tail cut
off near the backbone, all the fat around the internal organs, 10the
two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the long
lobe of the liver. These must be removed with the kidneys, 11and
the priest will burn them on the altar. It is a special gift of food
presented to the LORD.

12“If you present a goat as your offering, bring it to the LORD, 13lay

your hand on its head, and slaughter it in front of the Tabernacle. Aaron's sons will then splatter the goat's blood against all sides of the altar. 14The priest must present part of this offering as a special gift to the LORD. This includes all the fat around the internal organs, 15the two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver. These must be removed with the kidneys, 16and the priest will burn them on the altar. It is a special gift of food, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. All the fat belongs to the LORD.

17"You must never eat any fat or blood. This is a permanent law for you, and it must be observed from generation to generation, wherever you live."

Leviticus 4

PROCEDURES FOR THE SIN OFFERING

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. This is how you are to deal with those who sin unintentionally by doing anything that violates one of the LORD's commands.

3"If the high priest* sins, bringing guilt upon the entire community, he must give a sin offering for the sin he has committed. He must present to the LORD a young bull with no defects. 4He must bring the bull to the LORD at the entrance of the Tabernacle,* lay his hand on the bull's head, and slaughter it before the LORD. 5The high priest will then take some of the bull's blood into the Tabernacle, 6dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD in front of the inner curtain of the sanctuary. 7The priest will then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar for fragrant incense that stands in the LORD's presence inside the Tabernacle. He will pour out the rest of the bull's blood at the base of the altar for burnt offerings at the entrance of the Tabernacle. 8Then the priest must remove all the fat of the bull to be offered as

a sin offering. This includes all the fat around the internal organs,
9the two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the
long lobe of the liver. He must remove these along with the
kidneys, 10just as he does with cattle offered as a peace offering, and
burn them on the altar of burnt offerings. 11But he must take
whatever is left of the bull—its hide, meat, head, legs, internal
organs, and dung—12and carry it away to a place outside the camp
that is ceremonially clean, the place where the ashes are dumped.
There, on the ash heap, he will burn it on a wood fire.

13"If the entire Israelite community sins by violating one of the
LORD's commands, but the people don't realize it, they are still
guilty. 14When they become aware of their sin, the people must
bring a young bull as an offering for their sin and present it before
the Tabernacle. 15The elders of the community must then lay their
hands on the bull's head and slaughter it before the LORD. 16The
high priest will then take some of the bull's blood into the
Tabernacle, 17dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle it seven times
before the LORD in front of the inner curtain. 18He will then put
some of the blood on the horns of the altar for fragrant incense that
stands in the LORD's presence inside the Tabernacle. He will pour
out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar for burnt offerings
at the entrance of the Tabernacle. 19Then the priest must remove all
the animal's fat and burn it on the altar, 20just as he does with the
bull offered as a sin offering for the high priest. Through this
process, the priest will purify the people, making them right with
the LORD,* and they will be forgiven. 21Then the priest must take
what is left of the bull and carry it outside the camp and burn it
there, just as is done with the sin offering for the high priest. This
offering is for the sin of the entire congregation of Israel.

22"If one of Israel's leaders sins by violating one of the commands of
the LORD his God but doesn't realize it, he is still guilty. 23When he
becomes aware of his sin, he must bring as his offering a male goat
with no defects. 24He must lay his hand on the goat's head and
slaughter it at the place where burnt offerings are slaughtered
before the LORD. This is an offering for his sin. 25Then the priest
will dip his finger in the blood of the sin offering and put it on the
horns of the altar for burnt offerings. He will pour out the rest of

the blood at the base of the altar. 26Then he must burn all the goat's fat on the altar, just as he does with the peace offering. Through this process, the priest will purify the leader from his sin, making him right with the LORD, and he will be forgiven.

27"If any of the common people sin by violating one of the LORD's commands, but they don't realize it, they are still guilty. 28When they become aware of their sin, they must bring as an offering for their sin a female goat with no defects. 29They must lay a hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place where burnt offerings are slaughtered. 30Then the priest will dip his finger in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offerings. He will pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 31Then he must remove all the goat's fat, just as he does with the fat of the peace offering. He will burn the fat on the altar, and it will be a pleasing aroma to the LORD. Through this process, the priest will purify the people, making them right with the LORD, and they will be forgiven.

32"If the people bring a sheep as their sin offering, it must be a female with no defects. 33They must lay a hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place where burnt offerings are slaughtered. 34Then the priest will dip his finger in the blood of the sin offering and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offerings. He will pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 35Then he must remove all the sheep's fat, just as he does with the fat of a sheep presented as a peace offering. He will burn the fat on the altar on top of the special gifts presented to the LORD. Through this process, the priest will purify the people from their sin, making them right with the LORD, and they will be forgiven.

FORGIVENESS LEVITICUS 5:1-19

Leviticus 5

SINS REQUIRING A SIN OFFERING

1“If you are called to testify about something you have seen or that you know about, it is sinful to refuse to testify, and you will be punished for your sin.

2“Or suppose you unknowingly touch something that is ceremonially unclean, such as the carcass of an unclean animal. When you realize what you have done, you must admit your defilement and your guilt. This is true whether it is a wild animal, a domestic animal, or an animal that scurries along the ground.

3“Or suppose you unknowingly touch something that makes a person unclean. When you realize what you have done, you must admit your guilt.

4“Or suppose you make a foolish vow of any kind, whether its purpose is for good or for bad. When you realize its foolishness, you must admit your guilt.

5“When you become aware of your guilt in any of these ways, you must confess your sin. 6Then you must bring to the LORD as the penalty for your sin a female from the flock, either a sheep or a goat. This is a sin offering with which the priest will purify you

from your sin, making you right with the LORD.*

7"But if you cannot afford to bring a sheep, you may bring to the
LORD two turtledoves or two young pigeons as the penalty for your
sin. One of the birds will be for a sin offering, and the other for a
burnt offering. 8You must bring them to the priest, who will present
the first bird as the sin offering. He will wring its neck but without
severing its head from the body. 9Then he will sprinkle some of the
blood of the sin offering against the sides of the altar, and the rest
of the blood will be drained out at the base of the altar. This is an
offering for sin. 10The priest will then prepare the second bird as a
burnt offering, following all the procedures that have been
prescribed. Through this process the priest will purify you from
your sin, making you right with the LORD, and you will be
forgiven.

11"If you cannot afford to bring two turtledoves or two young
pigeons, you may bring two quarts* of choice flour for your sin
offering. Since it is an offering for sin, you must not moisten it with
olive oil or put any frankincense on it. 12Take the flour to the priest,
who will scoop out a handful as a representative portion. He will
burn it on the altar on top of the special gifts presented to the
LORD. It is an offering for sin. 13Through this process, the priest will
purify those who are guilty of any of these sins, making them right
with the LORD, and they will be forgiven. The rest of the flour will
belong to the priest, just as with the grain offering."

PROCEDURES FOR THE GUILT OFFERING

14Then the LORD said to Moses, 15"If one of you commits a sin by
unintentionally defiling the LORD's sacred property, you must bring
a guilt offering to the LORD. The offering must be your own ram
with no defects, or you may buy one of equal value with silver, as
measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel.*16You must make
restitution for the sacred property you have harmed by paying for
the loss, plus an additional 20 percent. When you give the payment
to the priest, he will purify you with the ram sacrificed as a guilt

offering, making you right with the LORD, and you will be forgiven.

17“Suppose you sin by violating one of the LORD’s commands. Even
if you are unaware of what you have done, you are guilty and will
be punished for your sin. 18For a guilt offering, you must bring to
the priest your own ram with no defects, or you may buy one of
equal value. Through this process the priest will purify you from
your unintentional sin, making you right with the LORD, and you
will be forgiven. 19This is a guilt offering, for you have been guilty
of an offense against the LORD.”

Leviticus 6

SINS REQUIRING A GUILT OFFERING

1*Then the LORD said to Moses, 2“Suppose one of you sins against
your associate and is unfaithful to the LORD. Suppose you cheat in
a deal involving a security deposit, or you steal or commit fraud, 3or
you find lost property and lie about it, or you lie while swearing to
tell the truth, or you commit any other such sin. 4If you have sinned
in any of these ways, you are guilty. You must give back whatever
you stole, or the money you took by extortion, or the security
deposit, or the lost property you found, 5or anything obtained by
swearing falsely. You must make restitution by paying the full price
plus an additional 20 percent to the person you have harmed. On
the same day you must present a guilt offering. 6As a guilt offering
to the LORD, you must bring to the priest your own ram with no
defects, or you may buy one of equal value. 7Through this process,
the priest will purify you before the LORD, making you right with
him,* and you will be forgiven for any of these sins you have
committed.”

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BURNT OFFERING

8*Then the LORD said to Moses, 9“Give Aaron and his sons the
following instructions regarding the burnt offering. The burnt

offering must be left on top of the altar until the next morning, and the fire on the altar must be kept burning all night. 10In the morning, after the priest on duty has put on his official linen clothing and linen undergarments, he must clean out the ashes of the burnt offering and put them beside the altar. 11Then he must take off these garments, change back into his regular clothes, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. 12Meanwhile, the fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must never go out. Each morning the priest will add fresh wood to the fire and arrange the burnt offering on it. He will then burn the fat of the peace offerings on it. 13Remember, the fire must be kept burning on the altar at all times. It must never go out.

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GRAIN OFFERING

14"These are the instructions regarding the grain offering. Aaron's sons must present this offering to the LORD in front of the altar. 15The priest on duty will take from the grain offering a handful of the choice flour moistened with olive oil, together with all the frankincense. He will burn this representative portion on the altar as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 16Aaron and his sons may eat the rest of the flour, but it must be baked without yeast and eaten in a sacred place within the courtyard of the Tabernacle.* 17Remember, it must never be prepared with yeast. I have given it to the priests as their share of the special gifts presented to me. Like the sin offering and the guilt offering, it is most holy. 18Any of Aaron's male descendants may eat from the special gifts presented to the LORD. This is their permanent right from generation to generation. Anyone or anything that touches these offerings will become holy."

PROCEDURES FOR THE ORDINATION OFFERING

19Then the LORD said to Moses, 20"On the day Aaron and his sons are anointed, they must present to the LORD the standard grain offering of two quarts* of choice flour, half to be offered in the morning and half to be offered in the evening. 21It must be carefully mixed with olive oil and cooked on a griddle. Then slice* this grain offering and present it as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 22In each generation, the high priest* who succeeds Aaron must prepare this

same offering. It belongs to the LORD and must be burned up completely. This is a permanent law. 23All such grain offerings of a priest must be burned up entirely. None of it may be eaten."

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SIN OFFERING

24Then the LORD said to Moses, 25"Give Aaron and his sons the following instructions regarding the sin offering. The animal given as an offering for sin is a most holy offering, and it must be slaughtered in the LORD's presence at the place where the burnt offerings are slaughtered. 26The priest who offers the sacrifice as a sin offering must eat his portion in a sacred place within the courtyard of the Tabernacle. 27Anyone or anything that touches the sacrificial meat will become holy. If any of the sacrificial blood spatters on a person's clothing, the soiled garment must be washed in a sacred place. 28If a clay pot is used to boil the sacrificial meat, it must then be broken. If a bronze pot is used, it must be scoured and thoroughly rinsed with water. 29Any male from a priest's family may eat from this offering; it is most holy. 30But the offering for sin may not be eaten if its blood was brought into the Tabernacle as an offering for purification* in the Holy Place. It must be completely burned with fire.

Leviticus 7

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GUILT OFFERING

1"These are the instructions for the guilt offering. It is most holy. 2The animal sacrificed as a guilt offering must be slaughtered at the place where the burnt offerings are slaughtered, and its blood must be splattered against all sides of the altar. 3The priest will then offer all its fat on the altar, including the fat of the broad tail, the fat around the internal organs, 4the two kidneys and the fat around them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver. These are to be removed with the kidneys, 5and the priests will burn them on the altar as a special gift presented to the LORD. This is the guilt offering. 6Any male from a priest's family may eat the meat. It must be eaten in a sacred place, for it is most holy.

7“The same instructions apply to both the guilt offering and the sin
offering. Both belong to the priest who uses them to purify
someone, making that person right with the LORD.*8In the case of
the burnt offering, the priest may keep the hide of the sacrificed
animal. 9Any grain offering that has been baked in an oven,
prepared in a pan, or cooked on a griddle belongs to the priest who
presents it. 10All other grain offerings, whether made of dry flour or
flour moistened with olive oil, are to be shared equally among all
the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PEACE OFFERING

11“These are the instructions regarding the different kinds of peace
offerings that may be presented to the LORD. 12If you present your
peace offering as an expression of thanksgiving, the usual animal
sacrifice must be accompanied by various kinds of bread made
without yeast—thin cakes mixed with olive oil, wafers spread with
oil, and cakes made of choice flour mixed with olive oil. 13This
peace offering of thanksgiving must also be accompanied by loaves
of bread made with yeast. 14One of each kind of bread must be
presented as a gift to the LORD. It will then belong to the priest
who splatters the blood of the peace offering against the altar. 15The
meat of the peace offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the
same day it is offered. None of it may be saved for the next
morning.

16“If you bring an offering to fulfill a vow or as a voluntary offering,
the meat must be eaten on the same day the sacrifice is offered, but
whatever is left over may be eaten on the second day. 17Any meat
left over until the third day must be completely burned up. 18If any
of the meat from the peace offering is eaten on the third day, the
person who presented it will not be accepted by the LORD. You will
receive no credit for offering it. By then the meat will be
contaminated; if you eat it, you will be punished for your sin.

19“Meat that touches anything ceremonially unclean may not be

eaten; it must be completely burned up. The rest of the meat may be eaten, but only by people who are ceremonially clean. 20If you are ceremonially unclean and you eat meat from a peace offering that was presented to the LORD, you will be cut off from the community. 21If you touch anything that is unclean (whether it is human defilement or an unclean animal or any other unclean, detestable thing) and then eat meat from a peace offering presented to the LORD, you will be cut off from the community."

THE FORBIDDEN BLOOD AND FAT

22Then the LORD said to Moses, 23"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. You must never eat fat, whether from cattle, sheep, or goats. 24The fat of an animal found dead or torn to pieces by wild animals must never be eaten, though it may be used for any other purpose. 25Anyone who eats fat from an animal presented as a special gift to the LORD will be cut off from the community. 26No matter where you live, you must never consume the blood of any bird or animal. 27Anyone who consumes blood will be cut off from the community."

A PORTION FOR THE PRIESTS

28Then the LORD said to Moses, 29"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you present a peace offering to the LORD, bring part of it as a gift to the LORD. 30Present it to the LORD with your own hands as a special gift to the LORD. Bring the fat of the animal, together with the breast, and lift up the breast as a special offering to the LORD. 31Then the priest will burn the fat on the altar, but the breast will belong to Aaron and his descendants. 32Give the right thigh of your peace offering to the priest as a gift. 33The right thigh must always be given to the priest who offers the blood and the fat of the peace offering. 34For I have reserved the breast of the special offering and the right thigh of the sacred offering for the priests. It is the permanent right of Aaron and his descendants to share in the peace offerings brought by the people of Israel. 35This is their rightful share. The special gifts presented to the LORD have been reserved for Aaron and his descendants from the time they were set apart to serve the LORD as priests. 36On the

day they were anointed, the LORD commanded the Israelites to give these portions to the priests as their permanent share from generation to generation.”

MOUNT SINAI

37These are the instructions for the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering, as well as the ordination offering and the peace offering. 38The LORD gave these instructions to Moses on Mount Sinai when he commanded the Israelites to present their offerings to the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai.

Leviticus 8

ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2“Bring Aaron and his sons, along

with their sacred garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams, and the basket of bread made without yeast,
3and call the entire community of Israel together at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*”

4So Moses followed the LORD’s instructions, and the whole community assembled at the Tabernacle entrance. 5Moses announced to them, “This is what the LORD has commanded us to do!” 6Then he presented Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. 7He put the official tunic on Aaron and tied the sash around his waist. He dressed him in the robe, placed the ephod on him, and attached the ephod securely with its decorative sash. 8Then Moses placed the chestpiece on Aaron and put the Urim and the Thummim inside it. 9He placed the turban on Aaron’s head and attached the gold medallion—the badge of holiness—to the front of the turban, just as the LORD had commanded him.

10Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the Tabernacle and everything in it, making them holy. 11He sprinkled the oil on the altar seven times, anointing it and all its utensils, as well as the washbasin and its stand, making them holy. 12Then he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head, anointing him and making him holy for his work. 13Next Moses presented Aaron’s sons. He clothed them in their tunics, tied their sashes around them, and put their special head coverings on them, just as the LORD had commanded him.

14Then Moses presented the bull for the sin offering. Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the bull’s head, 15and Moses slaughtered it. Moses took some of the blood, and with his finger he put it on the four horns of the altar to purify it. He poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. Through this process, he made the altar holy by purifying it.*16Then Moses took all the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat around them, and he burned it all on the altar. 17He took the rest of the bull, including its hide, meat, and dung, and burned it on a fire outside the camp, just as the LORD had commanded him.

18Then Moses presented the ram for the burnt offering. Aaron and
his sons laid their hands on the ram's head, 19and Moses slaughtered
it. Then Moses took the ram's blood and splattered it against all
sides of the altar. 20Then he cut the ram into pieces, and he burned
the head, some of its pieces, and the fat on the altar. 21After
washing the internal organs and the legs with water, Moses burned
the entire ram on the altar as a burnt offering. It was a pleasing
aroma, a special gift presented to the LORD, just as the LORD had
commanded him.

22Then Moses presented the other ram, which was the ram of
ordination. Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the ram's head,
23and Moses slaughtered it. Then Moses took some of its blood and
applied it to the lobe of Aaron's right ear, the thumb of his right
hand, and the big toe of his right foot. 24Next Moses presented
Aaron's sons and applied some of the blood to the lobes of their
right ears, the thumbs of their right hands, and the big toes of their
right feet. He then splattered the rest of the blood against all sides
of the altar.

25Next Moses took the fat, including the fat of the broad tail, the fat
around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, and the two
kidneys and the fat around them, along with the right thigh. 26On
top of these he placed a thin cake of bread made without yeast, a
cake of bread mixed with olive oil, and a wafer spread with olive
oil. All these were taken from the basket of bread made without
yeast that was placed in the LORD's presence. 27He put all these in
the hands of Aaron and his sons, and he lifted these gifts as a
special offering to the LORD. 28Moses then took all the offerings
back from them and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt
offering. This was the ordination offering. It was a pleasing aroma,
a special gift presented to the LORD. 29Then Moses took the breast
and lifted it up as a special offering to the LORD. This was Moses'
portion of the ram of ordination, just as the LORD had commanded
him.

30Next Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood
that was on the altar, and he sprinkled them on Aaron and his

garments and on his sons and their garments. In this way, he made Aaron and his sons and their garments holy.

31Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons, “Boil the remaining meat of the offerings at the Tabernacle entrance, and eat it there, along with the bread that is in the basket of offerings for the ordination, just as I commanded when I said, ‘Aaron and his sons will eat it.’ 32Any meat or bread that is left over must then be burned up. 33You must not leave the Tabernacle entrance for seven days, for that is when the ordination ceremony will be completed. 34Everything we have done today was commanded by the LORD in order to purify you, making you right with him.*35Now stay at the entrance of the Tabernacle day and night for seven days, and do everything the LORD requires. If you fail to do this, you will die, for this is what the LORD has commanded.” 36So Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD had commanded through Moses.

Leviticus 9

THE PRIESTS BEGIN THEIR WORK

1After the ordination ceremony, on the eighth day, Moses called together Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. 2He said to Aaron, “Take a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without defects, and present them to the LORD. 3Then tell the Israelites, ‘Take a male goat for a sin offering, and take a calf and a lamb, both a year old and without defects, for a burnt offering. 4Also take a bull* and a ram for a peace offering and flour moistened with olive oil for a grain offering. Present all these offerings to the LORD because the LORD will appear to you today.’”

5So the people presented all these things at the entrance of the Tabernacle,* just as Moses had commanded. Then the whole community came forward and stood before the LORD. 6And Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded you to do so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.”

7Then Moses said to Aaron, “Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering to purify yourself and the people. Then present the offerings of the people to purify them, making them right with the LORD,* just as he has commanded.”

8So Aaron went to the altar and slaughtered the calf as a sin offering for himself. 9His sons brought him the blood, and he dipped his finger in it and put it on the horns of the altar. He poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 10Then he burned on the altar the fat, the kidneys, and the long lobe of the liver from the sin offering, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 11The meat and the hide, however, he burned outside the camp.

12Next Aaron slaughtered the animal for the burnt offering. His sons brought him the blood, and he splattered it against all sides of the altar. 13Then they handed him each piece of the burnt offering, including the head, and he burned them on the altar. 14Then he washed the internal organs and the legs and burned them on the altar along with the rest of the burnt offering.

15Next Aaron presented the offerings of the people. He slaughtered the people’s goat and presented it as an offering for their sin, just as he had first done with the offering for his own sin. 16Then he presented the burnt offering and sacrificed it in the prescribed way. 17He also presented the grain offering, burning a handful of the flour mixture on the altar, in addition to the regular burnt offering for the morning.

18Then Aaron slaughtered the bull and the ram for the people's
peace offering. His sons brought him the blood, and he splattered it
against all sides of the altar. 19Then he took the fat of the bull and
the ram—the fat of the broad tail and from around the internal
organs—along with the kidneys and the long lobes of the livers.
20He placed these fat portions on top of the breasts of these animals
and burned them on the altar. 21Aaron then lifted up the breasts and
right thighs as a special offering to the LORD, just as Moses had
commanded.

22After that, Aaron raised his hands toward the people and blessed
them. Then, after presenting the sin offering, the burnt offering, and
the peace offering, he stepped down from the altar. 23Then Moses
and Aaron went into the Tabernacle, and when they came back out,
they blessed the people again, and the glory of the LORD appeared
to the whole community. 24Fire blazed forth from the LORD's
presence and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar.
When the people saw this, they shouted with joy and fell face down
on the ground.

Leviticus 10

THE SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU

1Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu put coals of fire in their incense
burners and sprinkled incense over them. In this way, they
disobeyed the LORD by burning before him the wrong kind of fire,
different than he had commanded. 2So fire blazed forth from the
LORD's presence and burned them up, and they died there before
the LORD.

3Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD meant when he
said, 'I will display my holiness through those who come near me.

I will display my glory before all the people.'"

And Aaron was silent.

4Then Moses called for Mishael and Elzaphan, Aaron's cousins, the
sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel. He said to them, "Come forward and
carry away the bodies of your relatives from in front of the
sanctuary to a place outside the camp." 5So they came forward and
picked them up by their garments and carried them out of the
camp, just as Moses had commanded.

6Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do
not show grief by leaving your hair uncombed* or by tearing your
clothes. If you do, you will die, and the LORD's anger will strike the
whole community of Israel. However, the rest of the Israelites, your
relatives, may mourn because of the LORD's fiery destruction of
Nadab and Abihu. 7But you must not leave the entrance of the
Tabernacle* or you will die, for you have been anointed with the
LORD's anointing oil." So they did as Moses commanded.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRIESTLY CONDUCT

8Then the LORD said to Aaron, 9"You and your descendants must
never drink wine or any other alcoholic drink before going into the
Tabernacle. If you do, you will die. This is a permanent law for you,
and it must be observed from generation to generation. 10You must
distinguish between what is sacred and what is common, between

what is ceremonially unclean and what is clean. 11And you must teach the Israelites all the decrees that the LORD has given them through Moses."

12Then Moses said to Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take what is left of the grain offering after a portion has been presented as a special gift to the LORD, and eat it beside the altar. Make sure it contains no yeast, for it is most holy. 13You must eat it in a sacred place, for it has been given to you and your descendants as your portion of the special gifts presented to the LORD. These are the commands I have been given. 14But the breast and thigh that were lifted up as a special offering may be eaten in any place that is ceremonially clean. These parts have been given to you and your descendants as your portion of the peace offerings presented by the people of Israel. 15You must lift up the thigh and breast as a special offering to the LORD, along with the fat of the special gifts. These parts will belong to you and your descendants as your permanent right, just as the LORD has commanded."

16Moses then asked them what had happened to the goat of the sin offering. When he discovered it had been burned up, he became very angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's remaining sons. 17"Why didn't you eat the sin offering in the sacred area?" he demanded. "It is a holy offering! The LORD has given it to you to remove the guilt of the community and to purify the people, making them right with the LORD.*18Since the animal's blood was not brought into the Holy Place, you should have eaten the meat in the sacred area as I ordered you."

19Then Aaron answered Moses, "Today my sons presented both their sin offering and their burnt offering to the LORD. And yet this tragedy has happened to me. If I had eaten the people's sin offering on such a tragic day as this, would the LORD have been pleased?" 20And when Moses heard this, he was satisfied.

Leviticus 11

CEREMONIALLY CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS

1Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 2“Give the following
instructions to the people of Israel.

“Of all the land animals, these are the ones you may use for food.
3You may eat any animal that has completely split hooves and
chews the cud. 4You may not, however, eat the following animals*
that have split hooves or that chew the cud, but not both. The
camel chews the cud but does not have split hooves, so it is
ceremonially unclean for you. 5The hyrax* chews the cud but does
not have split hooves, so it is unclean. 6The hare chews the cud but
does not have split hooves, so it is unclean. 7The pig has evenly split
hooves but does not chew the cud, so it is unclean. 8You may not
eat the meat of these animals or even touch their carcasses. They
are ceremonially unclean for you.

9“Of all the marine animals, these are ones you may use for food.
You may eat anything from the water if it has both fins and scales,
whether taken from salt water or from streams. 10But you must
never eat animals from the sea or from rivers that do not have both
fins and scales. They are detestable to you. This applies both to
little creatures that live in shallow water and to all creatures that
live in deep water. 11They will always be detestable to you. You
must never eat their meat or even touch their dead bodies. 12Any
marine animal that does not have both fins and scales is detestable
to you.

13“These are the birds that are detestable to you. You must never
eat them: the griffon vulture, the bearded vulture, the black vulture,
14the kite, falcons of all kinds, 15ravens of all kinds, 16the eagle owl,
the short-eared owl, the seagull, hawks of all kinds, 17the little owl,
the cormorant, the great owl, 18the barn owl, the desert owl, the
Egyptian vulture, 19the stork, herons of all kinds, the hoopoe, and
the bat.

20“You must not eat winged insects that walk along the ground;
they are detestable to you. 21You may, however, eat winged insects
that walk along the ground and have jointed legs so they can jump.
22The insects you are permitted to eat include all kinds of locusts,
bald locusts, crickets, and grasshoppers. 23All other winged insects
that walk along the ground are detestable to you.

24“The following creatures will make you ceremonially unclean. If
any of you touch their carcasses, you will be defiled until evening.
25If you pick up their carcasses, you must wash your clothes, and
you will remain defiled until evening.

26“Any animal that has split hooves that are not evenly divided or
that does not chew the cud is unclean for you. If you touch the
carcass of such an animal, you will be defiled. 27Of the animals that
walk on all fours, those that have paws are unclean. If you touch
the carcass of such an animal, you will be defiled until evening. 28If
you pick up its carcass, you must wash your clothes, and you will
remain defiled until evening. These animals are unclean for you.

29“Of the small animals that scurry along the ground, these are
unclean for you: the mole rat, the rat, large lizards of all kinds, 30the
gecko, the monitor lizard, the common lizard, the sand lizard, and
the chameleon. 31All these small animals are unclean for you. If any
of you touch the dead body of such an animal, you will be defiled
until evening. 32If such an animal dies and falls on something, that
object will be unclean. This is true whether the object is made of
wood, cloth, leather, or burlap. Whatever its use, you must dip it in
water, and it will remain defiled until evening. After that, it will be

ceremonially clean and may be used again.

33“If such an animal falls into a clay pot, everything in the pot will
be defiled, and the pot must be smashed. 34If the water from such a
container spills on any food, the food will be defiled. And any
beverage in such a container will be defiled. 35Any object on which
the carcass of such an animal falls will be defiled. If it is an oven or
hearth, it must be destroyed, for it is defiled, and you must treat it
accordingly.

36“However, if the carcass of such an animal falls into a spring or a
cistern, the water will still be clean. But anyone who touches the
carcass will be defiled. 37If the carcass falls on seed grain to be
planted in the field, the seed will still be considered clean. 38But if
the seed is wet when the carcass falls on it, the seed will be defiled.

39“If an animal you are permitted to eat dies and you touch its
carcass, you will be defiled until evening. 40If you eat any of its
meat or carry away its carcass, you must wash your clothes, and
you will remain defiled until evening.

41“All small animals that scurry along the ground are detestable,
and you must never eat them. 42This includes all animals that slither
along on their bellies, as well as those with four legs and those with
many feet. All such animals that scurry along the ground are
detestable, and you must never eat them. 43Do not defile yourselves
by touching them. You must not make yourselves ceremonially
unclean because of them. 44For I am the LORD your God. You must
consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. So do not
defile yourselves with any of these small animals that scurry along
the ground. 45For I, the LORD, am the one who brought you up from
the land of Egypt, that I might be your God. Therefore, you must be
holy because I am holy.

46“These are the instructions regarding land animals, birds, marine
creatures, and animals that scurry along the ground. 47By these
instructions you will know what is unclean and clean, and which

animals may be eaten and which may not be eaten.”

Leviticus 12

PURIFICATION AFTER CHILDBIRTH

1The LORD said to Moses, 2“Give the following instructions to the
people of Israel. If a woman becomes pregnant and gives birth to a
son, she will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is
unclean during her menstrual period. 3On the eighth day the boy’s
foreskin must be circumcised. 4After waiting thirty-three days, she
will be purified from the bleeding of childbirth. During this time of
purification, she must not touch anything that is set apart as holy.
And she must not enter the sanctuary until her time of purification
is over. 5If a woman gives birth to a daughter, she will be
ceremonially unclean for two weeks, just as she is unclean during
her menstrual period. After waiting sixty-six days, she will be
purified from the bleeding of childbirth.

6“When the time of purification is completed for either a son or a
daughter, the woman must bring a one-year-old lamb for a burnt
offering and a young pigeon or turtledove for a purification
offering. She must bring her offerings to the priest at the entrance
of the Tabernacle.*7The priest will then present them to the LORD
to purify her.* Then she will be ceremonially clean again after her
bleeding at childbirth. These are the instructions for a woman after
the birth of a son or a daughter.

8“If a woman cannot afford to bring a lamb, she must bring two
turtledoves or two young pigeons. One will be for the burnt offering
and the other for the purification offering. The priest will sacrifice
them to purify her, and she will be ceremonially clean.”

Leviticus 13

SERIOUS SKIN DISEASES

1The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 2"If anyone has a swelling or a
rash or discolored skin that might develop into a serious skin
disease,* that person must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one
of his sons.*3The priest will examine the affected area of the skin. If
the hair in the affected area has turned white and the problem
appears to be more than skin-deep, it is a serious skin disease, and
the priest who examines it must pronounce the person ceremonially
unclean.

4"But if the affected area of the skin is only a white discoloration
and does not appear to be more than skin-deep, and if the hair on
the spot has not turned white, the priest will quarantine the person
for seven days. 5On the seventh day the priest will make another
examination. If he finds the affected area has not changed and the
problem has not spread on the skin, the priest will quarantine the
person for seven more days. 6On the seventh day the priest will
make another examination. If he finds the affected area has faded
and has not spread, the priest will pronounce the person
ceremonially clean. It was only a rash. The person's clothing must
be washed, and the person will be ceremonially clean. 7But if the
rash continues to spread after the person has been examined by the
priest and has been pronounced clean, the infected person must
return to be examined again. 8If the priest finds that the rash has
spread, he must pronounce the person ceremonially unclean, for it
is indeed a skin disease.

9"Anyone who develops a serious skin disease must go to the priest
for an examination. 10If the priest finds a white swelling on the skin,
and some hair on the spot has turned white, and there is an open
sore in the affected area, 11it is a chronic skin disease, and the priest
must pronounce the person ceremonially unclean. In such cases the
person need not be quarantined, for it is obvious that the skin is
defiled by the disease.

12"Now suppose the disease has spread all over the person's skin,
covering the body from head to foot. 13When the priest examines

the infected person and finds that the disease covers the entire body, he will pronounce the person ceremonially clean. Since the skin has turned completely white, the person is clean. 14But if any open sores appear, the infected person will be pronounced ceremonially unclean. 15The priest must make this pronouncement as soon as he sees an open sore, since open sores indicate the presence of a skin disease. 16However, if the open sores heal and turn white like the rest of the skin, the person must return to the priest 17for another examination. If the affected areas have indeed turned white, the priest will then pronounce the person ceremonially clean by declaring, 'You are clean!'

18"If anyone has a boil on the skin that has started to heal, 19but a white swelling or a reddish white spot develops in its place, that person must go to the priest to be examined. 20If the priest examines it and finds it to be more than skin-deep, and if the hair in the affected area has turned white, the priest must pronounce the person ceremonially unclean. The boil has become a serious skin disease. 21But if the priest finds no white hair on the affected area and the problem appears to be no more than skin-deep and has faded, the priest must quarantine the person for seven days. 22If during that time the affected area spreads on the skin, the priest must pronounce the person ceremonially unclean, because it is a serious disease. 23But if the area grows no larger and does not spread, it is merely the scar from the boil, and the priest will pronounce the person ceremonially clean.

24"If anyone has suffered a burn on the skin and the burned area changes color, becoming either reddish white or shiny white, 25the priest must examine it. If he finds that the hair in the affected area has turned white and the problem appears to be more than skin-deep, a skin disease has broken out in the burn. The priest must then pronounce the person ceremonially unclean, for it is clearly a serious skin disease. 26But if the priest finds no white hair on the affected area and the problem appears to be no more than skin-deep and has faded, the priest must quarantine the infected person for seven days. 27On the seventh day the priest must examine the person again. If the affected area has spread on the skin, the priest must pronounce that person ceremonially unclean, for it is clearly a

serious skin disease. 28But if the affected area has not changed or spread on the skin and has faded, it is simply a swelling from the burn. The priest will then pronounce the person ceremonially clean, for it is only the scar from the burn.

29“If anyone, either a man or woman, has a sore on the head or chin, 30the priest must examine it. If he finds it is more than skin-deep and has fine yellow hair on it, the priest must pronounce the person ceremonially unclean. It is a scabby sore of the head or chin. 31If the priest examines the scabby sore and finds that it is only skin-deep but there is no black hair on it, he must quarantine the person for seven days. 32On the seventh day the priest must examine the sore again. If he finds that the scabby sore has not spread, and there is no yellow hair on it, and it appears to be only skin-deep, 33the person must shave off all hair except the hair on the affected area. Then the priest must quarantine the person for another seven days. 34On the seventh day he will examine the sore again. If it has not spread and appears to be no more than skin-deep, the priest will pronounce the person ceremonially clean. The person’s clothing must be washed, and the person will be ceremonially clean. 35But if the scabby sore begins to spread after the person is pronounced clean, 36the priest must do another examination. If he finds that the sore has spread, the priest does not need to look for yellow hair. The infected person is ceremonially unclean. 37But if the color of the scabby sore does not change and black hair has grown on it, it has healed. The priest will then pronounce the person ceremonially clean.

38“If anyone, either a man or woman, has shiny white patches on the skin, 39the priest must examine the affected area. If he finds that the shiny patches are only pale white, this is a harmless skin rash, and the person is ceremonially clean.

40“If a man loses his hair and his head becomes bald, he is still ceremonially clean. 41And if he loses hair on his forehead, he simply has a bald forehead; he is still clean. 42However, if a reddish white sore appears on the bald area on top of his head or on his forehead, this is a skin disease. 43The priest must examine him, and if he finds

swelling around the reddish white sore anywhere on the man's head and it looks like a skin disease, 44the man is indeed infected with a skin disease and is unclean. The priest must pronounce him ceremonially unclean because of the sore on his head.

45"Those who suffer from a serious skin disease must tear their clothing and leave their hair uncombed.* They must cover their mouth and call out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' 46As long as the serious disease lasts, they will be ceremonially unclean. They must live in isolation in their place outside the camp.

TREATMENT OF CONTAMINATED CLOTHING

47"Now suppose mildew* contaminates some woolen or linen clothing, 48woolen or linen fabric, the hide of an animal, or anything made of leather. 49If the contaminated area in the clothing, the animal hide, the fabric, or the leather article has turned greenish or reddish, it is contaminated with mildew and must be shown to the priest. 50After examining the affected spot, the priest will put the article in quarantine for seven days. 51On the seventh day the priest must inspect it again. If the contaminated area has spread, the clothing or fabric or leather is clearly contaminated by a serious mildew and is ceremonially unclean. 52The priest must burn the item—the clothing, the woolen or linen fabric, or piece of leather—for it has been contaminated by a serious mildew. It must be completely destroyed by fire.

53"But if the priest examines it and finds that the contaminated area has not spread in the clothing, the fabric, or the leather, 54the priest will order the object to be washed and then quarantined for seven more days. 55Then the priest must examine the object again. If he finds that the contaminated area has not changed color after being washed, even if it did not spread, the object is defiled. It must be completely burned up, whether the contaminated spot* is on the inside or outside. 56But if the priest examines it and finds that the contaminated area has faded after being washed, he must cut the

spot from the clothing, the fabric, or the leather. 57If the spot later reappears on the clothing, the fabric, or the leather article, the mildew is clearly spreading, and the contaminated object must be burned up. 58But if the spot disappears from the clothing, the fabric, or the leather article after it has been washed, it must be washed again; then it will be ceremonially clean.

59“These are the instructions for dealing with mildew that contaminates woolen or linen clothing or fabric or anything made of leather. This is how the priest will determine whether these items are ceremonially clean or unclean.”

Leviticus 14

CLEANSING FROM SKIN DISEASES

1And the LORD said to Moses, 2“The following instructions are for those seeking ceremonial purification from a skin disease.* Those who have been healed must be brought to the priest, 3who will examine them at a place outside the camp. If the priest finds that someone has been healed of a serious skin disease, 4he will perform a purification ceremony, using two live birds that are ceremonially clean, a stick of cedar,* some scarlet yarn, and a hyssop branch. 5The priest will order that one bird be slaughtered over a clay pot filled with fresh water. 6He will take the live bird, the cedar stick, the scarlet yarn, and the hyssop branch, and dip them into the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the fresh water. 7The priest will then sprinkle the blood of the dead bird seven times on the person being purified of the skin disease. When the priest has purified the person, he will release the live bird in the open field to fly away.

8“The persons being purified must then wash their clothes, shave off all their hair, and bathe themselves in water. Then they will be ceremonially clean and may return to the camp. However, they must remain outside their tents for seven days. 9On the seventh day they must again shave all the hair from their heads, including the

hair of the beard and eyebrows. They must also wash their clothes and bathe themselves in water. Then they will be ceremonially clean.

10“On the eighth day each person being purified must bring two male lambs and a one-year-old female lamb, all with no defects, along with a grain offering of six quarts* of choice flour moistened with olive oil, and a cup* of olive oil. 11Then the officiating priest will present that person for purification, along with the offerings, before the LORD at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*12The priest will take one of the male lambs and the olive oil and present them as a guilt offering, lifting them up as a special offering before the LORD. 13He will then slaughter the male lamb in the sacred area where sin offerings and burnt offerings are slaughtered. As with the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest. It is a most holy offering. 14The priest will then take some of the blood of the guilt offering and apply it to the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person being purified.

15“Then the priest will pour some of the olive oil into the palm of his own left hand. 16He will dip his right finger into the oil in his palm and sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the LORD. 17The priest will then apply some of the oil in his palm over the blood from the guilt offering that is on the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person being purified. 18The priest will apply the oil remaining in his hand to the head of the person being purified. Through this process, the priest will purify* the person before the LORD.

19“Then the priest must present the sin offering to purify the person who was cured of the skin disease. After that, the priest will slaughter the burnt offering 20and offer it on the altar along with the grain offering. Through this process, the priest will purify the person who was healed, and the person will be ceremonially clean.

21“But anyone who is too poor and cannot afford these offerings
may bring one male lamb for a guilt offering, to be lifted up as a
special offering for purification. The person must also bring two
quarts* of choice flour moistened with olive oil for the grain
offering and a cup of olive oil. 22The offering must also include two
turtledoves or two young pigeons, whichever the person can afford.
One of the pair must be used for the sin offering and the other for a
burnt offering. 23On the eighth day of the purification ceremony,
the person being purified must bring the offerings to the priest in
the LORD’s presence at the entrance of the Tabernacle. 24The priest
will take the lamb for the guilt offering, along with the olive oil,
and lift them up as a special offering to the LORD. 25Then the priest
will slaughter the lamb for the guilt offering. He will take some of
its blood and apply it to the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the
right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person being
purified.

26“The priest will also pour some of the olive oil into the palm of his
own left hand. 27He will dip his right finger into the oil in his palm
and sprinkle some of it seven times before the LORD. 28The priest
will then apply some of the oil in his palm over the blood from the
guilt offering that is on the lobe of the right ear, the thumb of the
right hand, and the big toe of the right foot of the person being
purified. 29The priest will apply the oil remaining in his hand to the
head of the person being purified. Through this process, the priest
will purify the person before the LORD.

30“Then the priest will offer the two turtledoves or the two young
pigeons, whichever the person can afford. 31One of them is for a sin
offering and the other for a burnt offering, to be presented along
with the grain offering. Through this process, the priest will purify
the person before the LORD. 32These are the instructions for
purification for those who have recovered from a serious skin
disease but who cannot afford to bring the offerings normally
required for the ceremony of purification.”

TREATMENT OF CONTAMINATED HOUSES

33Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 34“When you arrive in
Canaan, the land I am giving you as your own possession, I may
contaminate some of the houses in your land with mildew.*35The
owner of such a house must then go to the priest and say, ‘It
appears that my house has some kind of mildew.’ 36Before the priest
goes in to inspect the house, he must have the house emptied so
nothing inside will be pronounced ceremonially unclean. 37Then the
priest will go in and examine the mildew on the walls. If he finds
greenish or reddish streaks and the contamination appears to go
deeper than the wall’s surface, 38the priest will step outside the door
and put the house in quarantine for seven days. 39On the seventh
day the priest must return for another inspection. If he finds that
the mildew on the walls of the house has spread, 40the priest must
order that the stones from those areas be removed. The
contaminated material will then be taken outside the town to an
area designated as ceremonially unclean. 41Next the inside walls of
the entire house must be scraped thoroughly and the scrapings
dumped in the unclean place outside the town. 42Other stones will
be brought in to replace the ones that were removed, and the walls
will be replastered.

43“But if the mildew reappears after all the stones have been
replaced and the house has been scraped and replastered, 44the
priest must return and inspect the house again. If he finds that the
mildew has spread, the walls are clearly contaminated with a
serious mildew, and the house is defiled. 45It must be torn down,
and all its stones, timbers, and plaster must be carried out of town
to the place designated as ceremonially unclean. 46Those who enter
the house during the period of quarantine will be ceremonially
unclean until evening, 47and all who sleep or eat in the house must
wash their clothing.

48“But if the priest returns for his inspection and finds that the
mildew has not reappeared in the house after the fresh plastering,
he will pronounce it clean because the mildew is clearly gone. 49To
purify the house the priest must take two birds, a stick of cedar,
some scarlet yarn, and a hyssop branch. 50He will slaughter one of
the birds over a clay pot filled with fresh water. 51He will take the
cedar stick, the hyssop branch, the scarlet yarn, and the live bird,

and dip them into the blood of the slaughtered bird and into the fresh water. Then he will sprinkle the house seven times. 52When the priest has purified the house in exactly this way, 53he will release the live bird in the open fields outside the town. Through this process, the priest will purify the house, and it will be ceremonially clean.

54“These are the instructions for dealing with serious skin diseases,* including scabby sores; 55and mildew,* whether on clothing or in a house; 56and a swelling on the skin, a rash, or discolored skin. 57This procedure will determine whether a person or object is ceremonially clean or unclean.

“These are the instructions regarding skin diseases and mildew.”

Leviticus 15

BODILY DISCHARGES

1The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 2“Give the following instructions to the people of Israel.

“Any man who has a bodily discharge is ceremonially unclean. 3This defilement is caused by his discharge, whether the discharge continues or stops. In either case the man is unclean. 4Any bed on which the man with the discharge lies and anything on which he sits will be ceremonially unclean. 5So if you touch the man’s bed, you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening. 6If you sit where the man with the discharge has sat, you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening. 7If you touch the man with the discharge, you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening. 8If the man spits on you, you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening. 9Any saddle blanket on which the man rides will be ceremonially unclean. 10If you touch anything that was under the man, you will

be unclean until evening. You must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening. 11If the man touches you without first rinsing his hands, you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening. 12Any clay pot the man touches must be broken, and any wooden utensil he touches must be rinsed with water.

13“When the man with the discharge is healed, he must count off seven days for the period of purification. Then he must wash his clothes and bathe himself in fresh water, and he will be ceremonially clean. 14On the eighth day he must get two turtledoves or two young pigeons and come before the LORD at the entrance of the Tabernacle* and give his offerings to the priest. 15The priest will offer one bird for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. Through this process, the priest will purify* the man before the LORD for his discharge.

16“Whenever a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his entire body in water, and he will remain ceremonially unclean until the next evening.*17Any clothing or leather with semen on it must be washed in water, and it will remain unclean until evening. 18After a man and a woman have sexual intercourse, they must each bathe in water, and they will remain unclean until the next evening.

19“Whenever a woman has her menstrual period, she will be ceremonially unclean for seven days. Anyone who touches her during that time will be unclean until evening. 20Anything on which the woman lies or sits during the time of her period will be unclean. 21If any of you touch her bed, you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening. 22If you touch any object she has sat on, you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening. 23This includes her bed or any other object she has sat on; you will be unclean until evening if you touch it. 24If a man has sexual intercourse with her and her blood touches him, her menstrual impurity will be transmitted to him. He will remain

unclean for seven days, and any bed on which he lies will be unclean.

25“If a woman has a flow of blood for many days that is unrelated to her menstrual period, or if the blood continues beyond the normal period, she is ceremonially unclean. As during her menstrual period, the woman will be unclean as long as the discharge continues. 26Any bed she lies on and any object she sits on during that time will be unclean, just as during her normal menstrual period. 27If any of you touch these things, you will be ceremonially unclean. You must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and you will remain unclean until evening.

28“When the woman’s bleeding stops, she must count off seven days. Then she will be ceremonially clean. 29On the eighth day she must bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons and present them to the priest at the entrance of the Tabernacle. 30The priest will offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. Through this process, the priest will purify her before the LORD for the ceremonial impurity caused by her bleeding.

31“This is how you will guard the people of Israel from ceremonial uncleanness. Otherwise they would die, for their impurity would defile my Tabernacle that stands among them. 32These are the instructions for dealing with anyone who has a bodily discharge—a man who is unclean because of an emission of semen 33or a woman during her menstrual period. It applies to any man or woman who has a bodily discharge, and to a man who has sexual intercourse with a woman who is ceremonially unclean.”

Leviticus 16

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

1The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, who
died after they entered the LORD's presence and burned the wrong
kind of fire before him. 2The LORD said to Moses, "Warn your
brother, Aaron, not to enter the Most Holy Place behind the inner
curtain whenever he chooses; if he does, he will die. For the Ark's
cover—the place of atonement—is there, and I myself am present in
the cloud above the atonement cover.

3"When Aaron enters the sanctuary area, he must follow these
instructions fully. He must bring a young bull for a sin offering and
a ram for a burnt offering. 4He must put on his linen tunic and the
linen undergarments worn next to his body. He must tie the linen
sash around his waist and put the linen turban on his head. These
are sacred garments, so he must bathe himself in water before he
puts them on. 5Aaron must take from the community of Israel two
male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

6“Aaron will present his own bull as a sin offering to purify himself
and his family, making them right with the LORD.*7Then he must
take the two male goats and present them to the LORD at the
entrance of the Tabernacle.*8He is to cast sacred lots to determine
which goat will be reserved as an offering to the LORD and which
will carry the sins of the people to the wilderness of Azazel. 9Aaron
will then present as a sin offering the goat chosen by lot for the
LORD. 10The other goat, the scapegoat chosen by lot to be sent
away, will be kept alive, standing before the LORD. When it is sent
away to Azazel in the wilderness, the people will be purified and
made right with the LORD.*

11“Aaron will present his own bull as a sin offering to purify himself
and his family, making them right with the LORD. After he has
slaughtered the bull as a sin offering, 12he will fill an incense burner
with burning coals from the altar that stands before the LORD. Then
he will take two handfuls of fragrant powdered incense and will
carry the burner and the incense behind the inner curtain. 13There
in the LORD’s presence he will put the incense on the burning coals
so that a cloud of incense will rise over the Ark’s cover—the place
of atonement—that rests on the Ark of the Covenant.* If he follows
these instructions, he will not die. 14Then he must take some of the
blood of the bull, dip his finger in it, and sprinkle it on the east side
of the atonement cover. He must sprinkle blood seven times with
his finger in front of the atonement cover.

15“Then Aaron must slaughter the first goat as a sin offering for the
people and carry its blood behind the inner curtain. There he will
sprinkle the goat’s blood over the atonement cover and in front of
it, just as he did with the bull’s blood. 16Through this process, he
will purify* the Most Holy Place, and he will do the same for the
entire Tabernacle, because of the defiling sin and rebellion of the
Israelites. 17No one else is allowed inside the Tabernacle when
Aaron enters it for the purification ceremony in the Most Holy
Place. No one may enter until he comes out again after purifying
himself, his family, and all the congregation of Israel, making them
right with the LORD.

18“Then Aaron will come out to purify the altar that stands before
the LORD. He will do this by taking some of the blood from the bull
and the goat and putting it on each of the horns of the altar. 19Then
he must sprinkle the blood with his finger seven times over the
altar. In this way, he will cleanse it from Israel’s defilement and
make it holy.

20“When Aaron has finished purifying the Most Holy Place and the
Tabernacle and the altar, he must present the live goat. 21He will
lay both of his hands on the goat’s head and confess over it all the
wickedness, rebellion, and sins of the people of Israel. In this way,
he will transfer the people’s sins to the head of the goat. Then a
man specially chosen for the task will drive the goat into the
wilderness. 22As the goat goes into the wilderness, it will carry all
the people’s sins upon itself into a desolate land.

23“When Aaron goes back into the Tabernacle, he must take off the
linen garments he was wearing when he entered the Most Holy
Place, and he must leave the garments there. 24Then he must bathe
himself with water in a sacred place, put on his regular garments,
and go out to sacrifice a burnt offering for himself and a burnt
offering for the people. Through this process, he will purify himself
and the people, making them right with the LORD. 25He must then
burn all the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

26“The man chosen to drive the scapegoat into the wilderness of
Azazel must wash his clothes and bathe himself in water. Then he
may return to the camp.

27“The bull and the goat presented as sin offerings, whose blood
Aaron takes into the Most Holy Place for the purification ceremony,
will be carried outside the camp. The animals’ hides, internal
organs, and dung are all to be burned. 28The man who burns them
must wash his clothes and bathe himself in water before returning
to the camp.

29“On the tenth day of the appointed month in early autumn,* you
must deny yourselves.* Neither native-born Israelites nor foreigners
living among you may do any kind of work. This is a permanent
law for you. 30On that day offerings of purification will be made for
you,* and you will be purified in the LORD’s presence from all your
sins. 31It will be a Sabbath day of complete rest for you, and you
must deny yourselves. This is a permanent law for you. 32In future
generations, the purification* ceremony will be performed by the
priest who has been anointed and ordained to serve as high priest in
place of his ancestor Aaron. He will put on the holy linen garments
33and purify the Most Holy Place, the Tabernacle, the altar, the
priests, and the entire congregation. 34This is a permanent law for
you, to purify the people of Israel from their sins, making them
right with the LORD once each year.”

Moses followed all these instructions exactly as the LORD had
commanded him.

Leviticus 17

PROHIBITIONS AGAINST EATING BLOOD

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2“Give the following instructions to
Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel. This is what the
LORD has commanded.

3“If any native Israelite sacrifices a bull* or a lamb or a goat
anywhere inside or outside the camp 4instead of bringing it to the
entrance of the Tabernacle* to present it as an offering to the LORD,
that person will be as guilty as a murderer.* Such a person has shed

blood and will be cut off from the community. 5The purpose of this rule is to stop the Israelites from sacrificing animals in the open fields. It will ensure that they bring their sacrifices to the priest at the entrance of the Tabernacle, so he can present them to the LORD as peace offerings. 6Then the priest will be able to splatter the blood against the LORD's altar at the entrance of the Tabernacle, and he will burn the fat as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 7The people must no longer be unfaithful to the LORD by offering sacrifices to the goat idols.* This is a permanent law for them, to be observed from generation to generation.

8"Give them this command as well. If any native Israelite or foreigner living among you offers a burnt offering or a sacrifice 9but does not bring it to the entrance of the Tabernacle to offer it to the LORD, that person will be cut off from the community.

10"And if any native Israelite or foreigner living among you eats or drinks blood in any form, I will turn against that person and cut him off from the community of your people, 11for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the LORD.* It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible. 12That is why I have said to the people of Israel, 'You must never eat or drink blood—neither you nor the foreigners living among you.'

13"And if any native Israelite or foreigner living among you goes hunting and kills an animal or bird that is approved for eating, he must drain its blood and cover it with earth. 14The life of every creature is in its blood. That is why I have said to the people of Israel, 'You must never eat or drink blood, for the life of any creature is in its blood.' So whoever consumes blood will be cut off from the community.

15"And if any native-born Israelites or foreigners eat the meat of an animal that died naturally or was torn up by wild animals, they must wash their clothes and bathe themselves in water. They will remain ceremonially unclean until evening, but then they will be

clean. 16But if they do not wash their clothes and bathe themselves,
they will be punished for their sin."

Leviticus 18

FORBIDDEN SEXUAL PRACTICES

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2"Give the following instructions to
the people of Israel. I am the LORD your God. 3So do not act like
the people in Egypt, where you used to live, or like the people of
Canaan, where I am taking you. You must not imitate their way of
life. 4You must obey all my regulations and be careful to obey my
decrees, for I am the LORD your God. 5If you obey my decrees and
my regulations, you will find life through them. I am the LORD.

6"You must never have sexual relations with a close relative, for I
am the LORD.

7"Do not violate your father by having sexual relations with your
mother. She is your mother; you must not have sexual relations
with her.

8"Do not have sexual relations with any of your father's wives, for
this would violate your father.

9"Do not have sexual relations with your sister or half sister,
whether she is your father's daughter or your mother's daughter,
whether she was born into your household or someone else's.

10"Do not have sexual relations with your granddaughter, whether
she is your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, for this
would violate yourself.

11"Do not have sexual relations with your stepsister, the daughter of
any of your father's wives, for she is your sister.

12“Do not have sexual relations with your father’s sister, for she is your father’s close relative.

13“Do not have sexual relations with your mother’s sister, for she is your mother’s close relative.

14“Do not violate your uncle, your father’s brother, by having sexual relations with his wife, for she is your aunt.

15“Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law; she is your son’s wife, so you must not have sexual relations with her.

16“Do not have sexual relations with your brother’s wife, for this would violate your brother.

17“Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. And do not take* her granddaughter, whether her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter, and have sexual relations with her. They are close relatives, and this would be a wicked act.

18“While your wife is living, do not marry her sister and have sexual relations with her, for they would be rivals.

19“Do not have sexual relations with a woman during her period of menstrual impurity.

20“Do not defile yourself by having sexual intercourse with your neighbor’s wife.

21“Do not permit any of your children to be offered as a sacrifice to Molech, for you must not bring shame on the name of your God. I am the LORD.

22“Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as
with a woman. It is a detestable sin.

23“A man must not defile himself by having sex with an animal. And
a woman must not offer herself to a male animal to have
intercourse with it. This is a perverse act.

24“Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for the people I am
driving out before you have defiled themselves in all these ways.
25Because the entire land has become defiled, I am punishing the
people who live there. I will cause the land to vomit them out.
26You must obey all my decrees and regulations. You must not
commit any of these detestable sins. This applies both to native-
born Israelites and to the foreigners living among you.

27“All these detestable activities are practiced by the people of the
land where I am taking you, and this is how the land has become
defiled. 28So do not defile the land and give it a reason to vomit you
out, as it will vomit out the people who live there now. 29Whoever
commits any of these detestable sins will be cut off from the
community of Israel. 30So obey my instructions, and do not defile
yourselves by committing any of these detestable practices that
were committed by the people who lived in the land before you. I
am the LORD your God.”

Leviticus 19

HOLINESS IN PERSONAL CONDUCT

1The LORD also said to Moses, 2“Give the following instructions to
the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the
LORD your God, am holy.

3“Each of you must show great respect for your mother and father,
and you must always observe my Sabbath days of rest. I am the
LORD your God.

4“Do not put your trust in idols or make metal images of gods for
yourselves. I am the LORD your God.

5“When you sacrifice a peace offering to the LORD, offer it properly
so you* will be accepted by God. 6The sacrifice must be eaten on the
same day you offer it or on the next day. Whatever is left over until
the third day must be completely burned up. 7If any of the sacrifice
is eaten on the third day, it will be contaminated, and I will not
accept it. 8Anyone who eats it on the third day will be punished for
defiling what is holy to the LORD and will be cut off from the
community.

9“When you harvest the crops of your land, do not harvest the grain
along the edges of your fields, and do not pick up what the
harvesters drop. 10It is the same with your grape crop—do not strip
every last bunch of grapes from the vines, and do not pick up the
grapes that fall to the ground. Leave them for the poor and the
foreigners living among you. I am the LORD your God.

11“Do not steal.

“Do not deceive or cheat one another.

12“Do not bring shame on the name of your God by using it to
swear falsely. I am the LORD.

13“Do not defraud or rob your neighbor.

“Do not make your hired workers wait until the next day to receive
their pay.

14“Do not insult the deaf or cause the blind to stumble. You must
fear your God; I am the LORD.

15“Do not twist justice in legal matters by favoring the poor or being
partial to the rich and powerful. Always judge people fairly.

16“Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people.*

“Do not stand idly by when your neighbor’s life is threatened. I am
the LORD.

17“Do not nurse hatred in your heart for any of your relatives.*
Confront people directly so you will not be held guilty for their sin.

18“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite,
but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

19“You must obey all my decrees.

“Do not mate two different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field
with two different kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven from
two different kinds of thread.

20“If a man has sex with a slave girl whose freedom has never been
purchased but who is committed to become another man’s wife, he
must pay full compensation to her master. But since she is not a free
woman, neither the man nor the woman will be put to death. 21The
man, however, must bring a ram as a guilt offering and present it to
the LORD at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*22The priest will then
purify him* before the LORD with the ram of the guilt offering, and
the man’s sin will be forgiven.

23“When you enter the land and plant fruit trees, leave the fruit
unharvested for the first three years and consider it forbidden.* Do
not eat it. 24In the fourth year the entire crop must be consecrated
to the LORD as a celebration of praise. 25Finally, in the fifth year
you may eat the fruit. If you follow this pattern, your harvest will
increase. I am the LORD your God.

26“Do not eat meat that has not been drained of its blood.

“Do not practice fortune-telling or witchcraft.

27“Do not trim off the hair on your temples or trim your beards.

28“Do not cut your bodies for the dead, and do not mark your skin
with tattoos. I am the LORD.

29“Do not defile your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the
land will be filled with prostitution and wickedness.

30“Keep my Sabbath days of rest, and show reverence toward my
sanctuary. I am the LORD.

31“Do not defile yourselves by turning to mediums or to those who
consult the spirits of the dead. I am the LORD your God.

32“Stand up in the presence of the elderly, and show respect for the
aged. Fear your God. I am the LORD.

33“Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your
land. 34Treat them like native-born Israelites, and love them as you
love yourself. Remember that you were once foreigners living in the
land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

35“Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight,
or volume. 36Your scales and weights must be accurate. Your
containers for measuring dry materials or liquids must be accurate.*
I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37“You must be careful to keep all of my decrees and regulations by
putting them into practice. I am the LORD.”

Leviticus 20

PUNISHMENTS FOR DISOBEDIENCE

1The LORD said to Moses, 2“Give the people of Israel these
instructions, which apply both to native Israelites and to the
foreigners living in Israel.

“If any of them offer their children as a sacrifice to Molech, they
must be put to death. The people of the community must stone
them to death. 3I myself will turn against them and cut them off
from the community, because they have defiled my sanctuary and
brought shame on my holy name by offering their children to
Molech. 4And if the people of the community ignore those who offer
their children to Molech and refuse to execute them, 5I myself will
turn against them and their families and will cut them off from the
community. This will happen to all who commit spiritual
prostitution by worshiping Molech.

6“I will also turn against those who commit spiritual prostitution by

putting their trust in mediums or in those who consult the spirits of the dead. I will cut them off from the community. 7So set yourselves apart to be holy, for I am the LORD your God. 8Keep all my decrees by putting them into practice, for I am the LORD who makes you holy.

9“Anyone who dishonors* father or mother must be put to death. Such a person is guilty of a capital offense.

10“If a man commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, both the man and the woman who have committed adultery must be put to death.

11“If a man violates his father by having sex with one of his father’s wives, both the man and the woman must be put to death, for they are guilty of a capital offense.

12“If a man has sex with his daughter-in-law, both must be put to death. They have committed a perverse act and are guilty of a capital offense.

13“If a man practices homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman, both men have committed a detestable act. They must both be put to death, for they are guilty of a capital offense.

14“If a man marries both a woman and her mother, he has committed a wicked act. The man and both women must be burned to death to wipe out such wickedness from among you.

15“If a man has sex with an animal, he must be put to death, and the animal must be killed.

16“If a woman presents herself to a male animal to have intercourse with it, she and the animal must both be put to death. You must kill

both, for they are guilty of a capital offense.

17“If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a shameful disgrace. They must be publicly cut off from the community. Since the man has violated his sister, he will be punished for his sin.

18“If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her menstrual period, both of them must be cut off from the community, for together they have exposed the source of her blood flow.

19“Do not have sexual relations with your aunt, whether your mother’s sister or your father’s sister. This would dishonor a close relative. Both parties are guilty and will be punished for their sin.

20“If a man has sex with his uncle’s wife, he has violated his uncle. Both the man and woman will be punished for their sin, and they will die childless.

21“If a man marries his brother’s wife, it is an act of impurity. He has violated his brother, and the guilty couple will remain childless.

22“You must keep all my decrees and regulations by putting them into practice; otherwise the land to which I am bringing you as your new home will vomit you out. 23Do not live according to the customs of the people I am driving out before you. It is because they do these shameful things that I detest them. 24But I have promised you, ‘You will possess their land because I will give it to you as your possession—a land flowing with milk and honey.’ I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from all other people.

25“You must therefore make a distinction between ceremonially clean and unclean animals, and between clean and unclean birds. You must not defile yourselves by eating any unclean animal or bird or creature that scurries along the ground. I have identified them as

being unclean for you. 26You must be holy because I, the LORD, am holy. I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own.

27“Men and women among you who act as mediums or who consult the spirits of the dead must be put to death by stoning. They are guilty of a capital offense.”

Leviticus 21

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRIESTS

1The LORD said to Moses, “Give the following instructions to the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

“A priest must not make himself ceremonially unclean by touching the dead body of a relative. 2The only exceptions are his closest relatives—his mother or father, son or daughter, brother, 3or his virgin sister who depends on him because she has no husband. 4But a priest must not defile himself and make himself unclean for someone who is related to him only by marriage.

5“The priests must not shave their heads or trim their beards or cut their bodies. 6They must be set apart as holy to their God and must never bring shame on the name of God. They must be holy, for they are the ones who present the special gifts to the LORD, gifts of food for their God.

7“Priests may not marry a woman defiled by prostitution, and they may not marry a woman who is divorced from her husband, for the priests are set apart as holy to their God. 8You must treat them as holy because they offer up food to your God. You must consider them holy because I, the LORD, am holy, and I make you holy.

9“If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she also defiles her father’s holiness, and she must be burned to death.

10“The high priest has the highest rank of all the priests. The
anointing oil has been poured on his head, and he has been
ordained to wear the priestly garments. He must never leave his
hair uncombed* or tear his clothing. 11He must not defile himself by
going near a dead body. He may not make himself ceremonially
unclean even for his father or mother. 12He must not defile the
sanctuary of his God by leaving it to attend to a dead person, for he
has been made holy by the anointing oil of his God. I am the LORD.

13“The high priest may marry only a virgin. 14He may not marry a
widow, a woman who is divorced, or a woman who has defiled
herself by prostitution. She must be a virgin from his own clan, 15so
that he will not dishonor his descendants among his clan, for I am
the LORD who makes him holy.”

16Then the LORD said to Moses, 17“Give the following instructions
to Aaron: In all future generations, none of your descendants who
has any defect will qualify to offer food to his God. 18No one who
has a defect qualifies, whether he is blind, lame, disfigured,
deformed, 19or has a broken foot or arm, 20or is hunchbacked or
dwarfed, or has a defective eye, or skin sores or scabs, or damaged
testicles. 21No descendant of Aaron who has a defect may approach
the altar to present special gifts to the LORD. Since he has a defect,
he may not approach the altar to offer food to his God. 22However,
he may eat from the food offered to God, including the holy
offerings and the most holy offerings. 23Yet because of his physical
defect, he may not enter the room behind the inner curtain or
approach the altar, for this would defile my holy places. I am the
LORD who makes them holy.”

24So Moses gave these instructions to Aaron and his sons and to all
the Israelites.

Leviticus 22

1The LORD said to Moses, 2“Tell Aaron and his sons to be very
careful with the sacred gifts that the Israelites set apart for me, so
they do not bring shame on my holy name. I am the LORD. 3Give
them the following instructions.

“In all future generations, if any of your descendants is
ceremonially unclean when he approaches the sacred offerings that
the people of Israel consecrate to the LORD, he must be cut off from
my presence. I am the LORD.

4“If any of Aaron’s descendants has a skin disease* or any kind of
discharge that makes him ceremonially unclean, he may not eat
from the sacred offerings until he has been pronounced clean. He
also becomes unclean by touching a corpse, or by having an
emission of semen, 5or by touching a small animal that is unclean,
or by touching someone who is ceremonially unclean for any
reason. 6The man who is defiled in any of these ways will remain
unclean until evening. He may not eat from the sacred offerings
until he has bathed himself in water. 7When the sun goes down, he
will be ceremonially clean again and may eat from the sacred
offerings, for this is his food. 8He may not eat an animal that has
died a natural death or has been torn apart by wild animals, for this
would defile him. I am the LORD.

9“The priests must follow my instructions carefully. Otherwise they
will be punished for their sin and will die for violating my
instructions. I am the LORD who makes them holy.

10“No one outside a priest’s family may eat the sacred offerings.
Even guests and hired workers in a priest’s home are not allowed to
eat them. 11However, if the priest buys a slave for himself, the slave
may eat from the sacred offerings. And if his slaves have children,
they also may share his food. 12If a priest’s daughter marries
someone outside the priestly family, she may no longer eat the
sacred offerings. 13But if she becomes a widow or is divorced and
has no children to support her, and she returns to live in her
father’s home as in her youth, she may eat her father’s food again.

Otherwise, no one outside a priest's family may eat the sacred offerings.

14"Any such person who eats the sacred offerings without realizing it must pay the priest for the amount eaten, plus an additional 20 percent. 15The priests must not let the Israelites defile the sacred offerings brought to the LORD 16by allowing unauthorized people to eat them. This would bring guilt upon them and require them to pay compensation. I am the LORD who makes them holy."

WORTHY AND UNWORTHY OFFERINGS

17And the LORD said to Moses, 18"Give Aaron and his sons and all the Israelites these instructions, which apply both to native Israelites and to the foreigners living among you.

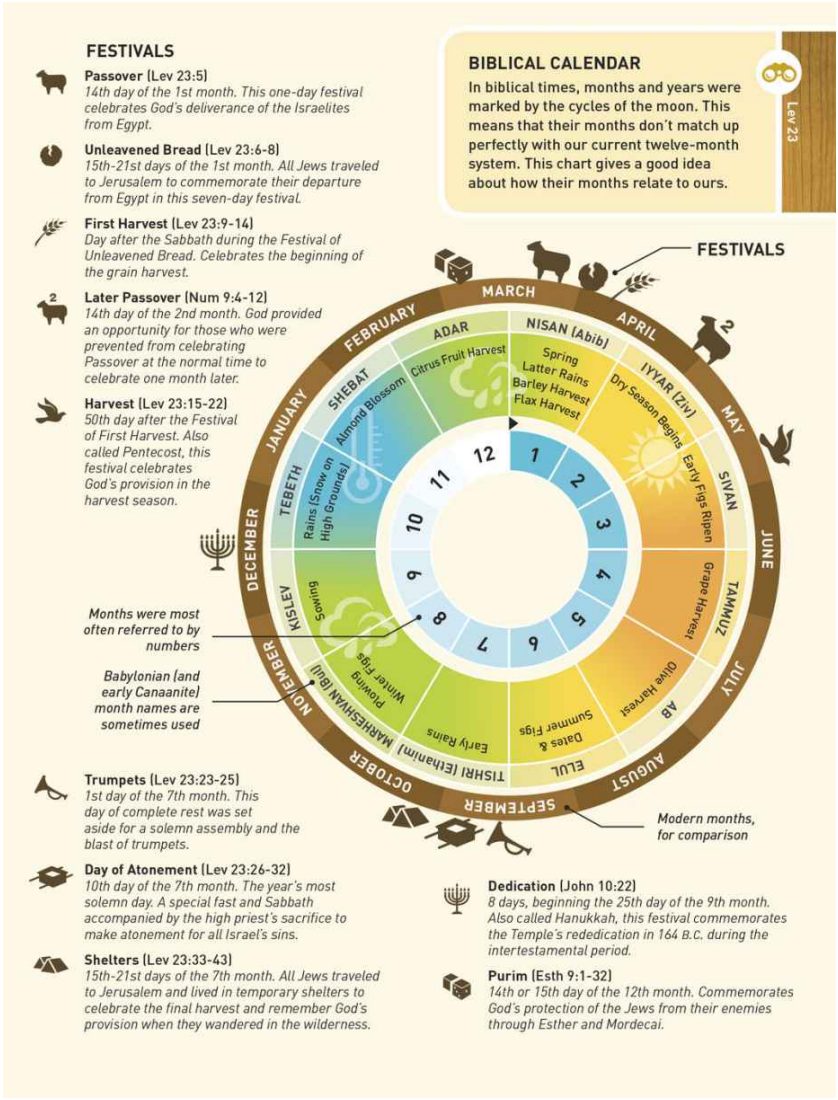
"If you present a gift as a burnt offering to the LORD, whether it is to fulfill a vow or is a voluntary offering, 19you* will be accepted only if your offering is a male animal with no defects. It may be a bull, a ram, or a male goat. 20Do not present an animal with defects, because the LORD will not accept it on your behalf.

21"If you present a peace offering to the LORD from the herd or the flock, whether it is to fulfill a vow or is a voluntary offering, you must offer a perfect animal. It may have no defect of any kind. 22You must not offer an animal that is blind, crippled, or injured, or that has a wart, a skin sore, or scabs. Such animals must never be offered on the altar as special gifts to the LORD. 23If a bull* or lamb has a leg that is too long or too short, it may be offered as a voluntary offering, but it may not be offered to fulfill a vow. 24If an animal has damaged testicles or is castrated, you may not offer it to the LORD. You must never do this in your own land, 25and you must not accept such an animal from foreigners and then offer it as a sacrifice to your God. Such animals will not be accepted on your behalf, for they are mutilated or defective."

26And the LORD said to Moses, 27"When a calf or lamb or goat is

born, it must be left with its mother for seven days. From the eighth day on, it will be acceptable as a special gift to the LORD. 28But you must not slaughter a mother animal and her offspring on the same day, whether from the herd or the flock. 29When you bring a thanksgiving offering to the LORD, sacrifice it properly so you will be accepted. 30Eat the entire sacrificial animal on the day it is presented. Do not leave any of it until the next morning. I am the LORD.

31“You must faithfully keep all my commands by putting them into practice, for I am the LORD. 32Do not bring shame on my holy name, for I will display my holiness among the people of Israel. I am the LORD who makes you holy. 33It was I who rescued you from the land of Egypt, that I might be your God. I am the LORD.”



BIBLICAL CALENDAR

Leviticus 23

THE APPOINTED FESTIVALS

1The LORD said to Moses, 2“Give the following instructions to the

people of Israel. These are the LORD's appointed festivals, which you are to proclaim as official days for holy assembly.

3"You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of complete rest, an official day for holy assembly. It is the LORD's Sabbath day, and it must be observed wherever you live.

4"In addition to the Sabbath, these are the LORD's appointed festivals, the official days for holy assembly that are to be celebrated at their proper times each year.

PASSOVER AND THE FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

5"The LORD's Passover begins at sundown on the fourteenth day of the first month.* 6On the next day, the fifteenth day of the month, you must begin celebrating the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This festival to the LORD continues for seven days, and during that time the bread you eat must be made without yeast. 7On the first day of the festival, all the people must stop their ordinary work and observe an official day for holy assembly. 8For seven days you must present special gifts to the LORD. On the seventh day the people must again stop all their ordinary work to observe an official day for holy assembly."

CELEBRATION OF FIRST HARVEST

9Then the LORD said to Moses, 10"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you enter the land I am giving you and you harvest its first crops, bring the priest a bundle of grain from the first cutting of your grain harvest. 11On the day after the Sabbath, the priest will lift it up before the LORD so it may be accepted on your behalf. 12On that same day you must sacrifice a one-year-old male lamb with no defects as a burnt offering to the LORD. 13With it you must present a grain offering consisting of four quarts* of choice flour moistened with olive oil. It will be a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. You must also offer one quart*

of wine as a liquid offering. 14Do not eat any bread or roasted grain or fresh kernels on that day until you bring this offering to your God. This is a permanent law for you, and it must be observed from generation to generation wherever you live.

THE FESTIVAL OF HARVEST

15"From the day after the Sabbath—the day you bring the bundle of grain to be lifted up as a special offering—count off seven full weeks. 16Keep counting until the day after the seventh Sabbath, fifty days later. Then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. 17From wherever you live, bring two loaves of bread to be lifted up before the LORD as a special offering. Make these loaves from four quarts of choice flour, and bake them with yeast. They will be an offering to the LORD from the first of your crops. 18Along with the bread, present seven one-year-old male lambs with no defects, one young bull, and two rams as burnt offerings to the LORD. These burnt offerings, together with the grain offerings and liquid offerings, will be a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 19Then you must offer one male goat as a sin offering and two one-year-old male lambs as a peace offering.

20"The priest will lift up the two lambs as a special offering to the LORD, together with the loaves representing the first of your crops. These offerings, which are holy to the LORD, belong to the priests. 21That same day will be proclaimed an official day for holy assembly, a day on which you do no ordinary work. This is a permanent law for you, and it must be observed from generation to generation wherever you live.*

22"When you harvest the crops of your land, do not harvest the grain along the edges of your fields, and do not pick up what the harvesters drop. Leave it for the poor and the foreigners living among you. I am the LORD your God."

THE FESTIVAL OF TRUMPETS

23The LORD said to Moses, 24“Give the following instructions to the
people of Israel. On the first day of the appointed month in early
autumn,* you are to observe a day of complete rest. It will be an
official day for holy assembly, a day commemorated with loud
blasts of a trumpet. 25You must do no ordinary work on that day.
Instead, you are to present special gifts to the LORD.”

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

26Then the LORD said to Moses, 27“Be careful to celebrate the Day
of Atonement on the tenth day of that same month—nine days after
the Festival of Trumpets.* You must observe it as an official day for
holy assembly, a day to deny yourselves* and present special gifts to
the LORD. 28Do no work during that entire day because it is the Day
of Atonement, when offerings of purification are made for you,
making you right with* the LORD your God. 29All who do not deny
themselves that day will be cut off from God’s people. 30And I will
destroy anyone among you who does any work on that day. 31You
must not do any work at all! This is a permanent law for you, and it
must be observed from generation to generation wherever you live.
32This will be a Sabbath day of complete rest for you, and on that
day you must deny yourselves. This day of rest will begin at
sundown on the ninth day of the month and extend until sundown
on the tenth day.”

THE FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS

33And the LORD said to Moses, 34“Give the following instructions to
the people of Israel. Begin celebrating the Festival of Shelters* on
the fifteenth day of the appointed month—five days after the Day of
Atonement.* This festival to the LORD will last for seven days. 35On
the first day of the festival you must proclaim an official day for
holy assembly, when you do no ordinary work. 36For seven days you
must present special gifts to the LORD. The eighth day is another
holy day on which you present your special gifts to the LORD. This
will be a solemn occasion, and no ordinary work may be done that
day.

37(“These are the LORD’s appointed festivals. Celebrate them each
year as official days for holy assembly by presenting special gifts to
the LORD—burnt offerings, grain offerings, sacrifices, and liquid
offerings—each on its proper day. 38These festivals must be
observed in addition to the LORD’s regular Sabbath days, and the
offerings are in addition to your personal gifts, the offerings you
give to fulfill your vows, and the voluntary offerings you present to
the LORD.)

39“Remember that this seven-day festival to the LORD—the Festival
of Shelters—begins on the fifteenth day of the appointed month,*
after you have harvested all the produce of the land. The first day
and the eighth day of the festival will be days of complete rest. 40On
the first day gather branches from magnificent trees*—palm fronds,
boughs from leafy trees, and willows that grow by the streams.
Then celebrate with joy before the LORD your God for seven days.
41You must observe this festival to the LORD for seven days every
year. This is a permanent law for you, and it must be observed in
the appointed month* from generation to generation. 42For seven
days you must live outside in little shelters. All native-born
Israelites must live in shelters. 43This will remind each new
generation of Israelites that I made their ancestors live in shelters
when I rescued them from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your
God.”

44So Moses gave the Israelites these instructions regarding the
annual festivals of the LORD.

Leviticus 24

PURE OIL AND HOLY BREAD

1The LORD said to Moses, 2“Command the people of Israel to bring
you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to keep the lamps
burning continually. 3This is the lampstand that stands in the
Tabernacle, in front of the inner curtain that shields the Ark of the

Covenant.* Aaron must keep the lamps burning in the LORD's
presence all night. This is a permanent law for you, and it must be
observed from generation to generation. 4Aaron and the priests
must tend the lamps on the pure gold lampstand continually in the
LORD's presence.

5"You must bake twelve flat loaves of bread from choice flour, using
four quarts* of flour for each loaf. 6Place the bread before the LORD
on the pure gold table, and arrange the loaves in two stacks, with
six loaves in each stack. 7Put some pure frankincense near each
stack to serve as a representative offering, a special gift presented to
the LORD. 8Every Sabbath day this bread must be laid out before
the LORD as a gift from the Israelites; it is an ongoing expression of
the eternal covenant. 9The loaves of bread will belong to Aaron and
his descendants, who must eat them in a sacred place, for they are
most holy. It is the permanent right of the priests to claim this
portion of the special gifts presented to the LORD."

AN EXAMPLE OF JUST PUNISHMENT

10One day a man who had an Israelite mother and an Egyptian
father came out of his tent and got into a fight with one of the
Israelite men. 11During the fight, this son of an Israelite woman
blasphemed the Name of the LORD* with a curse. So the man was
brought to Moses for judgment. His mother was Shelomith, the
daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan. 12They kept the man in
custody until the LORD's will in the matter should become clear to
them.

13Then the LORD said to Moses, 14"Take the blasphemer outside the
camp, and tell all those who heard the curse to lay their hands on
his head. Then let the entire community stone him to death. 15Say
to the people of Israel: Those who curse their God will be punished
for their sin. 16Anyone who blasphemes the Name of the LORD must
be stoned to death by the whole community of Israel. Any native-
born Israelite or foreigner among you who blasphemes the Name of
the LORD must be put to death.

17“Anyone who takes another person’s life must be put to death.

18“Anyone who kills another person’s animal must pay for it in full
—a live animal for the animal that was killed.

19“Anyone who injures another person must be dealt with according
to the injury inflicted—20a fracture for a fracture, an eye for an eye,
a tooth for a tooth. Whatever anyone does to injure another person
must be paid back in kind.

21“Whoever kills an animal must pay for it in full, but whoever kills
another person must be put to death.

22“This same standard applies both to native-born Israelites and to
the foreigners living among you. I am the LORD your God.”

23After Moses gave all these instructions to the Israelites, they took
the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him to death. The
Israelites did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Leviticus 25

THE SABBATH YEAR

1While Moses was on Mount Sinai, the LORD said to him, 2"Give the
following instructions to the people of Israel. When you have
entered the land I am giving you, the land itself must observe a
Sabbath rest before the LORD every seventh year. 3For six years you
may plant your fields and prune your vineyards and harvest your
crops, 4but during the seventh year the land must have a Sabbath
year of complete rest. It is the LORD's Sabbath. Do not plant your
fields or prune your vineyards during that year. 5And don't store
away the crops that grow on their own or gather the grapes from
your unpruned vines. The land must have a year of complete rest.
6But you may eat whatever the land produces on its own during its
Sabbath. This applies to you, your male and female servants, your
hired workers, and the temporary residents who live with you.
7Your livestock and the wild animals in your land will also be
allowed to eat what the land produces.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

8"In addition, you must count off seven Sabbath years, seven sets of
seven years, adding up to forty-nine years in all. 9Then on the Day
of Atonement in the fiftieth year,* blow the ram's horn loud and
long throughout the land. 10Set this year apart as holy, a time to
proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live there. It will
be a jubilee year for you, when each of you may return to the land
that belonged to your ancestors and return to your own clan. 11This
fiftieth year will be a jubilee for you. During that year you must not
plant your fields or store away any of the crops that grow on their
own, and don't gather the grapes from your unpruned vines. 12It
will be a jubilee year for you, and you must keep it holy. But you
may eat whatever the land produces on its own. 13In the Year of
Jubilee each of you may return to the land that belonged to your
ancestors.

14"When you make an agreement with your neighbor to buy or sell
property, you must not take advantage of each other. 15When you

buy land from your neighbor, the price you pay must be based on the number of years since the last jubilee. The seller must set the price by taking into account the number of years remaining until the next Year of Jubilee. 16The more years until the next jubilee, the higher the price; the fewer years, the lower the price. After all, the person selling the land is actually selling you a certain number of harvests. 17Show your fear of God by not taking advantage of each other. I am the LORD your God.

18"If you want to live securely in the land, follow my decrees and obey my regulations. 19Then the land will yield large crops, and you will eat your fill and live securely in it. 20But you might ask, 'What will we eat during the seventh year, since we are not allowed to plant or harvest crops that year?' 21Be assured that I will send my blessing for you in the sixth year, so the land will produce a crop large enough for three years. 22When you plant your fields in the eighth year, you will still be eating from the large crop of the sixth year. In fact, you will still be eating from that large crop when the new crop is harvested in the ninth year.

REDEMPTION OF PROPERTY

23"The land must never be sold on a permanent basis, for the land belongs to me. You are only foreigners and tenant farmers working for me.

24"With every purchase of land you must grant the seller the right to buy it back. 25If one of your fellow Israelites falls into poverty and is forced to sell some family land, then a close relative should buy it back for him. 26If there is no close relative to buy the land, but the person who sold it gets enough money to buy it back, 27he

then has the right to redeem it from the one who bought it. The price of the land will be discounted according to the number of years until the next Year of Jubilee. In this way the original owner can then return to the land. 28But if the original owner cannot afford to buy back the land, it will remain with the new owner until the next Year of Jubilee. In the jubilee year, the land must be returned to the original owners so they can return to their family land.

29"Anyone who sells a house inside a walled town has the right to buy it back for a full year after its sale. During that year, the seller retains the right to buy it back. 30But if it is not bought back within a year, the sale of the house within the walled town cannot be reversed. It will become the permanent property of the buyer. It will not be returned to the original owner in the Year of Jubilee. 31But a house in a village—a settlement without fortified walls—will be treated like property in the countryside. Such a house may be bought back at any time, and it must be returned to the original owner in the Year of Jubilee.

32"The Levites always have the right to buy back a house they have sold within the towns allotted to them. 33And any property that is sold by the Levites—all houses within the Levitical towns—must be returned in the Year of Jubilee. After all, the houses in the towns reserved for the Levites are the only property they own in all Israel. 34The open pastureland around the Levitical towns may never be sold. It is their permanent possession.

REDEMPTION OF THE POOR AND ENSLAVED

35"If one of your fellow Israelites falls into poverty and cannot support himself, support him as you would a foreigner or a temporary resident and allow him to live with you. 36Do not charge interest or make a profit at his expense. Instead, show your fear of God by letting him live with you as your relative. 37Remember, do not charge interest on money you lend him or make a profit on food you sell him. 38I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your

God.

39“If one of your fellow Israelites falls into poverty and is forced to
sell himself to you, do not treat him as a slave. 40Treat him instead
as a hired worker or as a temporary resident who lives with you,
and he will serve you only until the Year of Jubilee. 41At that time
he and his children will no longer be obligated to you, and they will
return to their clans and go back to the land originally allotted to
their ancestors. 42The people of Israel are my servants, whom I
brought out of the land of Egypt, so they must never be sold as
slaves. 43Show your fear of God by not treating them harshly.

44“However, you may purchase male and female slaves from among
the nations around you. 45You may also purchase the children of
temporary residents who live among you, including those who have
been born in your land. You may treat them as your property,
46passing them on to your children as a permanent inheritance. You
may treat them as slaves, but you must never treat your fellow
Israelites this way.

47“Suppose a foreigner or temporary resident becomes rich while
living among you. If any of your fellow Israelites fall into poverty
and are forced to sell themselves to such a foreigner or to a member
of his family, 48they still retain the right to be bought back, even
after they have been purchased. They may be bought back by a
brother, 49an uncle, or a cousin. In fact, anyone from the extended
family may buy them back. They may also redeem themselves if
they have prospered. 50They will negotiate the price of their
freedom with the person who bought them. The price will be based
on the number of years from the time they were sold until the next
Year of Jubilee—whatever it would cost to hire a worker for that
period of time. 51If many years still remain until the jubilee, they
will repay the proper proportion of what they received when they
sold themselves. 52If only a few years remain until the Year of
Jubilee, they will repay a small amount for their redemption. 53The
foreigner must treat them as workers hired on a yearly basis. You
must not allow a foreigner to treat any of your fellow Israelites
harshly. 54If any Israelites have not been bought back by the time

the Year of Jubilee arrives, they and their children must be set free at that time. 55For the people of Israel belong to me. They are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 26

BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE

1"Do not make idols or set up carved images, or sacred pillars, or sculptured stones in your land so you may worship them. I am the LORD your God. 2You must keep my Sabbath days of rest and show reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.

3"If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, 4I will send you the seasonal rains. The land will then yield its crops, and the trees of the field will produce their fruit. 5Your threshing season will overlap with the grape harvest, and your grape harvest will overlap with the season of planting grain. You will eat your fill and live securely in your own land.

6"I will give you peace in the land, and you will be able to sleep with no cause for fear. I will rid the land of wild animals and keep your enemies out of your land. 7In fact, you will chase down your enemies and slaughter them with your swords. 8Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand! All your enemies will fall beneath your sword.

9"I will look favorably upon you, making you fertile and multiplying your people. And I will fulfill my covenant with you. 10You will have such a surplus of crops that you will need to clear out the old grain to make room for the new harvest! 11I will live among you, and I will not despise you. 12I will walk among you; I will be your God, and you will be my people. 13I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so you would no longer be their slaves. I broke the yoke of slavery from your neck so

you can walk with your heads held high.

PUNISHMENTS FOR DISOBEDIENCE

14“However, if you do not listen to me or obey all these commands,
15and if you break my covenant by rejecting my decrees, treating
my regulations with contempt, and refusing to obey my commands,
16I will punish you. I will bring sudden terrors upon you—wasting
diseases and burning fevers that will cause your eyes to fail and
your life to ebb away. You will plant your crops in vain because
your enemies will eat them. 17I will turn against you, and you will
be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you will rule over
you, and you will run even when no one is chasing you!

18“And if, in spite of all this, you still disobey me, I will punish you
seven times over for your sins. 19I will break your proud spirit by
making the skies as unyielding as iron and the earth as hard as
bronze. 20All your work will be for nothing, for your land will yield
no crops, and your trees will bear no fruit.

21“If even then you remain hostile toward me and refuse to obey
me, I will inflict disaster on you seven times over for your sins. 22I
will send wild animals that will rob you of your children and
destroy your livestock. Your numbers will dwindle, and your roads
will be deserted.

23“And if you fail to learn the lesson and continue your hostility
toward me, 24then I myself will be hostile toward you. I will
personally strike you with calamity seven times over for your sins.
25I will send armies against you to carry out the curse of the
covenant you have broken. When you run to your towns for safety,
I will send a plague to destroy you there, and you will be handed
over to your enemies. 26I will destroy your food supply, so that ten
women will need only one oven to bake bread for their families.
They will ration your food by weight, and though you have food to
eat, you will not be satisfied.

27“If in spite of all this you still refuse to listen and still remain
hostile toward me, 28then I will give full vent to my hostility. I
myself will punish you seven times over for your sins. 29Then you
will eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters. 30I will destroy
your pagan shrines and knock down your places of worship. I will
leave your lifeless corpses piled on top of your lifeless idols,* and I
will despise you. 31I will make your cities desolate and destroy your
places of pagan worship. I will take no pleasure in your offerings
that should be a pleasing aroma to me. 32Yes, I myself will devastate
your land, and your enemies who come to occupy it will be
appalled at what they see. 33I will scatter you among the nations
and bring out my sword against you. Your land will become
desolate, and your cities will lie in ruins. 34Then at last the land will
enjoy its neglected Sabbath years as it lies desolate while you are in
exile in the land of your enemies. Then the land will finally rest and
enjoy the Sabbaths it missed. 35As long as the land lies in ruins, it
will enjoy the rest you never allowed it to take every seventh year
while you lived in it.

36“And for those of you who survive, I will demoralize you in the
land of your enemies. You will live in such fear that the sound of a
leaf driven by the wind will send you fleeing. You will run as
though fleeing from a sword, and you will fall even when no one
pursues you. 37Though no one is chasing you, you will stumble over
each other as though fleeing from a sword. You will have no power
to stand up against your enemies. 38You will die among the foreign
nations and be devoured in the land of your enemies. 39Those of you
who survive will waste away in your enemies’ lands because of
their sins and the sins of their ancestors.

40“But at last my people will confess their sins and the sins of their
ancestors for betraying me and being hostile toward me. 41When I
have turned their hostility back on them and brought them to the
land of their enemies, then at last their stubborn hearts will be
humbled, and they will pay for their sins. 42Then I will remember
my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my
covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43For the
land must be abandoned to enjoy its years of Sabbath rest as it lies
deserted. At last the people will pay for their sins, for they have

continually rejected my regulations and despised my decrees.

44“But despite all this, I will not utterly reject or despise them while
they are in exile in the land of their enemies. I will not cancel my
covenant with them by wiping them out, for I am the LORD their
God. 45For their sakes I will remember my ancient covenant with
their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight
of all the nations, that I might be their God. I am the LORD.”

46These are the decrees, regulations, and instructions that the LORD
gave through Moses on Mount Sinai as evidence of the relationship
between himself and the Israelites.

Leviticus 27

REDEMPTION OF GIFTS OFFERED TO THE LORD

1The LORD said to Moses, 2“Give the following instructions to the
people of Israel. If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate someone
to the LORD by paying the value of that person, 3here is the scale of
values to be used. A man between the ages of twenty and sixty is
valued at fifty shekels* of silver, as measured by the sanctuary
shekel. 4A woman of that age is valued at thirty shekels* of silver. 5A
boy between the ages of five and twenty is valued at twenty shekels
of silver; a girl of that age is valued at ten shekels* of silver. 6A boy
between the ages of one month and five years is valued at five
shekels of silver; a girl of that age is valued at three shekels* of
silver. 7A man older than sixty is valued at fifteen shekels of silver; a
woman of that age is valued at ten shekels* of silver. 8If you desire
to make such a vow but cannot afford to pay the required amount,
take the person to the priest. He will determine the amount for you
to pay based on what you can afford.

9“If your vow involves giving an animal that is acceptable as an
offering to the LORD, any gift to the LORD will be considered holy.
10You may not exchange or substitute it for another animal—
neither a good animal for a bad one nor a bad animal for a good

one. But if you do exchange one animal for another, then both the original animal and its substitute will be considered holy. 11If your vow involves an unclean animal—one that is not acceptable as an offering to the LORD—then you must bring the animal to the priest. 12He will assess its value, and his assessment will be final, whether high or low. 13If you want to buy back the animal, you must pay the value set by the priest, plus 20 percent.

14"If someone dedicates a house to the LORD, the priest will come to assess its value. The priest's assessment will be final, whether high or low. 15If the person who dedicated the house wants to buy it back, he must pay the value set by the priest, plus 20 percent. Then the house will again be his.

16"If someone dedicates to the LORD a piece of his family property, its value will be assessed according to the amount of seed required to plant it—fifty shekels of silver for a field planted with five bushels of barley seed.* 17If the field is dedicated to the LORD in the Year of Jubilee, then the entire assessment will apply. 18But if the field is dedicated after the Year of Jubilee, the priest will assess the land's value in proportion to the number of years left until the next Year of Jubilee. Its assessed value is reduced each year. 19If the person who dedicated the field wants to buy it back, he must pay the value set by the priest, plus 20 percent. Then the field will again be legally his. 20But if he does not want to buy it back, and it is sold to someone else, the field can no longer be bought back. 21When the field is released in the Year of Jubilee, it will be holy, a field specially set apart* for the LORD. It will become the property of the priests.

22"If someone dedicates to the LORD a field he has purchased but which is not part of his family property, 23the priest will assess its value based on the number of years left until the next Year of Jubilee. On that day he must give the assessed value of the land as a sacred donation to the LORD. 24In the Year of Jubilee the field must be returned to the person from whom he purchased it, the one who inherited it as family property. 25(All the payments must be

measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel,* which equals twenty gerahs.)

26"You may not dedicate a firstborn animal to the LORD, for the firstborn of your cattle, sheep, and goats already belong to him. 27However, you may buy back the firstborn of a ceremonially unclean animal by paying the priest's assessment of its worth, plus 20 percent. If you do not buy it back, the priest will sell it at its assessed value.

28"However, anything specially set apart for the LORD—whether a person, an animal, or family property—must never be sold or bought back. Anything devoted in this way has been set apart as holy, and it belongs to the LORD. 29No person specially set apart for destruction may be bought back. Such a person must be put to death.

30"One-tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy. 31If you want to buy back the LORD's tenth of the grain or fruit, you must pay its value, plus 20 percent. 32Count off every tenth animal from your herds and flocks and set them apart for the LORD as holy. 33You may not pick and choose between good and bad animals, and you may not substitute one for another. But if you do exchange one animal for another, then both the original animal and its substitute will be considered holy and cannot be bought back."

34These are the commands that the LORD gave through Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

Numbers

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

WELCOME TO

NUMBERS

Numbers has two major parts. The first part records a census of the people by tribe. These lists of names may not seem important to us, but they were very important to God's people since it showed them that the Lord of all knew them by name. They were his, and he was organizing them to enter the Promised Land.

The second part of Numbers recounts some of the events that happened during the forty years after God's people depart from Mount Sinai. Shortly after this departure, they have an opportunity to enter the Promised Land. But when they hear reports of the dangers they will face there, they respond in fear. So God chooses to delay their entrance—for four decades! He refuses to tolerate their disbelief and distrust. God's people must learn how to follow him and trust in his power instead of focusing on their own fears and limitations.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Your one stop in Numbers beautifully exemplifies how God shows grace to those who love him and how he assures his people that he is present with them. Your next stop is at Numbers 9:1.

5 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: As you read some of the great stories in Numbers, you'll find out more about why God's people end up wandering in the desert for forty years and what happens to them during their journey. Your next stop is at Numbers 9:1.

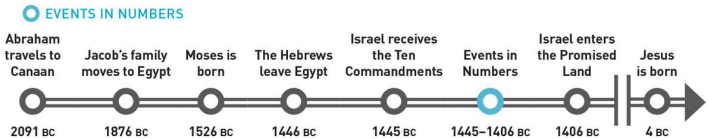
14 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The book of Numbers has its name for a reason. On this route, you'll read about the registration of Israel's troops. Then you'll read more of the adventures that God's people had before their arrival in the Promised Land. Your next stop is at Numbers 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN NUMBERS

Numbers contains two unique representations of Jesus. The first story that points to Jesus is the story of water coming out of a rock. When the Hebrews are thirsty in the wilderness, God miraculously provides water for them to help them live (Numbers 20:1-13). Paul tells us that the rock was like Christ, providing life and spiritual nourishment for God's people (1 Corinthians 10:4). The second

representation of Jesus is in the story of the bronze serpent on a pole that heals those who look at it (Numbers 21:8-9). When Jesus was on earth, he pointed back to this story and compared himself to that snake on a pole: “As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up” (John 3:14). All who look to Jesus on the cross will be saved from sin.



Numbers 1

REGISTRATION OF ISRAEL’S TROOPS

1 A year after Israel’s departure from Egypt, the LORD spoke to
Moses in the Tabernacle* in the wilderness of Sinai. On the first day
of the second month* of that year he said, 2 “From the whole

community of Israel, record the names of all the warriors by their clans and families. List all the men 3twenty years old or older who are able to go to war. You and Aaron must register the troops, 4and you will be assisted by one family leader from each tribe.

5“These are the tribes and the names of the leaders who will assist you:

Tribe	Leader
Reuben	Elizur son of Shedeur
Simeon	Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai
Judah	Nahshon son of Amminadab
Issachar	Nethanel son of Zuar
Zebulun	Eliab son of Helon
Joseph	Elishama son of Ammihud
Manasseh	Gamaliel son of Pedahzur
Benjamin	Abidan son of Gideoni
Dan	Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai
Asher	Pagiel son of Ocran
Gad	Eliasaph son of Deuel
Naphtali	Ahira son of Enan

16These are the chosen leaders of the community, the leaders of their ancestral tribes, the heads of the clans of Israel.”

17So Moses and Aaron called together these chosen leaders, 18and they assembled the whole community of Israel on that very day.* All the people were registered according to their ancestry by their clans and families. The men of Israel who were twenty years old or older were listed one by one, 19just as the LORD had commanded Moses. So Moses recorded their names in the wilderness of Sinai.

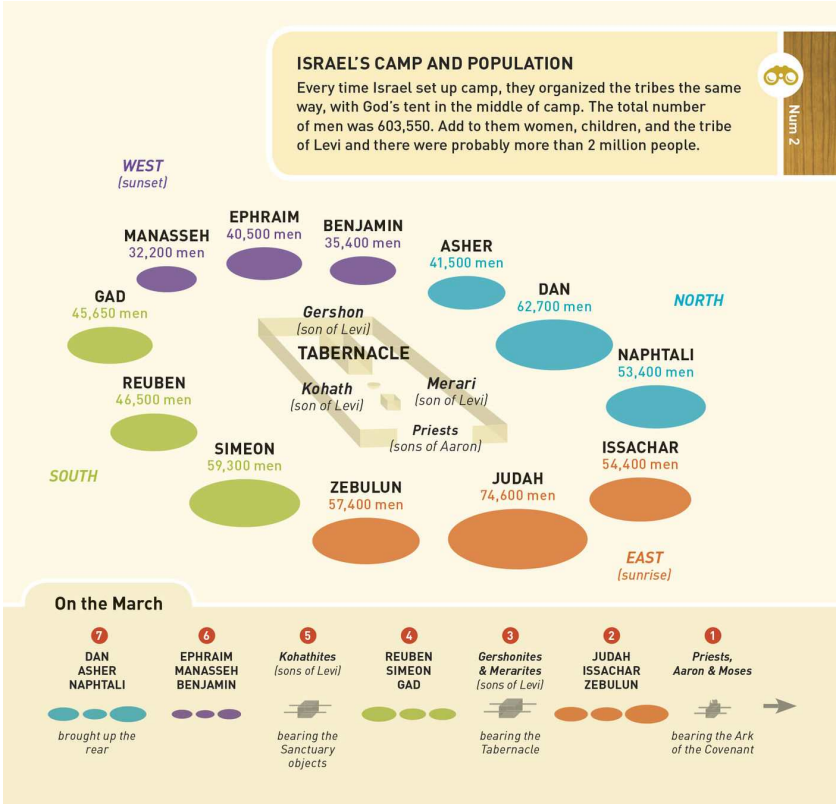
20-21This is the number of men twenty years old or older who were able to go to war, as their names were listed in the records of their clans and families*:

46,500	Reuben (Jacob's * oldest son)	
59,300	Simeon	
45,650	Gad	
74,600	Judah	
54,400	Issachar	
57,400	Zebulun	
40,500	Ephraim son of Joseph	
32,200	Manasseh son of Joseph	
35,400	Benjamin	
62,700	Dan	
41,500	Asher	
53,400	Naphtali	

44These were the men registered by Moses and Aaron and the
twelve leaders of Israel, all listed according to their ancestral
descent. 45They were registered by families—all the men of Israel
who were twenty years old or older and able to go to war. 46The
total number was 603,550.

47But this total did not include the Levites. 48For the LORD had said
to Moses, 49"Do not include the tribe of Levi in the registration; do
not count them with the rest of the Israelites. 50Put the Levites in
charge of the Tabernacle of the Covenant,* along with all its
furnishings and equipment. They must carry the Tabernacle and all
its furnishings as you travel, and they must take care of it and camp
around it. 51Whenever it is time for the Tabernacle to move, the
Levites will take it down. And when it is time to stop, they will set
it up again. But any unauthorized person who goes too near the
Tabernacle must be put to death. 52Each tribe of Israel will camp in
a designated area with its own family banner. 53But the Levites will
camp around the Tabernacle of the Covenant to protect the
community of Israel from the LORD's anger. The Levites are
responsible to stand guard around the Tabernacle."

54So the Israelites did everything just as the LORD had commanded
Moses.



ISRAEL'S CAMP AND POPULATION

Numbers 2

ORGANIZATION FOR ISRAEL'S CAMP

1Then the LORD gave these instructions to Moses and Aaron:
2"When the Israelites set up camp, each tribe will be assigned its own area. The tribal divisions will camp beneath their family banners on all four sides of the Tabernacle,* but at some distance from it.

3-4"The divisions of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun are to camp toward the sunrise on the east side of the Tabernacle, beneath their family banners. These are the names of the tribes, their leaders, and the numbers of their registered troops:

Tribe	Leader	Number
Judah	Nahshon son of Amminadab	74,600
Issachar	Nethanel son of Zuar	54,400
Zebulun	Eliab son of Helon	57,400

9So the total of all the troops on Judah's side of the camp is 186,400. These three tribes are to lead the way whenever the Israelites travel to a new campsite.

10-11"The divisions of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad are to camp on the south side of the Tabernacle, beneath their family banners. These are the names of the tribes, their leaders, and the numbers of their registered troops:

Tribe	Leader	Number
Reuben	Elizur son of Shedeur	46,500
Simeon	Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai	59,300
Gad	Eliasaph son of Deuel *	45,650

16So the total of all the troops on Reuben's side of the camp is 151,450. These three tribes will be second in line whenever the Israelites travel.

17“Then the Tabernacle, carried by the Levites, will set out from the middle of the camp. All the tibes are to travel in the same order that they camp, each in position under the appropriate family banner.

18-19“The divisions of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin are to camp on the west side of the Tabernacle, beneath their family banners. These are the names of the tribes, their leaders, and the numbers of their registered troops:

Tribe	Leader	Number
Ephraim	son of Ammihud	40,500
Manasseh	of Pedahzur	32,200
Benjamin	of Gideoni	35,400

24So the total of all the troops on Ephraim’s side of the camp is 108,100. These three tribes will be third in line whenever the Israelites travel.

25-26“The divisions of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali are to camp on the north side of the Tabernacle, beneath their family banners. These are the names of the tribes, their leaders, and the numbers of their registered troops:

Tribe	Leader	Number
Dan	son of Ammishaddai	62,700
Asher	of Ocran	41,500
Naphtali	of Enan	53,400

31So the total of all the troops on Dan’s side of the camp is 157,600. These three tribes will be last, marching under their banners whenever the Israelites travel.”

32In summary, the troops of Israel listed by their families totaled 603,550. 33But as the LORD had commanded, the Levites were not included in this registration. 34So the people of Israel did everything as the LORD had commanded Moses. Each clan and family set up

camp and marched under their banners exactly as the LORD had instructed them.

Numbers 3

LEVITES APPOINTED FOR SERVICE

1This is the family line of Aaron and Moses as it was recorded when
the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai: 2The names of Aaron's
sons were Nadab (the oldest), Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3These
sons of Aaron were anointed and ordained to minister as priests.
4But Nadab and Abihu died in the LORD's presence in the
wilderness of Sinai when they burned before the LORD the wrong
kind of fire, different than he had commanded. Since they had no
sons, this left only Eleazar and Ithamar to serve as priests with their
father, Aaron.

5Then the LORD said to Moses, 6"Call forward the tribe of Levi, and
present them to Aaron the priest to serve as his assistants. 7They
will serve Aaron and the whole community, performing their sacred
duties in and around the Tabernacle.*8They will also maintain all
the furnishings of the sacred tent,* serving in the Tabernacle on
behalf of all the Israelites. 9Assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons.

They have been given from among all the people of Israel to serve as their assistants. 10Appoint Aaron and his sons to carry out the duties of the priesthood. But any unauthorized person who goes too near the sanctuary must be put to death."

11And the LORD said to Moses, 12"Look, I have chosen the Levites from among the Israelites to serve as substitutes for all the firstborn sons of the people of Israel. The Levites belong to me, 13for all the firstborn males are mine. On the day I struck down all the firstborn sons of the Egyptians, I set apart for myself all the firstborn in Israel, both of people and of animals. They are mine; I am the LORD."

SKIP TO 3:40

REGISTRATION OF THE LEVITES

14The LORD spoke again to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. He said, 15"Record the names of the members of the tribe of Levi by their families and clans. List every male who is one month old or older." 16So Moses listed them, just as the LORD had commanded.

17Levi had three sons, whose names were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

18The clans descended from Gershon were named after two of his descendants, Libni and Shimei.

19The clans descended from Kohath were named after four of his descendants, Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

20The clans descended from Merari were named after two of his descendants, Mahli and Mushi.

These were the Levite clans, listed according to their family groups.

21The descendants of Gershon were composed of the clans
descended from Libni and Shimei. 22There were 7,500 males one
month old or older among these Gershonite clans. 23They were
assigned the area to the west of the Tabernacle for their camp.
24The leader of the Gershonite clans was Eliasaph son of Lael.
25These two clans were responsible to care for the Tabernacle,
including the sacred tent with its layers of coverings, the curtain at
its entrance, 26the curtains of the courtyard that surrounded the
Tabernacle and altar, the curtain at the courtyard entrance, the
ropes, and all the equipment related to their use.

27The descendants of Kohath were composed of the clans descended
from Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 28There were 8,600* males
one month old or older among these Kohathite clans. They were
responsible for the care of the sanctuary, 29and they were assigned
the area south of the Tabernacle for their camp. 30The leader of the
Kohathite clans was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. 31These four clans
were responsible for the care of the Ark, the table, the lampstand,
the altars, the various articles used in the sanctuary, the inner
curtain, and all the equipment related to their use. 32Eleazar, son of
Aaron the priest, was the chief administrator over all the Levites,
with special responsibility for the oversight of the sanctuary.

33The descendants of Merari were composed of the clans descended
from Mahli and Mushi. 34There were 6,200 males one month old or
older among these Merarite clans. 35They were assigned the area
north of the Tabernacle for their camp. The leader of the Merarite
clans was Zuriel son of Abihail. 36These two clans were responsible
for the care of the frames supporting the Tabernacle, the crossbars,
the pillars, the bases, and all the equipment related to their use.
37They were also responsible for the posts of the courtyard and all
their bases, pegs, and ropes.

38The area in front of the Tabernacle, in the east toward the
sunrise,* was reserved for the tents of Moses and of Aaron and his
sons, who had the final responsibility for the sanctuary on behalf of
the people of Israel. Anyone other than a priest or Levite who went

too near the sanctuary was to be put to death.

39When Moses and Aaron counted the Levite clans at the LORD's
command, the total number was 22,000 males one month old or
older.

REDEEMING THE FIRSTBORN SONS

40Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now count all the firstborn sons in
Israel who are one month old or older, and make a list of their
names. 41The Levites must be reserved for me as substitutes for the
firstborn sons of Israel; I am the LORD. And the Levites' livestock
must be reserved for me as substitutes for the firstborn livestock of
the whole nation of Israel."

42So Moses counted the firstborn sons of the people of Israel, just as
the LORD had commanded. 43The number of firstborn sons who
were one month old or older was 22,273.

44Then the LORD said to Moses, 45"Take the Levites as substitutes
for the firstborn sons of the people of Israel. And take the livestock
of the Levites as substitutes for the firstborn livestock of the people
of Israel. The Levites belong to me; I am the LORD. 46There are 273
more firstborn sons of Israel than there are Levites. To redeem these
extra firstborn sons, 47collect five pieces of silver* for each of them
(each piece weighing the same as the sanctuary shekel, which
equals twenty gerahs). 48Give the silver to Aaron and his sons as the
redemption price for the extra firstborn sons."

49So Moses collected the silver for redeeming the firstborn sons of
Israel who exceeded the number of Levites. 50He collected 1,365
pieces of silver* on behalf of these firstborn sons of Israel (each
piece weighing the same as the sanctuary shekel). 51And Moses gave
the silver for the redemption to Aaron and his sons, just as the
LORD had commanded.

Numbers 4

DUTIES OF THE KOHATHITE CLAN

1 Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 2 "Record the names of
the members of the clans and families of the Kohathite division of
the tribe of Levi. 3 List all the men between the ages of thirty and
fifty who are eligible to serve in the Tabernacle.*

4 "The duties of the Kohathites at the Tabernacle will relate to the
most sacred objects. 5 When the camp moves, Aaron and his sons
must enter the Tabernacle first to take down the inner curtain and
cover the Ark of the Covenant* with it. 6 Then they must cover the
inner curtain with fine goatskin leather and spread over that a
single piece of blue cloth. Finally, they must put the carrying poles
of the Ark in place.

7 "Next they must spread a blue cloth over the table where the Bread
of the Presence is displayed, and on the cloth they will place the
bowls, ladles, jars, pitchers, and the special bread. 8 They must
spread a scarlet cloth over all of this, and finally a covering of fine
goatskin leather on top of the scarlet cloth. Then they must insert
the carrying poles into the table.

9 "Next they must cover the lampstand with a blue cloth, along with
its lamps, lamp snuffers, trays, and special jars of olive oil. 10 Then
they must cover the lampstand and its accessories with fine
goatskin leather and place the bundle on a carrying frame.

11“Next they must spread a blue cloth over the gold incense altar
and cover this cloth with fine goatskin leather. Then they must
attach the carrying poles to the altar. 12They must take all the
remaining furnishings of the sanctuary and wrap them in a blue
cloth, cover them with fine goatskin leather, and place them on the
carrying frame.

13“They must remove the ashes from the altar for sacrifices and
cover the altar with a purple cloth. 14All the altar utensils—the
firepans, meat forks, shovels, basins, and all the containers—must
be placed on the cloth, and a covering of fine goatskin leather must
be spread over them. Finally, they must put the carrying poles in
place. 15The camp will be ready to move when Aaron and his sons
have finished covering the sanctuary and all the sacred articles. The
Kohathites will come and carry these things to the next destination.
But they must not touch the sacred objects, or they will die. So
these are the things from the Tabernacle that the Kohathites must
carry.

16“Eleazar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for the oil of
the lampstand, the fragrant incense, the daily grain offering, and
the anointing oil. In fact, Eleazar will be responsible for the entire
Tabernacle and everything in it, including the sanctuary and its
furnishings.”

17Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 18“Do not let the
Kohathite clans be destroyed from among the Levites! 19This is what
you must do so they will live and not die when they approach the
most sacred objects. Aaron and his sons must always go in with
them and assign a specific duty or load to each person. 20The
Kohathites must never enter the sanctuary to look at the sacred
objects for even a moment, or they will die.”

DUTIES OF THE GERSHONITE CLAN

21And the LORD said to Moses, 22“Record the names of the members
of the clans and families of the Gershonite division of the tribe of

Levi. 23List all the men between the ages of thirty and fifty who are eligible to serve in the Tabernacle.

24“These Gershonite clans will be responsible for general service and carrying loads. 25They must carry the curtains of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle itself with its coverings, the outer covering of fine goatskin leather, and the curtain for the Tabernacle entrance. 26They are also to carry the curtains for the courtyard walls that surround the Tabernacle and altar, the curtain across the courtyard entrance, the ropes, and all the equipment related to their use. The Gershonites are responsible for all these items. 27Aaron and his sons will direct the Gershonites regarding all their duties, whether it involves moving the equipment or doing other work. They must assign the Gershonites responsibility for the loads they are to carry. 28So these are the duties assigned to the Gershonite clans at the Tabernacle. They will be directly responsible to Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

DUTIES OF THE MERARITE CLAN

29“Now record the names of the members of the clans and families of the Merarite division of the tribe of Levi. 30List all the men between the ages of thirty and fifty who are eligible to serve in the Tabernacle.

31“Their only duty at the Tabernacle will be to carry loads. They will carry the frames of the Tabernacle, the crossbars, the posts, and the bases; 32also the posts for the courtyard walls with their bases, pegs, and ropes; and all the accessories and everything else related to their use. Assign the various loads to each man by name. 33So these are the duties of the Merarite clans at the Tabernacle. They are directly responsible to Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.”

SUMMARY OF THE REGISTRATION

34So Moses, Aaron, and the other leaders of the community listed the members of the Kohathite division by their clans and families. 35The list included all the men between thirty and fifty years of age

who were eligible for service in the Tabernacle, 36and the total number came to 2,750. 37So this was the total of all those from the Kohathite clans who were eligible to serve at the Tabernacle. Moses and Aaron listed them, just as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

38The Gershonite division was also listed by its clans and families. 39The list included all the men between thirty and fifty years of age who were eligible for service in the Tabernacle, 40and the total number came to 2,630. 41So this was the total of all those from the Gershonite clans who were eligible to serve at the Tabernacle. Moses and Aaron listed them, just as the LORD had commanded.

42The Merarite division was also listed by its clans and families. 43The list included all the men between thirty and fifty years of age who were eligible for service in the Tabernacle, 44and the total number came to 3,200. 45So this was the total of all those from the Merarite clans who were eligible for service. Moses and Aaron listed them, just as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

46So Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel listed all the Levites by their clans and families. 47All the men between thirty and fifty years of age who were eligible for service in the Tabernacle and for its transportation 48numbered 8,580. 49When their names were recorded, as the LORD had commanded through Moses, each man was assigned his task and told what to carry.

And so the registration was completed, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Numbers 5

PURITY IN ISRAEL'S CAMP

1The LORD gave these instructions to Moses: 2"Command the people of Israel to remove from the camp anyone who has a skin disease* or a discharge, or who has become ceremonially unclean by

touching a dead person. 3This command applies to men and women alike. Remove them so they will not defile the camp in which I live among them." 4So the Israelites did as the LORD had commanded Moses and removed such people from the camp.

5Then the LORD said to Moses, 6"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel: If any of the people—men or women—betray the LORD by doing wrong to another person, they are guilty. 7They must confess their sin and make full restitution for what they have done, adding an additional 20 percent and returning it to the person who was wronged. 8But if the person who was wronged is dead, and there are no near relatives to whom restitution can be made, the payment belongs to the LORD and must be given to the priest. Those who are guilty must also bring a ram as a sacrifice, and they will be purified and made right with the LORD.* 9All the sacred offerings that the Israelites bring to a priest will belong to him. 10Each priest may keep all the sacred donations that he receives."

PROTECTING MARITAL FAITHFULNESS

11And the LORD said to Moses, 12"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel.

"Suppose a man's wife goes astray, and she is unfaithful to her husband 13and has sex with another man, but neither her husband nor anyone else knows about it. She has defiled herself, even though there was no witness and she was not caught in the act. 14If her husband becomes jealous and is suspicious of his wife and needs to know whether or not she has defiled herself, 15the husband must bring his wife to the priest. He must also bring an offering of two quarts* of barley flour to be presented on her behalf. Do not mix it with olive oil or frankincense, for it is a jealousy offering—an offering to prove whether or not she is guilty.

16"The priest will then present her to stand trial before the LORD. 17He must take some holy water in a clay jar and pour into it dust he has taken from the Tabernacle floor. 18When the priest has

presented the woman before the LORD, he must unbind her hair
and place in her hands the offering of proof—the jealousy offering
to determine whether her husband's suspicions are justified. The
priest will stand before her, holding the jar of bitter water that
brings a curse to those who are guilty. 19The priest will then put the
woman under oath and say to her, 'If no other man has had sex
with you, and you have not gone astray and defiled yourself while
under your husband's authority, may you be immune from the
effects of this bitter water that brings on the curse. 20But if you have
gone astray by being unfaithful to your husband, and have defiled
yourself by having sex with another man—'

21"At this point the priest must put the woman under oath by
saying, 'May the people know that the LORD's curse is upon you
when he makes you infertile, causing your womb to shrivel* and
your abdomen to swell. 22Now may this water that brings the curse
enter your body and cause your abdomen to swell and your womb
to shrivel.*' And the woman will be required to say, 'Yes, let it be
so.' 23And the priest will write these curses on a piece of leather and
wash them off into the bitter water. 24He will make the woman
drink the bitter water that brings on the curse. When the water
enters her body, it will cause bitter suffering if she is guilty.

25"The priest will take the jealousy offering from the woman's hand,
lift it up before the LORD, and carry it to the altar. 26He will take a
handful of the flour as a token portion and burn it on the altar, and
he will require the woman to drink the water. 27If she has defiled
herself by being unfaithful to her husband, the water that brings on
the curse will cause bitter suffering. Her abdomen will swell and
her womb will shrink,* and her name will become a curse among
her people. 28But if she has not defiled herself and is pure, then she
will be unharmed and will still be able to have children.

29"This is the ritual law for dealing with suspicion. If a woman goes
astray and defiles herself while under her husband's authority, 30or
if a man becomes jealous and is suspicious that his wife has been
unfaithful, the husband must present his wife before the LORD, and

the priest will apply this entire ritual law to her. 31The husband will be innocent of any guilt in this matter, but his wife will be held accountable for her sin.”

Numbers 6

NAZIRITE LAWS

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2“Give the following instructions to the people of Israel.

“If any of the people, either men or women, take the special vow of a Nazirite, setting themselves apart to the LORD in a special way, 3they must give up wine and other alcoholic drinks. They must not use vinegar made from wine or from other alcoholic drinks, they must not drink fresh grape juice, and they must not eat grapes or raisins. 4As long as they are bound by their Nazirite vow, they are not allowed to eat or drink anything that comes from a grapevine—not even the grape seeds or skins.

5“They must never cut their hair throughout the time of their vow, for they are holy and set apart to the LORD. Until the time of their vow has been fulfilled, they must let their hair grow long. 6And they

must not go near a dead body during the entire period of their vow to the LORD. 7Even if the dead person is their own father, mother, brother, or sister, they must not defile themselves, for the hair on their head is the symbol of their separation to God. 8This requirement applies as long as they are set apart to the LORD.

9"If someone falls dead beside them, the hair they have dedicated will be defiled. They must wait for seven days and then shave their heads. Then they will be cleansed from their defilement. 10On the eighth day they must bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the Tabernacle.* 11The priest will offer one of the birds for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way, he will purify them* from the guilt they incurred through contact with the dead body. Then they must reaffirm their commitment and let their hair begin to grow again. 12The days of their vow that were completed before their defilement no longer count. They must rededicate themselves to the LORD as a Nazirite for the full term of their vow, and each must bring a one-year-old male lamb for a guilt offering.

13"This is the ritual law for Nazirites. At the conclusion of their time of separation as Nazirites, they must each go to the entrance of the Tabernacle 14and offer their sacrifices to the LORD: a one-year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a one-year-old female lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a peace offering, 15a basket of bread made without yeast—cakes of choice flour mixed with olive oil and wafers spread with olive oil —along with their prescribed grain offerings and liquid offerings. 16The priest will present these offerings before the LORD: first the sin offering and the burnt offering; 17then the ram for a peace offering, along with the basket of bread made without yeast. The priest must also present the prescribed grain offering and liquid offering to the LORD.

18"Then the Nazirites will shave their heads at the entrance of the Tabernacle. They will take the hair that had been dedicated and place it on the fire beneath the peace-offering sacrifice. 19After the Nazirite's head has been shaved, the priest will take for each of

them the boiled shoulder of the ram, and he will take from the basket a cake and a wafer made without yeast. He will put them all into the Nazirite's hands. 20Then the priest will lift them up as a special offering before the LORD. These are holy portions for the priest, along with the breast of the special offering and the thigh of the sacred offering that are lifted up before the LORD. After this ceremony the Nazirites may again drink wine.

21"This is the ritual law of the Nazirites, who vow to bring these offerings to the LORD. They may also bring additional offerings if they can afford it. And they must be careful to do whatever they vowed when they set themselves apart as Nazirites."

BLESSINGS NUMBERS 6:22-27

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

22Then the LORD said to Moses, 23"Tell Aaron and his sons to bless the people of Israel with this special blessing:

24‘May the LORD bless you and protect you.

25May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

26May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.’

27Whenever Aaron and his sons bless the people of Israel in my name, I myself will bless them.”

Numbers 7

OFFERINGS OF DEDICATION

1On the day Moses set up the Tabernacle, he anointed it and set it apart as holy. He also anointed and set apart all its furnishings and the altar with its utensils. 2Then the leaders of Israel—the tribal leaders who had registered the troops—came and brought their offerings. 3Together they brought six large wagons and twelve oxen. There was a wagon for every two leaders and an ox for each leader. They presented these to the LORD in front of the Tabernacle.

4Then the LORD said to Moses, 5“Receive their gifts, and use these oxen and wagons for transporting the Tabernacle.* Distribute them among the Levites according to the work they have to do.” 6So Moses took the wagons and oxen and presented them to the Levites. 7He gave two wagons and four oxen to the Gershonite division for their work, 8and he gave four wagons and eight oxen to the Merarite division for their work. All their work was done under the leadership of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. 9But he gave none of the wagons or oxen to the Kohathite division, since they were required to carry the sacred objects of the Tabernacle on their

shoulders.

10The leaders also presented dedication gifts for the altar at the time
it was anointed. They each placed their gifts before the altar. 11The
LORD said to Moses, “Let one leader bring his gift each day for the
dedication of the altar.”

12On the first day Nahshon son of Amminadab, leader of the tribe of
Judah, presented his offering.

13His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3*1/4* pounds and
a silver basin weighing 1*3/4* pounds* (as measured by the weight of
the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of
choice flour moistened with olive oil. 14He also brought a gold
container weighing four ounces,* which was filled with incense.
15He brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for
a burnt offering, 16and a male goat for a sin offering. 17For a peace
offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five
one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Nahshon
son of Amminadab.

18On the second day Nethanel son of Zuar, leader of the tribe of
Issachar, presented his offering.

19His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3*1/4* pounds and
a silver basin weighing 1*3/4* pounds (as measured by the weight of
the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of
choice flour moistened with olive oil. 20He also brought a gold
container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 21He
brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a
burnt offering, 22and a male goat for a sin offering. 23For a peace
offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five
one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Nethanel
son of Zuar.

24On the third day Eliab son of Helon, leader of the tribe of
Zebulun, presented his offering.

25His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3 1/4 pounds and
a silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds (as measured by the weight of
the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of
choice flour moistened with olive oil. 26He also brought a gold
container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 27He
brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a
burnt offering, 28and a male goat for a sin offering. 29For a peace
offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five
one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Eliab son
of Helon.

30On the fourth day Elizur son of Shedeur, leader of the tribe of
Reuben, presented his offering.

31His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3 1/4 pounds and
a silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds (as measured by the weight of
the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of
choice flour moistened with olive oil. 32He also brought a gold
container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 33He
brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a
burnt offering, 34and a male goat for a sin offering. 35For a peace
offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five
one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Elizur
son of Shedeur.

36On the fifth day Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, leader of the tribe
of Simeon, presented his offering.

37His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3 1/4 pounds and
a silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds (as measured by the weight of
the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of
choice flour moistened with olive oil. 38He also brought a gold
container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 39He
brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a
burnt offering, 40and a male goat for a sin offering. 41For a peace
offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five
one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by
Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.

42On the sixth day Eliasaph son of Deuel, leader of the tribe of Gad,
presented his offering.

43His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3 1/4 pounds and
a silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds (as measured by the weight of
the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of
choice flour moistened with olive oil. 44He also brought a gold
container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 45He
brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a
burnt offering, 46and a male goat for a sin offering. 47For a peace
offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five
one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Eliasaph
son of Deuel.

48On the seventh day Elishama son of Ammihud, leader of the tribe
of Ephraim, presented his offering.

49His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3 1/4 pounds and
a silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds (as measured by the weight of
the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of
choice flour moistened with olive oil. 50He also brought a gold
container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 51He
brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a
burnt offering, 52and a male goat for a sin offering. 53For a peace
offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five
one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Elishama
son of Ammihud.

54On the eighth day Gamaliel son of Pedahzur, leader of the tribe of
Manasseh, presented his offering.

55His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3 1/4 pounds and
a silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds (as measured by the weight of
the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of
choice flour moistened with olive oil. 56He also brought a gold
container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 57He
brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a
burnt offering, 58and a male goat for a sin offering. 59For a peace

offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

60On the ninth day Abidan son of Gideoni, leader of the tribe of Benjamin, presented his offering.

61His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3*1/4* pounds and a silver basin weighing 1*3/4* pounds (as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil. 62He also brought a gold container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 63He brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a burnt offering, 64and a male goat for a sin offering. 65For a peace offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Abidan son of Gideoni.

66On the tenth day Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai, leader of the tribe of Dan, presented his offering.

67His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3*1/4* pounds and a silver basin weighing 1*3/4* pounds (as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil. 68He also brought a gold container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 69He brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a burnt offering, 70and a male goat for a sin offering. 71For a peace offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

72On the eleventh day Pagiel son of Ocran, leader of the tribe of Asher, presented his offering.

73His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3*1/4* pounds and a silver basin weighing 1*3/4* pounds (as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of

choice flour moistened with olive oil. 74He also brought a gold container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 75He brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a burnt offering, 76and a male goat for a sin offering. 77For a peace offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Pagiel son of Ocran.

78On the twelfth day Ahira son of Enan, leader of the tribe of Naphtali, presented his offering.

79His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3*1/4* pounds and a silver basin weighing 1*3/4* pounds (as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil. 80He also brought a gold container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. 81He brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a burnt offering, 82and a male goat for a sin offering. 83For a peace offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Ahira son of Enan.

84So this was the dedication offering brought by the leaders of Israel at the time the altar was anointed: twelve silver platters, twelve silver basins, and twelve gold incense containers. 85Each silver platter weighed 3*1/4* pounds, and each silver basin weighed 1*3/4* pounds. The total weight of the silver was 60 pounds* (as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel). 86Each of the twelve gold containers that was filled with incense weighed four ounces (as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel). The total weight of the gold was three pounds.*87Twelve young bulls, twelve rams, and twelve one-year-old male lambs were donated for the burnt offerings, along with their prescribed grain offerings. Twelve male goats were brought for the sin offerings. 88Twenty-four bulls, sixty rams, sixty male goats, and sixty one-year-old male lambs were donated for the peace offerings. This was the dedication offering for the altar after it was anointed.

89Whenever Moses went into the Tabernacle to speak with the
LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two
cherubim above the Ark's cover—the place of atonement—that rests
on the Ark of the Covenant.* The LORD spoke to him from there.

THE LAMPSTAND

Numbers 8

PREPARING THE LAMPS

1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Give Aaron the following instructions:

When you set up the seven lamps in the lampstand, place them so their light shines forward in front of the lampstand." 3So Aaron did this. He set up the seven lamps so they reflected their light forward, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 4The entire lampstand, from its base to its decorative blossoms, was made of beaten gold. It was built according to the exact design the LORD had shown Moses.

THE LEVITES DEDICATED

5Then the LORD said to Moses, 6"Now set the Levites apart from the rest of the people of Israel and make them ceremonially clean. 7Do this by sprinkling them with the water of purification, and have them shave their entire body and wash their clothing. Then they will be ceremonially clean. 8Have them bring a young bull and a grain offering of choice flour moistened with olive oil, along with a second young bull for a sin offering. 9Then assemble the whole community of Israel, and present the Levites at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*10When you present the Levites before the LORD, the people of Israel must lay their hands on them. 11Raising his hands, Aaron must then present the Levites to the LORD as a special offering from the people of Israel, thus dedicating them to the LORD's service.

12"Next the Levites will lay their hands on the heads of the young bulls. Present one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to purify the Levites and make them right with the LORD.*13Then have the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons, and raise your hands and present them as a special offering to the LORD. 14In this way, you will set the Levites apart from the rest of the people of Israel, and the Levites will belong to me. 15After this, they may go into the Tabernacle to do their work, because you have purified them and presented them as a special offering.

16"Of all the people of Israel, the Levites are reserved for me. I have claimed them for myself in place of all the firstborn sons of the Israelites; I have taken the Levites as their substitutes. 17For all the firstborn males among the people of Israel are mine, both of people

and of animals. I set them apart for myself on the day I struck down
all the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. 18Yes, I have claimed the
Levites in place of all the firstborn sons of Israel. 19And of all the
Israelites, I have assigned the Levites to Aaron and his sons. They
will serve in the Tabernacle on behalf of the Israelites and make
sacrifices to purify* the people so no plague will strike them when
they approach the sanctuary."

20So Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel dedicated
the Levites, carefully following all the LORD's instructions to Moses.
21The Levites purified themselves from sin and washed their clothes,
and Aaron lifted them up and presented them to the LORD as a
special offering. He then offered a sacrifice to purify them and make
them right with the LORD.*22After that the Levites went into the
Tabernacle to perform their duties, assisting Aaron and his sons. So
they carried out all the commands that the LORD gave Moses
concerning the Levites.

23The LORD also instructed Moses, 24"This is the rule the Levites
must follow: They must begin serving in the Tabernacle at the age
of twenty-five, 25and they must retire at the age of fifty. 26After
retirement they may assist their fellow Levites by serving as guards
at the Tabernacle, but they may not officiate in the service. This is
how you must assign duties to the Levites."

Numbers 9

THE SECOND PASSOVER

1A year after Israel's departure from Egypt, the LORD spoke to
Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. In the first month* of that year he
said, 2"Tell the Israelites to celebrate the Passover at the prescribed
time, 3at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month.* Be sure
to follow all my decrees and regulations concerning this

celebration.”

4So Moses told the people to celebrate the Passover 5in the
wilderness of Sinai as twilight fell on the fourteenth day of the
month. And they celebrated the festival there, just as the LORD had
commanded Moses. 6But some of the men had been ceremonially
defiled by touching a dead body, so they could not celebrate the
Passover that day. They came to Moses and Aaron that day 7and
said, “We have become ceremonially unclean by touching a dead
body. But why should we be prevented from presenting the LORD’s
offering at the proper time with the rest of the Israelites?”

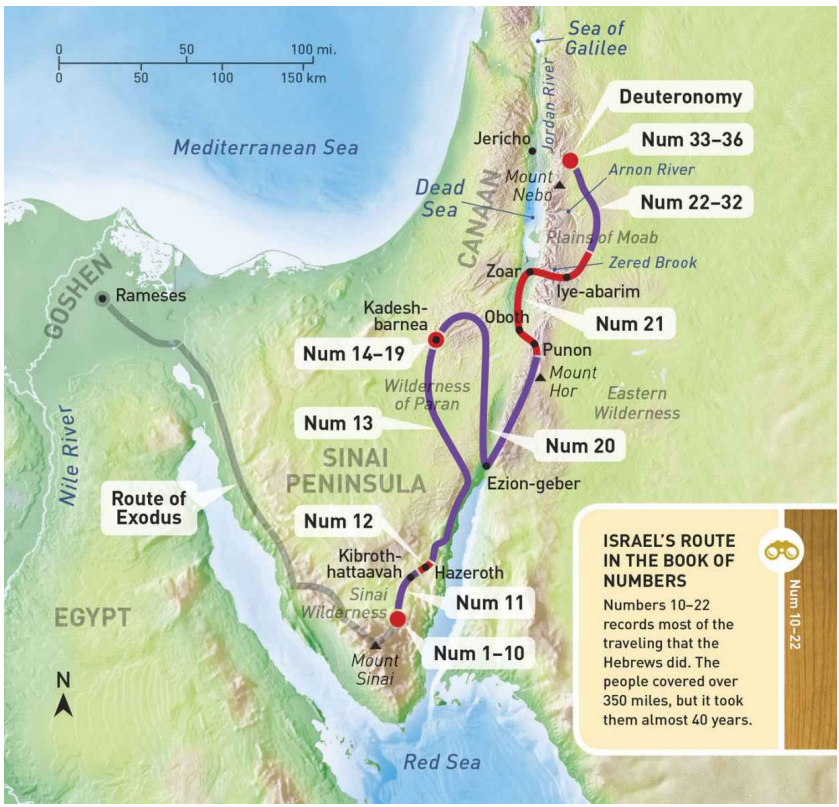
8Moses answered, “Wait here until I have received instructions for
you from the LORD.”

9This was the LORD’s reply to Moses. 10“Give the following
instructions to the people of Israel: If any of the people now or in
future generations are ceremonially unclean at Passover time
because of touching a dead body, or if they are on a journey and
cannot be present at the ceremony, they may still celebrate the
LORD’s Passover. 11They must offer the Passover sacrifice one
month later, at twilight on the fourteenth day of the second month.*
They must eat the Passover lamb at that time with bitter salad
greens and bread made without yeast. 12They must not leave any of
the lamb until the next morning, and they must not break any of its
bones. They must follow all the normal regulations concerning the
Passover.

13“But those who neglect to celebrate the Passover at the regular
time, even though they are ceremonially clean and not away on a
trip, will be cut off from the community of Israel. If they fail to
present the LORD’s offering at the proper time, they will suffer the
consequences of their guilt. 14And if foreigners living among you
want to celebrate the Passover to the LORD, they must follow these
same decrees and regulations. The same laws apply both to native-
born Israelites and to the foreigners living among you.”

THE FIERY CLOUD

15On the day the Tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered it.* But
from evening until morning the cloud over the Tabernacle looked
like a pillar of fire. 16This was the regular pattern—at night the
cloud that covered the Tabernacle had the appearance of fire.
17Whenever the cloud lifted from over the sacred tent, the people of
Israel would break camp and follow it. And wherever the cloud
settled, the people of Israel would set up camp. 18In this way, they
traveled and camped at the LORD's command wherever he told
them to go. Then they remained in their camp as long as the cloud
stayed over the Tabernacle. 19If the cloud remained over the
Tabernacle for a long time, the Israelites stayed and performed their
duty to the LORD. 20Sometimes the cloud would stay over the
Tabernacle for only a few days, so the people would stay for only a
few days, as the LORD commanded. Then at the LORD's command
they would break camp and move on. 21Sometimes the cloud stayed
only overnight and lifted the next morning. But day or night, when
the cloud lifted, the people broke camp and moved on. 22Whether
the cloud stayed above the Tabernacle for two days, a month, or a
year, the people of Israel stayed in camp and did not move on. But
as soon as it lifted, they broke camp and moved on. 23So they
camped or traveled at the LORD's command, and they did whatever
the LORD told them through Moses.



ISRAEL'S ROUTE IN THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

Numbers 10

THE SILVER TRUMPETS

1Now the LORD said to Moses, 2"Make two trumpets of hammered
silver for calling the community to assemble and for signaling the
breaking of camp. 3When both trumpets are blown, everyone must
gather before you at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*4But if only
one trumpet is blown, then only the leaders—the heads of the clans
of Israel—must present themselves to you.

5"When you sound the signal to move on, the tribes camped on the
east side of the Tabernacle must break camp and move forward.
6When you sound the signal a second time, the tribes camped on
the south will follow. You must sound short blasts as the signal for
moving on. 7But when you call the people to an assembly, blow the
trumpets with a different signal. 8Only the priests, Aaron's
descendants, are allowed to blow the trumpets. This is a permanent
law for you, to be observed from generation to generation.

9"When you arrive in your own land and go to war against your
enemies who attack you, sound the alarm with the trumpets. Then
the LORD your God will remember you and rescue you from your
enemies. 10Blow the trumpets in times of gladness, too, sounding
them at your annual festivals and at the beginning of each month.
And blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and peace
offerings. The trumpets will remind your God of his covenant with
you. I am the LORD your God."

**THE ISRAELITES LEAVE SINAI 11IN THE SECOND YEAR AFTER
ISRAEL'S DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT—ON THE TWENTIETH
DAY OF THE SECOND MONTH*—THE CLOUD LIFTED FROM
THE TABERNACLE OF THE COVENANT.*12SO THE ISRAELITES
SET OUT FROM THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI AND TRAVELED
ON FROM PLACE TO PLACE UNTIL THE CLOUD STOPPED IN
THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN.**

13When the people set out for the first time, following the
instructions the LORD had given through Moses, 14Judah's troops
led the way. They marched behind their banner, and their leader
was Nahshon son of Amminadab. 15They were joined by the troops
of the tribe of Issachar, led by Nethanel son of Zuar, 16and the
troops of the tribe of Zebulun, led by Eliab son of Helon.

17Then the Tabernacle was taken down, and the Gershonite and
Merarite divisions of the Levites were next in the line of march,
carrying the Tabernacle with them. 18Reuben's troops went next,
marching behind their banner. Their leader was Elizur son of
Shedeur. 19They were joined by the troops of the tribe of Simeon,
led by Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, 20and the troops of the tribe of
Gad, led by Eliasaph son of Deuel.

21Next came the Kohathite division of the Levites, carrying the
sacred objects from the Tabernacle. Before they arrived at the next
camp, the Tabernacle would already be set up at its new location.
22Ephraim's troops went next, marching behind their banner. Their
leader was Elishama son of Ammihud. 23They were joined by the
troops of the tribe of Manasseh, led by Gamaliel son of Pedahzur,
24and the troops of the tribe of Benjamin, led by Abidan son of
Gideoni.

25Dan's troops went last, marching behind their banner and serving
as the rear guard for all the tribal camps. Their leader was Ahiezer
son of Ammishaddai. 26They were joined by the troops of the tribe
of Asher, led by Pagiel son of Ocran, 27and the troops of the tribe of
Naphtali, led by Ahira son of Enan.

28This was the order in which the Israelites marched, division by
division.

29One day Moses said to his brother-in-law, Hobab son of Reuel the
Midianite, "We are on our way to the place the LORD promised us,
for he said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will treat
you well, for the LORD has promised wonderful blessings for

Israel!”

30But Hobab replied, “No, I will not go. I must return to my own
land and family.”

31“Please don’t leave us,” Moses pleaded. “You know the places in
the wilderness where we should camp. Come, be our guide. 32If you
do, we’ll share with you all the blessings the LORD gives us.”

33They marched for three days after leaving the mountain of the
LORD, with the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant moving ahead of them
to show them where to stop and rest. 34As they moved on each day,
the cloud of the LORD hovered over them. 35And whenever the Ark
set out, Moses would shout, “Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies
be scattered! Let them flee before you!” 36And when the Ark was set
down, he would say, “Return, O LORD, to the countless thousands
of Israel!”

Numbers 11

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN TO MOSES

1Soon the people began to complain about their hardship, and the
LORD heard everything they said. Then the LORD's anger blazed
against them, and he sent a fire to rage among them, and he
destroyed some of the people in the outskirts of the camp. 2Then the
people screamed to Moses for help, and when he prayed to the
LORD, the fire stopped. 3After that, the area was known as Taberah
(which means "the place of burning"), because fire from the LORD
had burned among them there.

4Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites
began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel
also began to complain. "Oh, for some meat!" they exclaimed. 5"We
remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all
the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. 6But
now our appetites are gone. All we ever see is this manna!"

7The manna looked like small coriander seeds, and it was pale
yellow like gum resin. 8The people would go out and gather it from

the ground. They made flour by grinding it with hand mills or pounding it in mortars. Then they boiled it in a pot and made it into flat cakes. These cakes tasted like pastries baked with olive oil. 9The manna came down on the camp with the dew during the night.

10Moses heard all the families standing in the doorways of their tents whining, and the LORD became extremely angry. Moses was also very aggravated. 11And Moses said to the LORD, “Why are you treating me, your servant, so harshly? Have mercy on me! What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? 12Did I give birth to them? Did I bring them into the world? Why did you tell me to carry them in my arms like a mother carries a nursing baby? How can I carry them to the land you swore to give their ancestors? 13Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people? They keep whining to me, saying, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ 14I can’t carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy! 15If this is how you intend to treat me, just go ahead and kill me. Do me a favor and spare me this misery!”

SKIP TO 11:31

MOSES CHOOSES SEVENTY LEADERS

16Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather before me seventy men who are recognized as elders and leaders of Israel. Bring them to the Tabernacle* to stand there with you. 17I will come down and talk to you there. I will take some of the Spirit that is upon you, and I will put the Spirit upon them also. They will bear the burden of the people along with you, so you will not have to carry it alone.

18“And say to the people, ‘Purify yourselves, for tomorrow you will have meat to eat. You were whining, and the LORD heard you when you cried, “Oh, for some meat! We were better off in Egypt!” Now the LORD will give you meat, and you will have to eat it. 19And it won’t be for just a day or two, or for five or ten or even twenty. 20You will eat it for a whole month until you gag and are sick of it. For you have rejected the LORD, who is here among you, and you

have whined to him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?”””

21But Moses responded to the LORD, “There are 600,000 foot
soldiers here with me, and yet you say, ‘I will give them meat for a
whole month!’ 22Even if we butchered all our flocks and herds,
would that satisfy them? Even if we caught all the fish in the sea,
would that be enough?”

23Then the LORD said to Moses, “Has my arm lost its power? Now
you will see whether or not my word comes true!”

24So Moses went out and reported the LORD’s words to the people.
He gathered the seventy elders and stationed them around the
Tabernacle.*25And the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to
Moses. Then he gave the seventy elders the same Spirit that was
upon Moses. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they
prophesied. But this never happened again.

26Two men, Eldad and Medad, had stayed behind in the camp. They
were listed among the elders, but they had not gone out to the
Tabernacle. Yet the Spirit rested upon them as well, so they
prophesied there in the camp. 27A young man ran and reported to
Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!”

28Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’ assistant since his youth,
protested, “Moses, my master, make them stop!”

29But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all
the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his
Spirit upon them all!” 30Then Moses returned to the camp with the
elders of Israel.

THE LORD SENDS QUAIL

31Now the LORD sent a wind that brought quail from the sea and let
them fall all around the camp. For miles in every direction there
were quail flying about three feet above the ground.*32So the people
went out and caught quail all that day and throughout the night
and all the next day, too. No one gathered less than fifty bushels*!
They spread the quail all around the camp to dry. 33But while they
were gorging themselves on the meat—while it was still in their
mouths—the anger of the LORD blazed against the people, and he
struck them with a severe plague. 34So that place was called
Kibroth-hattaavah (which means “graves of gluttony”) because
there they buried the people who had craved meat from Egypt.
35From Kibroth-hattaavah the Israelites traveled to Hazeroth, where
they stayed for some time.

Numbers 12

THE COMPLAINTS OF MIRIAM AND AARON

1While they were at Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses
because he had married a Cushite woman. 2They said, “Has the
LORD spoken only through Moses? Hasn’t he spoken through us,
too?” But the LORD heard them. 3(Now Moses was very humble—
more humble than any other person on earth.)

4So immediately the LORD called to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam and
said, “Go out to the Tabernacle,* all three of you!” So the three of
them went to the Tabernacle. 5Then the LORD descended in the
pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the Tabernacle.* “Aaron
and Miriam!” he called, and they stepped forward. 6And the LORD
said to them, “Now listen to what I say: “If there were prophets

among you, I, the LORD, would reveal myself in visions.

I would speak to them in dreams.

7But not with my servant Moses.
Of all my house, he is the one I trust.

8I speak to him face to face, clearly, and not in riddles!
He sees the LORD as he is.
So why were you not afraid to criticize my servant Moses?”

9The LORD was very angry with them, and he departed. 10As the cloud moved from above the Tabernacle, there stood Miriam, her skin as white as snow from leprosy.* When Aaron saw what had happened to her, 11he cried out to Moses, “Oh, my master! Please don’t punish us for this sin we have so foolishly committed. 12Don’t let her be like a stillborn baby, already decayed at birth.”

13So Moses cried out to the LORD, “O God, I beg you, please heal her!”

14But the LORD said to Moses, “If her father had done nothing more than spit in her face, wouldn’t she be defiled for seven days? So keep her outside the camp for seven days, and after that she may be accepted back.”

THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN

15So Miriam was kept outside the camp for seven days, and the people waited until she was brought back before they traveled again. 16Then they left Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

Numbers 13

TWELVE SCOUTS EXPLORE CANAAN

1The LORD now said to Moses, 2“Send out men to explore the land
of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites. Send one leader
from each of the twelve ancestral tribes.” 3So Moses did as the
LORD commanded him. He sent out twelve men, all tribal leaders of
Israel, from their camp in the wilderness of Paran. 4These were the

tribes and the names of their leaders:

Tribe	*Leader*
Reuben	Shammua son of Zaccur
Simeon	Shaphat son of Hori
Judah	Caleb son of Jephunneh
Issachar	Igal son of Joseph
Ephraim	Hoshea son of Nun
Benjamin	Palti son of Raphu
Zebulun	Gaddiel son of Sodi
Manasseh (Joseph's son)	Gaddi son of Susi
Dan	Ammiel son of Gemalli
Asher	Sethur son of Michael
Naphtali	Nahbi son of Vophsi
Gad	Geuel son of Maki

16These are the names of the men Moses sent out to explore the land. (Moses called Hoshea son of Nun by the name Joshua.)

17Moses gave the men these instructions as he sent them out to explore the land: “Go north through the Negev into the hill country. 18See what the land is like, and find out whether the people living there are strong or weak, few or many. 19See what kind of land they live in. Is it good or bad? Do their towns have walls, or are they unprotected like open camps? 20Is the soil fertile or poor? Are there many trees? Do your best to bring back samples of the crops you see.” (It happened to be the season for harvesting the first ripe grapes.)

21So they went up and explored the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. 22Going north, they passed through the Negev and arrived at Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai—all descendants of Anak—lived. (The ancient town of Hebron was founded seven years before the Egyptian city of Zoan.) 23When they came to the valley of Eshcol, they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes so large that it took two of them to carry it on a pole between them! They also brought back samples of the pomegranates and figs. 24That place was called the valley of

Eshcol (which means “cluster”), because of the cluster of grapes the Israelite men cut there.

THE SCOUTING REPORT

25After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned 26to Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They reported to the whole community what they had seen and showed them the fruit they had taken from the land. 27This was their report to Moses: “We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country—a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is the kind of fruit it produces. 28But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! 29The Amalekites live in the Negev, and the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea* and along the Jordan Valley.”

30But Caleb tried to quiet the people as they stood before Moses. “Let’s go at once to take the land,” he said. “We can certainly conquer it!”

31But the other men who had explored the land with him disagreed. “We can’t go up against them! They are stronger than we are!” 32So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites: “The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge. 33We even saw giants* there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them we felt like grasshoppers, and that’s what they thought, too!”

Numbers 14

THE PEOPLE REBEL

1Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried
all night. 2Their voices rose in a great chorus of protest against
Moses and Aaron. “If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the
wilderness!” they complained. 3“Why is the LORD taking us to this
country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones
will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn’t it be better for us to return
to Egypt?” 4Then they plotted among themselves, “Let’s choose a
new leader and go back to Egypt!”

5Then Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground before the
whole community of Israel. 6Two of the men who had explored the
land, Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, tore their
clothing. 7They said to all the people of Israel, “The land we
traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! 8And if the
LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and
give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. 9Do not
rebel against the LORD, and don’t be afraid of the people of the
land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection,
but the LORD is with us! Don’t be afraid of them!”

10But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and
Caleb. Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to all the
Israelites at the Tabernacle.*11And the LORD said to Moses, “How
long will these people treat me with contempt? Will they never
believe me, even after all the miraculous signs I have done among
them? 12I will disown them and destroy them with a plague. Then I
will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they are!”

MOSES INTERCEDES FOR THE PEOPLE

13But Moses objected. “What will the Egyptians think when they
hear about it?” he asked the LORD. “They know full well the power
you displayed in rescuing your people from Egypt. 14Now if you
destroy them, the Egyptians will send a report to the inhabitants of
this land, who have already heard that you live among your people.
They know, LORD, that you have appeared to your people face to
face and that your pillar of cloud hovers over them. They know that
you go before them in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of
fire by night. 15Now if you slaughter all these people with a single
blow, the nations that have heard of your fame will say, 16‘The
LORD was not able to bring them into the land he swore to give
them, so he killed them in the wilderness.’

17“Please, Lord, prove that your power is as great as you have
claimed. For you said, 18‘The LORD is slow to anger and filled with
unfailing love, forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. But he does
not excuse the guilty. He lays the sins of the parents upon their
children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third
and fourth generations.’ 19In keeping with your magnificent,
unfailing love, please pardon the sins of this people, just as you

have forgiven them ever since they left Egypt."

20Then the LORD said, "I will pardon them as you have requested.
21But as surely as I live, and as surely as the earth is filled with the
LORD's glory, 22not one of these people will ever enter that land.
They have all seen my glorious presence and the miraculous signs I
performed both in Egypt and in the wilderness, but again and again
they have tested me by refusing to listen to my voice. 23They will
never even see the land I swore to give their ancestors. None of
those who have treated me with contempt will ever see it. 24But my
servant Caleb has a different attitude than the others have. He has
remained loyal to me, so I will bring him into the land he explored.
His descendants will possess their full share of that land. 25Now turn
around, and don't go on toward the land where the Amalekites and
Canaanites live. Tomorrow you must set out for the wilderness in
the direction of the Red Sea.*"

THE LORD PUNISHES THE ISRAELITES

26Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 27"How long must I put
up with this wicked community and its complaints about me? Yes, I
have heard the complaints the Israelites are making against me.
28Now tell them this: 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will
do to you the very things I heard you say. 29You will all drop dead
in this wilderness! Because you complained against me, every one
of you who is twenty years old or older and was included in the
registration will die. 30You will not enter and occupy the land I
swore to give you. The only exceptions will be Caleb son of
Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

31"'You said your children would be carried off as plunder. Well, I
will bring them safely into the land, and they will enjoy what you
have despised. 32But as for you, you will drop dead in this
wilderness. 33And your children will be like shepherds, wandering
in the wilderness for forty years. In this way, they will pay for your
faithlessness, until the last of you lies dead in the wilderness.

34“‘Because your men explored the land for forty days, you must
wander in the wilderness for forty years—a year for each day,
suffering the consequences of your sins. Then you will discover
what it is like to have me for an enemy.’ 35I, the LORD, have
spoken! I will certainly do these things to every member of the
community who has conspired against me. They will be destroyed
here in this wilderness, and here they will die!”

36The ten men Moses had sent to explore the land—the ones who
incited rebellion against the LORD with their bad report—37were
struck dead with a plague before the LORD. 38Of the twelve who
had explored the land, only Joshua and Caleb remained alive.

39When Moses reported the LORD’s words to all the Israelites, the
people were filled with grief. 40Then they got up early the next
morning and went to the top of the range of hills. “Let’s go,” they
said. “We realize that we have sinned, but now we are ready to
enter the land the LORD has promised us.”

41But Moses said, “Why are you now disobeying the LORD’s orders
to return to the wilderness? It won’t work. 42Do not go up into the
land now. You will only be crushed by your enemies because the
LORD is not with you. 43When you face the Amalekites and
Canaanites in battle, you will be slaughtered. The LORD will
abandon you because you have abandoned the LORD.”

44But the people defiantly pushed ahead toward the hill country,
even though neither Moses nor the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant left
the camp. 45Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in
those hills came down and attacked them and chased them back as
far as Hormah.

Numbers 15

LAWS CONCERNING OFFERINGS

1Then the LORD told Moses, 2“Give the following instructions to the
people of Israel.

“When you finally settle in the land I am giving you, 3you will offer
special gifts as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. These gifts may take
the form of a burnt offering, a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, a voluntary
offering, or an offering at any of your annual festivals, and they
may be taken from your herds of cattle or your flocks of sheep and
goats. 4When you present these offerings, you must also give the
LORD a grain offering of two quarts* of choice flour mixed with one
quart* of olive oil. 5For each lamb offered as a burnt offering or a
special sacrifice, you must also present one quart of wine as a liquid
offering.

6“If the sacrifice is a ram, give a grain offering of four quarts* of
choice flour mixed with a third of a gallon* of olive oil, 7and give a
third of a gallon of wine as a liquid offering. This will be a pleasing
aroma to the LORD.

8“When you present a young bull as a burnt offering or as a sacrifice
to fulfill a vow or as a peace offering to the LORD, 9you must also
give a grain offering of six quarts* of choice flour mixed with two
quarts* of olive oil, 10and give two quarts of wine as a liquid
offering. This will be a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

11“Each sacrifice of a bull, ram, lamb, or young goat should be
prepared in this way. 12Follow these instructions with each offering
you present. 13All of you native-born Israelites must follow these
instructions when you offer a special gift as a pleasing aroma to the
LORD. 14And if any foreigners visit you or live among you and want
to present a special gift as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, they must
follow these same procedures. 15Native-born Israelites and
foreigners are equal before the LORD and are subject to the same
decrees. This is a permanent law for you, to be observed from
generation to generation. 16The same instructions and regulations
will apply both to you and to the foreigners living among you.”

17Then the LORD said to Moses, 18“Give the following instructions
to the people of Israel.

“When you arrive in the land where I am taking you, 19and you eat
the crops that grow there, you must set some aside as a sacred
offering to the LORD. 20Present a cake from the first of the flour you
grind, and set it aside as a sacred offering, as you do with the first
grain from the threshing floor. 21Throughout the generations to
come, you are to present a sacred offering to the LORD each year
from the first of your ground flour.

22“But suppose you unintentionally fail to carry out all these
commands that the LORD has given you through Moses. 23And
suppose your descendants in the future fail to do everything the
LORD has commanded through Moses. 24If the mistake was made
unintentionally, and the community was unaware of it, the whole
community must present a young bull for a burnt offering as a
pleasing aroma to the LORD. It must be offered along with its
prescribed grain offering and liquid offering and with one male goat
for a sin offering. 25With it the priest will purify the whole
community of Israel, making them right with the LORD,* and they
will be forgiven. For it was an unintentional sin, and they have
corrected it with their offerings to the LORD—the special gift and
the sin offering. 26The whole community of Israel will be forgiven,
including the foreigners living among you, for all the people were
involved in the sin.

27“If one individual commits an unintentional sin, the guilty person
must bring a one-year-old female goat for a sin offering. 28The priest
will sacrifice it to purify* the guilty person before the LORD, and
that person will be forgiven. 29These same instructions apply both to
native-born Israelites and to the foreigners living among you.

30“But those who brazenly violate the LORD’s will, whether native-
born Israelites or foreigners, have blasphemed the LORD, and they
must be cut off from the community. 31Since they have treated the
LORD’s word with contempt and deliberately disobeyed his
command, they must be completely cut off and suffer the
punishment for their guilt.”

PENALTY FOR BREAKING THE SABBATH

32One day while the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they
discovered a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. 33The people
who found him doing this took him before Moses, Aaron, and the
rest of the community. 34They held him in custody because they did
not know what to do with him. 35Then the LORD said to Moses,
“The man must be put to death! The whole community must stone
him outside the camp.” 36So the whole community took the man
outside the camp and stoned him to death, just as the LORD had
commanded Moses.

TASSELS ON CLOTHING

37Then the LORD said to Moses, 38“Give the following instructions
to the people of Israel: Throughout the generations to come you
must make tassels for the hems of your clothing and attach them
with a blue cord. 39When you see the tassels, you will remember
and obey all the commands of the LORD instead of following your
own desires and defiling yourselves, as you are prone to do. 40The
tassels will help you remember that you must obey all my
commands and be holy to your God. 41I am the LORD your God who
brought you out of the land of Egypt that I might be your God. I am
the LORD your God!”

Numbers 16

KORAH'S REBELLION

1One day Korah son of Izhar, a descendant of Kohath son of Levi,
conspired with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On son of
Peleth, from the tribe of Reuben. 2They incited a rebellion against
Moses, along with 250 other leaders of the community, all
prominent members of the assembly. 3They united against Moses
and Aaron and said, "You have gone too far! The whole community
of Israel has been set apart by the LORD, and he is with all of us.
What right do you have to act as though you are greater than the
rest of the LORD's people?"

4When Moses heard what they were saying, he fell face down on the
ground. 5Then he said to Korah and his followers, "Tomorrow
morning the LORD will show us who belongs to him* and who is
holy. The LORD will allow only those whom he selects to enter his
own presence. 6Korah, you and all your followers must prepare your
incense burners. 7Light fires in them tomorrow, and burn incense
before the LORD. Then we will see whom the LORD chooses as his
holy one. You Levites are the ones who have gone too far!"

8Then Moses spoke again to Korah: “Now listen, you Levites! 9Does
it seem insignificant to you that the God of Israel has chosen you
from among all the community of Israel to be near him so you can
serve in the LORD’s Tabernacle and stand before the people to
minister to them? 10Korah, he has already given this special
ministry to you and your fellow Levites. Are you now demanding
the priesthood as well? 11The LORD is the one you and your
followers are really revolting against! For who is Aaron that you are
complaining about him?”

12Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but
they replied, “We refuse to come before you! 13Isn’t it enough that
you brought us out of Egypt, a land flowing with milk and honey, to
kill us here in this wilderness, and that you now treat us like your
subjects? 14What’s more, you haven’t brought us into another land
flowing with milk and honey. You haven’t given us a new homeland
with fields and vineyards. Are you trying to fool these men?* We
will not come.”

15Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, “Do not
accept their grain offerings! I have not taken so much as a donkey
from them, and I have never hurt a single one of them.” 16And
Moses said to Korah, “You and all your followers must come here
tomorrow and present yourselves before the LORD. Aaron will also
be here. 17You and each of your 250 followers must prepare an
incense burner and put incense on it, so you can all present them
before the LORD. Aaron will also bring his incense burner.”

18So each of these men prepared an incense burner, lit the fire, and
placed incense on it. Then they all stood at the entrance of the
Tabernacle* with Moses and Aaron. 19Meanwhile, Korah had stirred
up the entire community against Moses and Aaron, and they all
gathered at the Tabernacle entrance. Then the glorious presence of
the LORD appeared to the whole community, 20and the LORD said
to Moses and Aaron, 21“Get away from all these people so that I
may instantly destroy them!”

22But Moses and Aaron fell face down on the ground. “O God,” they pleaded, “you are the God who gives breath to all creatures. Must you be angry with all the people when only one man sins?”

23And the LORD said to Moses, 24“Then tell all the people to get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”

25So Moses got up and rushed over to the tents of Dathan and Abiram, followed by the elders of Israel. 26“Quick!” he told the people. “Get away from the tents of these wicked men, and don’t touch anything that belongs to them. If you do, you will be destroyed for their sins.” 27So all the people stood back from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Then Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the entrances of their tents, together with their wives and children and little ones.

28And Moses said, “This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things that I have done—for I have not done them on my own. 29If these men die a natural death, or if nothing unusual happens, then the LORD has not sent me. 30But if the LORD does something entirely new and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them and all their belongings, and they go down alive into the grave,* then you will know that these men have shown contempt for the LORD.”

31He had hardly finished speaking the words when the ground suddenly split open beneath them. 32The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the men, along with their households and all their followers who were standing with them, and everything they owned. 33So they went down alive into the grave, along with all their belongings. The earth closed over them, and they all vanished from among the people of Israel. 34All the people around them fled when they heard their screams. “The earth will swallow us, too!” they cried. 35Then fire blazed forth from the LORD and burned up the 250 men who were offering incense.

36* And the LORD said to Moses, 37 "Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the
priest to pull all the incense burners from the fire, for they are holy.
Also tell him to scatter the burning coals. 38 Take the incense burners
of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, and hammer
the metal into a thin sheet to overlay the altar. Since these burners
were used in the LORD's presence, they have become holy. Let them
serve as a warning to the people of Israel."

39 So Eleazar the priest collected the 250 bronze incense burners that
had been used by the men who died in the fire, and the bronze was
hammered into a thin sheet to overlay the altar. 40 This would warn
the Israelites that no unauthorized person—no one who was not a
descendant of Aaron—should ever enter the LORD's presence to
burn incense. If anyone did, the same thing would happen to him as
happened to Korah and his followers. So the LORD's instructions to
Moses were carried out.

41 But the very next morning the whole community of Israel began
muttering again against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed
the LORD's people!" 42 As the community gathered to protest against
Moses and Aaron, they turned toward the Tabernacle and saw that
the cloud had covered it, and the glorious presence of the LORD
appeared.

43 Moses and Aaron came and stood in front of the Tabernacle, 44 and
the LORD said to Moses, 45 "Get away from all these people so that I
can instantly destroy them!" But Moses and Aaron fell face down on
the ground.

46 And Moses said to Aaron, "Quick, take an incense burner and
place burning coals on it from the altar. Lay incense on it, and carry
it out among the people to purify them and make them right with
the LORD.* The LORD's anger is blazing against them—the plague
has already begun."

47Aaron did as Moses told him and ran out among the people. The
plague had already begun to strike down the people, but Aaron
burned the incense and purified* the people. 48He stood between the
dead and the living, and the plague stopped. 49But 14,700 people
died in that plague, in addition to those who had died in the affair
involving Korah. 50Then because the plague had stopped, Aaron
returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tabernacle.

Numbers 17

THE BUDDING OF AARON'S STAFF

1*Then the LORD said to Moses, 2"Tell the people of Israel to bring
you twelve wooden staffs, one from each leader of Israel's ancestral
tribes, and inscribe each leader's name on his staff. 3Inscribe Aaron's

name on the staff of the tribe of Levi, for there must be one staff for
the leader of each ancestral tribe. 4Place these staffs in the
Tabernacle in front of the Ark containing the tablets of the
Covenant,* where I meet with you. 5Buds will sprout on the staff
belonging to the man I choose. Then I will finally put an end to the
people's murmuring and complaining against you."

6So Moses gave the instructions to the people of Israel, and each of
the twelve tribal leaders, including Aaron, brought Moses a staff.
7Moses placed the staffs in the LORD's presence in the Tabernacle of
the Covenant.*8When he went into the Tabernacle of the Covenant
the next day, he found that Aaron's staff, representing the tribe of
Levi, had sprouted, budded, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds!

9When Moses brought all the staffs out from the LORD's presence,
he showed them to the people. Each man claimed his own staff.
10And the LORD said to Moses: "Place Aaron's staff permanently
before the Ark of the Covenant* to serve as a warning to rebels. This
should put an end to their complaints against me and prevent any
further deaths." 11So Moses did as the LORD commanded him.

12Then the people of Israel said to Moses, "Look, we are doomed!
We are dead! We are ruined! 13Everyone who even comes close to
the Tabernacle of the LORD dies. Are we all doomed to die?"

Numbers 18

DUTIES OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES

1Then the LORD said to Aaron: “You, your sons, and your relatives
from the tribe of Levi will be held responsible for any offenses
related to the sanctuary. But you and your sons alone will be held
responsible for violations connected with the priesthood.

2“Bring your relatives of the tribe of Levi—your ancestral tribe—to
assist you and your sons as you perform the sacred duties in front of
the Tabernacle of the Covenant.* 3But as the Levites go about all
their assigned duties at the Tabernacle, they must be careful not to
go near any of the sacred objects or the altar. If they do, both you
and they will die. 4The Levites must join you in fulfilling their
responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the Tabernacle,* but
no unauthorized person may assist you.

5“You yourselves must perform the sacred duties inside the
sanctuary and at the altar. If you follow these instructions, the
LORD’s anger will never again blaze against the people of Israel. 6I
myself have chosen your fellow Levites from among the Israelites to
be your special assistants. They are a gift to you, dedicated to the
LORD for service in the Tabernacle. 7But you and your sons, the
priests, must personally handle all the priestly rituals associated
with the altar and with everything behind the inner curtain. I am
giving you the priesthood as your special privilege of service. Any
unauthorized person who comes too near the sanctuary will be put
to death.”

SUPPORT FOR THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES

8The LORD gave these further instructions to Aaron: “I myself have
put you in charge of all the holy offerings that are brought to me by
the people of Israel. I have given all these consecrated offerings to
you and your sons as your permanent share. 9You are allotted the
portion of the most holy offerings that is not burned on the fire.
This portion of all the most holy offerings—including the grain
offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings—will be most holy, and
it belongs to you and your sons. 10You must eat it as a most holy
offering. All the males may eat of it, and you must treat it as most

holy.

11“All the sacred offerings and special offerings presented to me
when the Israelites lift them up before the altar also belong to you. I
have given them to you and to your sons and daughters as your
permanent share. Any member of your family who is ceremonially
clean may eat of these offerings.

12“I also give you the harvest gifts brought by the people as
offerings to the LORD—the best of the olive oil, new wine, and
grain. 13All the first crops of their land that the people present to
the LORD belong to you. Any member of your family who is
ceremonially clean may eat this food.

14“Everything in Israel that is specially set apart for the LORD* also
belongs to you.

15“The firstborn of every mother, whether human or animal, that is
offered to the LORD will be yours. But you must always redeem
your firstborn sons and the firstborn of ceremonially unclean
animals. 16Redeem them when they are one month old. The
redemption price is five pieces of silver* (as measured by the weight
of the sanctuary shekel, which equals twenty gerahs).

17“However, you may not redeem the firstborn of cattle, sheep, or
goats. They are holy and have been set apart for the LORD. Sprinkle
their blood on the altar, and burn their fat as a special gift, a
pleasing aroma to the LORD. 18The meat of these animals will be
yours, just like the breast and right thigh that are presented by
lifting them up as a special offering before the altar. 19Yes, I am
giving you all these holy offerings that the people of Israel bring to
the LORD. They are for you and your sons and daughters, to be
eaten as your permanent share. This is an eternal and unbreakable
covenant* between the LORD and you, and it also applies to your
descendants.”

20And the LORD said to Aaron, “You priests will receive no
allotment of land or share of property among the people of Israel. I
am your share and your allotment. 21As for the tribe of Levi, your
relatives, I will compensate them for their service in the Tabernacle.
Instead of an allotment of land, I will give them the tithes from the
entire land of Israel.

22“From now on, no Israelites except priests or Levites may
approach the Tabernacle. If they come too near, they will be judged
guilty and will die. 23Only the Levites may serve at the Tabernacle,
and they will be held responsible for any offenses against it. This is
a permanent law for you, to be observed from generation to
generation. The Levites will receive no allotment of land among the
Israelites, 24because I have given them the Israelites’ tithes, which
have been presented as sacred offerings to the LORD. This will be
the Levites’ share. That is why I said they would receive no
allotment of land among the Israelites.”

25The LORD also told Moses, 26“Give these instructions to the
Levites: When you receive from the people of Israel the tithes I have
assigned as your allotment, give a tenth of the tithes you receive—a
tithe of the tithe—to the LORD as a sacred offering. 27The LORD
will consider this offering to be your harvest offering, as though it
were the first grain from your own threshing floor or wine from
your own winepress. 28You must present one-tenth of the tithe
received from the Israelites as a sacred offering to the LORD. This is
the LORD’s sacred portion, and you must present it to Aaron the
priest. 29Be sure to give to the LORD the best portions of the gifts
given to you.

30“Also, give these instructions to the Levites: When you present the
best part as your offering, it will be considered as though it came
from your own threshing floor or winepress. 31You Levites and your
families may eat this food anywhere you wish, for it is your
compensation for serving in the Tabernacle. 32You will not be
considered guilty for accepting the LORD’s tithes if you give the
best portion to the priests. But be careful not to treat the holy gifts
of the people of Israel as though they were common. If you do, you

will die.”

Numbers 19

THE WATER OF PURIFICATION

1The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 2“Here is another legal
requirement commanded by the LORD: Tell the people of Israel to
bring you a red heifer, a perfect animal that has no defects and has
never been yoked to a plow. 3Give it to Eleazar the priest, and it
will be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence.
4Eleazar will take some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle it
seven times toward the front of the Tabernacle.*5As Eleazar
watches, the heifer must be burned—its hide, meat, blood, and
dung. 6Eleazar the priest must then take a stick of cedar,* a hyssop
branch, and some scarlet yarn and throw them into the fire where
the heifer is burning.

7“Then the priest must wash his clothes and bathe himself in water.
Afterward he may return to the camp, though he will remain
ceremonially unclean until evening. 8The man who burns the
animal must also wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and
he, too, will remain unclean until evening. 9Then someone who is
ceremonially clean will gather up the ashes of the heifer and
deposit them in a purified place outside the camp. They will be kept
there for the community of Israel to use in the water for the
purification ceremony. This ceremony is performed for the removal
of sin. 10The man who gathers up the ashes of the heifer must also
wash his clothes, and he will remain ceremonially unclean until
evening. This is a permanent law for the people of Israel and any
foreigners who live among them.

11“All those who touch a dead human body will be ceremonially
unclean for seven days. 12They must purify themselves on the third
and seventh days with the water of purification; then they will be
purified. But if they do not do this on the third and seventh days,
they will continue to be unclean even after the seventh day. 13All

those who touch a dead body and do not purify themselves in the proper way defile the LORD's Tabernacle, and they will be cut off from the community of Israel. Since the water of purification was not sprinkled on them, their defilement continues.

14"This is the ritual law that applies when someone dies inside a tent: All those who enter that tent and those who were inside when the death occurred will be ceremonially unclean for seven days. 15Any open container in the tent that was not covered with a lid is also defiled. 16And if someone in an open field touches the corpse of someone who was killed with a sword or who died a natural death, or if someone touches a human bone or a grave, that person will be defiled for seven days.

17"To remove the defilement, put some of the ashes from the burnt purification offering in a jar, and pour fresh water over them. 18Then someone who is ceremonially clean must take a hyssop branch and dip it into the water. That person must sprinkle the water on the tent, on all the furnishings in the tent, and on the people who were in the tent; also on the person who touched a human bone, or touched someone who was killed or who died naturally, or touched a grave. 19On the third and seventh days the person who is ceremonially clean must sprinkle the water on those who are defiled. Then on the seventh day the people being cleansed must wash their clothes and bathe themselves, and that evening they will be cleansed of their defilement.

20"But those who become defiled and do not purify themselves will be cut off from the community, for they have defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. Since the water of purification has not been sprinkled on them, they remain defiled. 21This is a permanent law for the people. Those who sprinkle the water of purification must afterward wash their clothes, and anyone who then touches the water used for purification will remain defiled until evening. 22Anything and anyone that a defiled person touches will be ceremonially unclean until evening."

Numbers 20

MOSES STRIKES THE ROCK

1In the first month of the year,* the whole community of Israel
arrived in the wilderness of Zin and camped at Kadesh. While they
were there, Miriam died and was buried.

2There was no water for the people to drink at that place, so they

rebelled against Moses and Aaron. 3The people blamed Moses and said, “If only we had died in the LORD’s presence with our brothers! 4Why have you brought the congregation of the LORD’s people into this wilderness to die, along with all our livestock? 5Why did you make us leave Egypt and bring us here to this terrible place? This land has no grain, no figs, no grapes, no pomegranates, and no water to drink!”

6Moses and Aaron turned away from the people and went to the entrance of the Tabernacle,* where they fell face down on the ground. Then the glorious presence of the LORD appeared to them, 7and the LORD said to Moses, 8“You and Aaron must take the staff and assemble the entire community. As the people watch, speak to the rock over there, and it will pour out its water. You will provide enough water from the rock to satisfy the whole community and their livestock.”

9So Moses did as he was told. He took the staff from the place where it was kept before the LORD. 10Then he and Aaron summoned the people to come and gather at the rock. “Listen, you rebels!” he shouted. “Must we bring you water from this rock?” 11Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the staff, and water gushed out. So the entire community and their livestock drank their fill.

12But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust me enough to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel, you will not lead them into the land I am giving them!” 13This place was known as the waters of Meribah (which means “arguing”) because there the people of Israel argued with the LORD, and there he demonstrated his holiness among them.

EDOM REFUSES ISRAEL PASSAGE

14While Moses was at Kadesh, he sent ambassadors to the king of
Edom with this message:

"This is what your relatives, the people of Israel, say: You know all
the hardships we have been through. 15Our ancestors went down to
Egypt, and we lived there a long time, and we and our ancestors
were brutally mistreated by the Egyptians. 16But when we cried out
to the LORD, he heard us and sent an angel who brought us out of
Egypt. Now we are camped at Kadesh, a town on the border of your
land. 17Please let us travel through your land. We will be careful not
to go through your fields and vineyards. We won't even drink water
from your wells. We will stay on the king's road and never leave it
until we have passed through your territory."

18But the king of Edom said, "Stay out of my land, or I will meet
you with an army!"

19The Israelites answered, "We will stay on the main road. If our
livestock drink your water, we will pay for it. Just let us pass
through your country. That's all we ask."

20But the king of Edom replied, "Stay out! You may not pass
through our land." With that he mobilized his army and marched
out against them with an imposing force. 21Because Edom refused to
allow Israel to pass through their country, Israel was forced to turn
around.

THE DEATH OF AARON

22The whole community of Israel left Kadesh and arrived at Mount
Hor. 23There, on the border of the land of Edom, the LORD said to
Moses and Aaron, 24"The time has come for Aaron to join his
ancestors in death. He will not enter the land I am giving the people
of Israel, because the two of you rebelled against my instructions
concerning the water at Meribah. 25Now take Aaron and his son
Eleazar up Mount Hor. 26There you will remove Aaron's priestly
garments and put them on Eleazar, his son. Aaron will die there and
join his ancestors."

27So Moses did as the LORD commanded. The three of them went
up Mount Hor together as the whole community watched. 28At the
summit, Moses removed the priestly garments from Aaron and put
them on Eleazar, Aaron's son. Then Aaron died there on top of the
mountain, and Moses and Eleazar went back down. 29When the
people realized that Aaron had died, all Israel mourned for him
thirty days.

Numbers 21

VICTORY OVER THE CANAANITES

1The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that the
Israelites were approaching on the road through Atharim. So he
attacked the Israelites and took some of them as prisoners. 2Then
the people of Israel made this vow to the LORD: “If you will hand
these people over to us, we will completely destroy* all their
towns.” 3The LORD heard the Israelites’ request and gave them
victory over the Canaanites. The Israelites completely destroyed
them and their towns, and the place has been called Hormah* ever
since.

THE BRONZE SNAKE

4Then the people of Israel set out from Mount Hor, taking the road
to the Red Sea* to go around the land of Edom. But the people grew
impatient with the long journey, 5and they began to speak against
God and Moses. “Why have you brought us out of Egypt to die here
in the wilderness?” they complained. “There is nothing to eat here
and nothing to drink. And we hate this horrible manna!”

6So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people, and many
were bitten and died. 7Then the people came to Moses and cried
out, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against
you. Pray that the LORD will take away the snakes.” So Moses
prayed for the people.

8Then the LORD told him, “Make a replica of a poisonous snake and
attach it to a pole. All who are bitten will live if they simply look at
it!” 9So Moses made a snake out of bronze and attached it to a pole.
Then anyone who was bitten by a snake could look at the bronze
snake and be healed!

ISRAEL’S JOURNEY TO MOAB

10The Israelites traveled next to Oboth and camped there. 11Then
they went on to Iye-abarim, in the wilderness on the eastern border
of Moab. 12From there they traveled to the valley of Zered Brook
and set up camp. 13Then they moved out and camped on the far side
of the Arnon River, in the wilderness adjacent to the territory of the
Amorites. The Arnon is the boundary line between the Moabites
and the Amorites. 14For this reason *The Book of the Wars of the*
LORD speaks of “the town of Waheb in the area of Suphah, and the
ravines of the Arnon River, 15and the ravines that extend as far as
the settlement of Ar on the border of Moab.”

16From there the Israelites traveled to Beer,* which is the well
where the LORD said to Moses, “Assemble the people, and I will
give them water.” 17There the Israelites sang this song:

“Spring up, O well!
Yes, sing its praises!

18Sing of this well, which princes dug, which great leaders hollowed
out with their scepters and staffs.”

Then the Israelites left the wilderness and proceeded on through
Mattanah, 19Nahaliel, and Bamoth. 20After that they went to the
valley in Moab where Pisgah Peak overlooks the wasteland.*

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

VICTORY OVER SIHON AND OG

21 The Israelites sent ambassadors to King Sihon of the Amorites
with this message:

22“Let us travel through your land. We will be careful not to go
through your fields and vineyards. We won’t even drink water from
your wells. We will stay on the king’s road until we have passed
through your territory.”

23But King Sihon refused to let them cross his territory. Instead, he
mobilized his entire army and attacked Israel in the wilderness,
engaging them in battle at Jahaz. 24But the Israelites slaughtered
them with their swords and occupied their land from the Arnon
River to the Jabbok River. They went only as far as the Ammonite
border because the boundary of the Ammonites was fortified.*

25So Israel captured all the towns of the Amorites and settled in
them, including the city of Heshbon and its surrounding villages.
26Heshbon had been the capital of King Sihon of the Amorites. He
had defeated a former Moabite king and seized all his land as far as
the Arnon River. 27Therefore, the ancient poets wrote this about
him: “Come to Heshbon and let it be rebuilt!

Let the city of Sihon be restored.

28A fire flamed forth from Heshbon, a blaze from the city of Sihon.
It burned the city of Ar in Moab; it destroyed the rulers of the
Arnon heights.

29What sorrow awaits you, O people of Moab!
You are finished, O worshipers of Chemosh!
Chemosh has left his sons as refugees, his daughters as captives of
Sihon, the Amorite king.

30We have utterly destroyed them, from Heshbon to Dibon.
We have completely wiped them out as far away as Nophah and
Medeba.*”

31So the people of Israel occupied the territory of the Amorites.
32After Moses sent men to explore the Jazer area, they captured all
the towns in the region and drove out the Amorites who lived there.
33Then they turned and marched up the road to Bashan, but King
Og of Bashan and all his people attacked them at Edrei. 34The LORD

said to Moses, “Do not be afraid of him, for I have handed him over
to you, along with all his people and his land. Do the same to him
as you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon.”
35And Israel killed King Og, his sons, and all his subjects; not a
single survivor remained. Then Israel occupied their land.

BALAAM IN MOAB

Numbers 22

BALAK SENDS FOR BALAAM

1Then the people of Israel traveled to the plains of Moab and
camped east of the Jordan River, across from Jericho. 2Balak son of
Zippor, the Moabite king, had seen everything the Israelites did to
the Amorites. 3And when the people of Moab saw how many
Israelites there were, they were terrified. 4The king of Moab said to
the elders of Midian, "This mob will devour everything in sight, like
an ox devours grass in the field!"

THE LAND OF PETHOR

So Balak, king of Moab, 5sent messengers to call Balaam son of Beor, who was living in his native land of Pethor* near the Euphrates River.* His message said:

"Look, a vast horde of people has arrived from Egypt. They cover the face of the earth and are threatening me. 6Please come and curse these people for me because they are too powerful for me. Then perhaps I will be able to conquer them and drive them from the land. I know that blessings fall on any people you bless, and curses fall on people you curse."

7Balak's messengers, who were elders of Moab and Midian, set out with money to pay Balaam to place a curse upon Israel.* They went to Balaam and delivered Balak's message to him. 8"Stay here overnight," Balaam said. "In the morning I will tell you whatever the LORD directs me to say." So the officials from Moab stayed there with Balaam.

9That night God came to Balaam and asked him, “Who are these men visiting you?”

10Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent me this message: 11‘Look, a vast horde of people has arrived from Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come and curse these people for me. Then perhaps I will be able to stand up to them and drive them from the land.’”

12But God told Balaam, “Do not go with them. You are not to curse these people, for they have been blessed!”

13The next morning Balaam got up and told Balak’s officials, “Go on home! The LORD will not let me go with you.”

14So the Moabite officials returned to King Balak and reported, “Balaam refused to come with us.” 15Then Balak tried again. This time he sent a larger number of even more distinguished officials than those he had sent the first time. 16They went to Balaam and delivered this message to him:

“This is what Balak son of Zippor says: Please don’t let anything stop you from coming to help me. 17I will pay you very well and do whatever you tell me. Just come and curse these people for me!”

18But Balaam responded to Balak’s messengers, “Even if Balak were to give me his palace filled with silver and gold, I would be powerless to do anything against the will of the LORD my God. 19But stay here one more night, and I will see if the LORD has anything else to say to me.”

20That night God came to Balaam and told him, “Since these men have come for you, get up and go with them. But do only what I tell you to do.”

BALAAM AND HIS DONKEY

21So the next morning Balaam got up, saddled his donkey, and
started off with the Moabite officials. 22But God was angry that
Balaam was going, so he sent the angel of the LORD to stand in the
road to block his way. As Balaam and two servants were riding
along, 23Balaam's donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the
road with a drawn sword in his hand. The donkey bolted off the
road into a field, but Balaam beat it and turned it back onto the
road. 24Then the angel of the LORD stood at a place where the road
narrowed between two vineyard walls. 25When the donkey saw the
angel of the LORD, it tried to squeeze by and crushed Balaam's foot
against the wall. So Balaam beat the donkey again. 26Then the angel
of the LORD moved farther down the road and stood in a place too
narrow for the donkey to get by at all. 27This time when the donkey
saw the angel, it lay down under Balaam. In a fit of rage Balaam
beat the animal again with his staff.

28Then the LORD gave the donkey the ability to speak. "What have I
done to you that deserves your beating me three times?" it asked
Balaam.

29"You have made me look like a fool!" Balaam shouted. "If I had a
sword with me, I would kill you!"

30"But I am the same donkey you have ridden all your life," the
donkey answered. "Have I ever done anything like this before?"

"No," Balaam admitted.

31Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the
LORD standing in the roadway with a drawn sword in his hand.
Balaam bowed his head and fell face down on the ground before
him.

32"Why did you beat your donkey those three times?" the angel of
the LORD demanded. "Look, I have come to block your way

because you are stubbornly resisting me. 33Three times the donkey
saw me and shied away; otherwise, I would certainly have killed
you by now and spared the donkey."

34Then Balaam confessed to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned. I
didn't realize you were standing in the road to block my way. I will
return home if you are against my going."

35But the angel of the LORD told Balaam, "Go with these men, but
say only what I tell you to say." So Balaam went on with Balak's
officials. 36When King Balak heard that Balaam was on the way, he
went out to meet him at a Moabite town on the Arnon River at the
farthest border of his land.

37"Didn't I send you an urgent invitation? Why didn't you come
right away?" Balak asked Balaam. "Didn't you believe me when I
said I would reward you richly?"

38Balaam replied, "Look, now I have come, but I have no power to
say whatever I want. I will speak only the message that God puts in
my mouth." 39Then Balaam accompanied Balak to Kiriath-huzoth,
40where the king sacrificed cattle and sheep. He sent portions of the
meat to Balaam and the officials who were with him. 41The next
morning Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth-baal. From there he
could see some of the people of Israel spread out below him.

Numbers 23

BALAAM BLESSES ISRAEL

1Then Balaam said to King Balak, "Build me seven altars here, and
prepare seven young bulls and seven rams for me to sacrifice."
2Balak followed his instructions, and the two of them sacrificed a
young bull and a ram on each altar.

3Then Balaam said to Balak, “Stand here by your burnt offerings,
and I will go to see if the LORD will respond to me. Then I will tell
you whatever he reveals to me.” So Balaam went alone to the top of
a bare hill, 4and God met him there. Balaam said to him, “I have
prepared seven altars and have sacrificed a young bull and a ram on
each altar.”

5The LORD gave Balaam a message for King Balak. Then he said,
“Go back to Balak and give him my message.”

6So Balaam returned and found the king standing beside his burnt
offerings with all the officials of Moab. 7This was the message
Balaam delivered: “Balak summoned me to come from Aram; the
king of Moab brought me from the eastern hills.

‘Come,’ he said, ‘curse Jacob for me!
Come and announce Israel’s doom.’

8But how can I curse those whom God has not cursed?
How can I condemn those whom the LORD has not condemned?

9I see them from the cliff tops; I watch them from the hills.
I see a people who live by themselves, set apart from other nations.

10Who can count Jacob’s descendants, as numerous as dust?
Who can count even a fourth of Israel’s people?
Let me die like the righteous; let my life end like theirs.”

11Then King Balak demanded of Balaam, “What have you done to
me? I brought you to curse my enemies. Instead, you have blessed
them!”

12But Balaam replied, “I will speak only the message that the LORD
puts in my mouth.”

BALAAM’S SECOND MESSAGE

13Then King Balak told him, “Come with me to another place. There

you will see another part of the nation of Israel, but not all of them. Curse at least that many!” 14So Balak took Balaam to the plateau of Zophim on Pisgah Peak. He built seven altars there and offered a young bull and a ram on each altar.

15Then Balaam said to the king, “Stand here by your burnt offerings while I go over there to meet the LORD.”

16And the LORD met Balaam and gave him a message. Then he said, “Go back to Balak and give him my message.”

17So Balaam returned and found the king standing beside his burnt offerings with all the officials of Moab. “What did the LORD say?” Balak asked eagerly.

18This was the message Balaam delivered: “Rise up, Balak, and listen!

Hear me, son of Zippor.

19God is not a man, so he does not lie.
He is not human, so he does not change his mind.
Has he ever spoken and failed to act?
Has he ever promised and not carried it through?

20Listen, I received a command to bless; God has blessed, and I cannot reverse it!

21No misfortune is in his plan for Jacob; no trouble is in store for Israel.
For the LORD their God is with them; he has been proclaimed their king.

22God brought them out of Egypt; for them he is as strong as a wild ox.

23No curse can touch Jacob; no magic has any power against Israel.
For now it will be said of Jacob, ‘What wonders God has done for

Israel!’

24These people rise up like a lioness, like a majestic lion rousing itself.
They refuse to rest until they have feasted on prey, drinking the blood of the slaughtered!”

25Then Balak said to Balaam, “Fine, but if you won’t curse them, at least don’t bless them!”

26But Balaam replied to Balak, “Didn’t I tell you that I can do only what the LORD tells me?”

BALAAM’S THIRD MESSAGE

27Then King Balak said to Balaam, “Come, I will take you to one more place. Perhaps it will please God to let you curse them from there.”

28So Balak took Balaam to the top of Mount Peor, overlooking the wasteland.*29Balaam again told Balak, “Build me seven altars, and prepare seven young bulls and seven rams for me to sacrifice.” 30So Balak did as Balaam ordered and offered a young bull and a ram on each altar.

Numbers 24

1By now Balaam realized that the LORD was determined to bless Israel, so he did not resort to divination as before. Instead, he turned and looked out toward the wilderness, 2where he saw the people of Israel camped, tribe by tribe. Then the Spirit of God came upon him, 3and this is the message he delivered: “This is the message of Balaam son of Beor, the message of the man whose eyes see clearly,

4the message of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision
from the Almighty, who bows down with eyes wide open:

5How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob; how lovely are your homes,
O Israel!

6They spread before me like palm groves,*
like gardens by the riverside.
They are like tall trees planted by the LORD, like cedars beside the
waters.

7Water will flow from their buckets; their offspring have all they
need.
Their king will be greater than Agag; their kingdom will be exalted.

8God brought them out of Egypt; for them he is as strong as a wild
ox.
He devours all the nations that oppose him, breaking their bones in
pieces, shooting them with arrows.

9Like a lion, Israel crouches and lies down; like a lioness, who dares
to arouse her?
Blessed is everyone who blesses you, O Israel, and cursed is
everyone who curses you."

10King Balak flew into a rage against Balaam. He angrily clapped his
hands and shouted, "I called you to curse my enemies! Instead, you
have blessed them three times. 11Now get out of here! Go back
home! I promised to reward you richly, but the LORD has kept you
from your reward."

12Balaam told Balak, "Don't you remember what I told your
messengers? I said, 13'Even if Balak were to give me his palace filled
with silver and gold, I would be powerless to do anything against
the will of the LORD.' I told you that I could say only what the
LORD says! 14Now I am returning to my own people. But first let me
tell you what the Israelites will do to your people in the future."

BALAAM'S FINAL MESSAGES

15This is the message Balaam delivered: "This is the message of
Balaam son of Beor, the message of the man whose eyes see clearly,

16the message of one who hears the words of God, who has
knowledge from the Most High, who sees a vision from the
Almighty, who bows down with eyes wide open:

17I see him, but not here and now.
I perceive him, but far in the distant future.
A star will rise from Jacob; a scepter will emerge from Israel.
It will crush the heads of Moab's people, cracking the skulls* of the
people of Sheth.

18Edom will be taken over, and Seir, its enemy, will be conquered,
while Israel marches on in triumph.

19A ruler will rise in Jacob who will destroy the survivors of Ir."

20Then Balaam looked over toward the people of Amalek and
delivered this message: "Amalek was the greatest of nations, but its
destiny is destruction!"

21Then he looked over toward the Kenites and delivered this
message: "Your home is secure; your nest is set in the rocks.

22But the Kenites will be destroyed when Assyria* takes you
captive."

23Balaam concluded his messages by saying: "Alas, who can survive
unless God has willed it?

24Ships will come from the coasts of Cyprus*; they will oppress
Assyria and afflict Eber, but they, too, will be utterly destroyed."

25Then Balaam left and returned home, and Balak also went on his way.

Numbers 25

MOAB SEDUCES ISRAEL

1While the Israelites were camped at Acacia Grove,* some of the men defiled themselves by having* sexual relations with local Moabite women. 2These women invited them to attend sacrifices to their gods, so the Israelites feasted with them and worshiped the gods of Moab. 3In this way, Israel joined in the worship of Baal of Peor, causing the LORD's anger to blaze against his people.

4The LORD issued the following command to Moses: "Seize all the ringleaders and execute them before the LORD in broad daylight, so his fierce anger will turn away from the people of Israel."

5So Moses ordered Israel's judges, "Each of you must put to death the men under your authority who have joined in worshiping Baal of Peor."

6Just then one of the Israelite men brought a Midianite woman into his tent, right before the eyes of Moses and all the people, as everyone was weeping at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*7When Phinehas son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest saw this, he jumped up and left the assembly. He took a spear 8and rushed after the man into his tent. Phinehas thrust the spear all the way through the man's body and into the woman's stomach. So the plague against the Israelites was stopped, 9but not before 24,000 people had died.

10Then the LORD said to Moses, 11"Phinehas son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest has turned my anger away from the Israelites by being as zealous among them as I was. So I stopped

destroying all Israel as I had intended to do in my zealous anger.
12Now tell him that I am making my special covenant of peace with
him. 13In this covenant, I give him and his descendants a permanent
right to the priesthood, for in his zeal for me, his God, he purified
the people of Israel, making them right with me.*"

14The Israelite man killed with the Midianite woman was named
Zimri son of Salu, the leader of a family from the tribe of Simeon.
15The woman's name was Cozbi; she was the daughter of Zur, the
leader of a Midianite clan.

16Then the LORD said to Moses, 17"Attack the Midianites and
destroy them, 18because they assaulted you with deceit and tricked
you into worshiping Baal of Peor, and because of Cozbi, the
daughter of a Midianite leader, who was killed at the time of the
plague because of what happened at Peor."

Numbers 26

THE SECOND REGISTRATION OF ISRAEL'S TROOPS

1After the plague had ended,* the LORD said to Moses and to
Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, 2"From the whole community of
Israel, record the names of all the warriors by their families. List all
the men twenty years old or older who are able to go to war."

3So there on the plains of Moab beside the Jordan River, across
from Jericho, Moses and Eleazar the priest issued these instructions
to the leaders of Israel: 4"List all the men of Israel twenty years old
and older, just as the LORD commanded Moses."

This is the record of all the descendants of Israel who came out of
Egypt.

THE TRIBE OF REUBEN

5These were the clans descended from the sons of Reuben, Jacob's* oldest son: The Hanochite clan, named after their ancestor Hanoch.

The Palluite clan, named after their ancestor Pallu.

6The Hezronite clan, named after their ancestor Hezron.
The Carmite clan, named after their ancestor Carmi.

7These were the clans of Reuben. Their registered troops numbered 43,730.

8Pallu was the ancestor of Eliab, 9and Eliab was the father of Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. This Dathan and Abiram are the same community leaders who conspired with Korah against Moses and Aaron, rebelling against the LORD. 10But the earth opened up its mouth and swallowed them with Korah, and fire devoured 250 of their followers. This served as a warning to the entire nation of Israel. 11However, the sons of Korah did not die that day.

THE TRIBE OF SIMEON

12These were the clans descended from the sons of Simeon: The Jemuelite clan, named after their ancestor Jemuel.*

The Jaminite clan, named after their ancestor Jamin.
The Jakinite clan, named after their ancestor Jakin.

13The Zoharite clan, named after their ancestor Zohar.*
The Shaulite clan, named after their ancestor Shaul.

14These were the clans of Simeon. Their registered troops numbered 22,200.

THE TRIBE OF GAD

15These were the clans descended from the sons of Gad: The Zephonite clan, named after their ancestor Zephon.

The Haggite clan, named after their ancestor Haggi.
The Shunite clan, named after their ancestor Shuni.

16The Oznite clan, named after their ancestor Ozni.
The Erite clan, named after their ancestor Eri.

17The Arodite clan, named after their ancestor Arodi.*
The Arelite clan, named after their ancestor Areli.

18These were the clans of Gad. Their registered troops numbered 40,500.

THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

19Judah had two sons, Er and Onan, who had died in the land of Canaan. 20These were the clans descended from Judah's surviving sons: The Shelanite clan, named after their ancestor Shelah.

The Perezite clan, named after their ancestor Perez.
The Zerahite clan, named after their ancestor Zerah.

21These were the subclans descended from the Perezites: The Hezronites, named after their ancestor Hezron.

The Hamulites, named after their ancestor Hamul.

22These were the clans of Judah. Their registered troops numbered 76,500.

THE TRIBE OF ISSACHAR

23These were the clans descended from the sons of Issachar: The Tolaite clan, named after their ancestor Tola.

The Puite clan, named after their ancestor Puah.*

24The Jashubite clan, named after their ancestor Jashub.
The Shimronite clan, named after their ancestor Shimron.

25These were the clans of Issachar. Their registered troops numbered 64,300.

THE TRIBE OF ZEBULUN

26These were the clans descended from the sons of Zebulun: The Seredite clan, named after their ancestor Sered.

The Elonite clan, named after their ancestor Elon.
The Jahleelite clan, named after their ancestor Jahleel.

27These were the clans of Zebulun. Their registered troops numbered 60,500.

THE TRIBE OF MANASSEH

28Two clans were descended from Joseph through Manasseh and Ephraim.

29These were the clans descended from Manasseh: The Makirite clan, named after their ancestor Makir.

The Gileadite clan, named after their ancestor Gilead, Makir's son.

30These were the subclans descended from the Gileadites: The Iezerites, named after their ancestor Iezer.

The Helekites, named after their ancestor Helek.

31The Asrielites, named after their ancestor Asriel.
The Shechemites, named after their ancestor Shechem.

32The Shemidaites, named after their ancestor Shemida.
The Hepherites, named after their ancestor Hepher.

33(One of Hepher's descendants, Zelophehad, had no sons, but his daughters' names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.)

34These were the clans of Manasseh. Their registered troops numbered 52,700.

THE TRIBE OF EPHRAIM

35These were the clans descended from the sons of Ephraim: The Shuthelahite clan, named after their ancestor Shuthelah.

The Bekerite clan, named after their ancestor Beker.
The Tahanite clan, named after their ancestor Tahan.

36This was the subclan descended from the Shuthelahites: The Eranites, named after their ancestor Eran.

37These were the clans of Ephraim. Their registered troops numbered 32,500.

These clans of Manasseh and Ephraim were all descendants of Joseph.

THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN

38These were the clans descended from the sons of Benjamin: The Belaite clan, named after their ancestor Bela.

The Ashbelite clan, named after their ancestor Ashbel.
The Ahiramite clan, named after their ancestor Ahiram.

39The Shuphamite clan, named after their ancestor Shupham.*
The Huphamite clan, named after their ancestor Hupham.

40These were the subclans descended from the Belaites: The Ardites, named after their ancestor Ard.*

The Naamites, named after their ancestor Naaman.

41These were the clans of Benjamin. Their registered troops numbered 45,600.

THE TRIBE OF DAN

42These were the clans descended from the sons of Dan: The Shuhamite clan, named after their ancestor Shuham.

43These were the Shuhamite clans of Dan. Their registered troops numbered 64,400.

THE TRIBE OF ASHER

44These were the clans descended from the sons of Asher: The Imnite clan, named after their ancestor Imnah.

The Ishvite clan, named after their ancestor Ishvi.
The Beriite clan, named after their ancestor Beriah.

45These were the subclans descended from the Beriites: The Heberites, named after their ancestor Heber.

The Malkielites, named after their ancestor Malkiel.

46Asher also had a daughter named Serah.

47These were the clans of Asher. Their registered troops numbered 53,400.

THE TRIBE OF NAPHTALI

48These were the clans descended from the sons of Naphtali: The Jahzeelite clan, named after their ancestor Jahzeel.

The Gunite clan, named after their ancestor Guni.

49The Jezerite clan, named after their ancestor Jezer.
The Shillemite clan, named after their ancestor Shillem.

50These were the clans of Naphtali. Their registered troops numbered 45,400.

RESULTS OF THE REGISTRATION

51In summary, the registered troops of all Israel numbered 601,730.

52Then the LORD said to Moses, 53“Divide the land among the tribes, and distribute the grants of land in proportion to the tribes’ populations, as indicated by the number of names on the list. 54Give the larger tribes more land and the smaller tribes less land, each group receiving a grant in proportion to the size of its population. 55But you must assign the land by lot, and give land to each ancestral tribe according to the number of names on the list. 56Each grant of land must be assigned by lot among the larger and smaller tribal groups.”

THE TRIBE OF LEVI

57This is the record of the Levites who were counted according to their clans: The Gershonite clan, named after their ancestor Gershon.

The Kohathite clan, named after their ancestor Kohath.
The Merarite clan, named after their ancestor Merari.

58The Libnites, the Hebronites, the Mahlites, the Mushites, and the Korahites were all subclans of the Levites.

Now Kohath was the ancestor of Amram, 59and Amram’s wife was named Jochebed. She also was a descendant of Levi, born among the Levites in the land of Egypt. Amram and Jochebed became the parents of Aaron, Moses, and their sister, Miriam. 60To Aaron were born Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 61But Nadab and Abihu died when they burned before the LORD the wrong kind of fire, different than he had commanded.

62The men from the Levite clans who were one month old or older numbered 23,000. But the Levites were not included in the registration of the rest of the people of Israel because they were not given an allotment of land when it was divided among the Israelites.

63So these are the results of the registration of the people of Israel
as conducted by Moses and Eleazar the priest on the plains of Moab
beside the Jordan River, across from Jericho. 64Not one person on
this list had been among those listed in the previous registration
taken by Moses and Aaron in the wilderness of Sinai. 65For the
LORD had said of them, “They will all die in the wilderness.” Not
one of them survived except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua
son of Nun.

Numbers 27

THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

1One day a petition was presented by the daughters of Zelophehad
—Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Their father,
Zelophehad, was a descendant of Hepher son of Gilead, son of
Makir, son of Manasseh, son of Joseph. 2These women stood before
Moses, Eleazar the priest, the tribal leaders, and the entire
community at the entrance of the Tabernacle.*3“Our father died in
the wilderness,” they said. “He was not among Korah’s followers,
who rebelled against the LORD; he died because of his own sin. But
he had no sons. 4Why should the name of our father disappear from
his clan just because he had no sons? Give us property along with
the rest of our relatives.”

5So Moses brought their case before the LORD. 6And the LORD
replied to Moses, 7"The claim of the daughters of Zelophehad is
legitimate. You must give them a grant of land along with their
father's relatives. Assign them the property that would have been
given to their father.

8"And give the following instructions to the people of Israel: If a
man dies and has no son, then give his inheritance to his daughters.
9And if he has no daughter either, transfer his inheritance to his
brothers. 10If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's
brothers. 11But if his father has no brothers, give his inheritance to
the nearest relative in his clan. This is a legal requirement for the
people of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses."

JOSHUA CHOSEN TO LEAD ISRAEL

12One day the LORD said to Moses, "Climb one of the mountains
east of the river,* and look out over the land I have given the people
of Israel. 13After you have seen it, you will die like your brother,
Aaron, 14for you both rebelled against my instructions in the
wilderness of Zin. When the people of Israel rebelled, you failed to
demonstrate my holiness to them at the waters." (These are the
waters of Meribah at Kadesh* in the wilderness of Zin.)

15Then Moses said to the LORD, 16"O LORD, you are the God who
gives breath to all creatures. Please appoint a new man as leader for
the community. 17Give them someone who will guide them
wherever they go and will lead them into battle, so the community
of the LORD will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

18The LORD replied, "Take Joshua son of Nun, who has the Spirit in
him, and lay your hands on him. 19Present him to Eleazar the priest
before the whole community, and publicly commission him to lead
the people. 20Transfer some of your authority to him so the whole
community of Israel will obey him. 21When direction from the
LORD is needed, Joshua will stand before Eleazar the priest, who

will use the Urim—one of the sacred lots cast before the LORD—to determine his will. This is how Joshua and the rest of the community of Israel will determine everything they should do."

22So Moses did as the LORD commanded. He presented Joshua to Eleazar the priest and the whole community. 23Moses laid his hands on him and commissioned him to lead the people, just as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

Numbers 28

THE DAILY OFFERINGS

1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Give these instructions to the people of Israel: The offerings you present as special gifts are a pleasing aroma to me; they are my food. See to it that they are brought at the appointed times and offered according to my instructions.

3"Say to the people: This is the special gift you must present to the LORD as your daily burnt offering. You must offer two one-year-old male lambs with no defects. 4Sacrifice one lamb in the morning and the other in the evening. 5With each lamb you must offer a grain offering of two quarts* of choice flour mixed with one quart* of pure oil of pressed olives. 6This is the regular burnt offering instituted at Mount Sinai as a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 7Along with it you must present the proper liquid offering of one quart of alcoholic drink with each lamb, poured out in the Holy Place as an offering to the LORD. 8Offer the second lamb in the evening with the same grain offering and liquid offering. It, too, is a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

THE SABBATH OFFERINGS

9“On the Sabbath day, sacrifice two one-year-old male lambs with
no defects. They must be accompanied by a grain offering of four
quarts* of choice flour moistened with olive oil, and a liquid
offering. 10This is the burnt offering to be presented each Sabbath
day, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its accompanying
liquid offering.

THE MONTHLY OFFERINGS

11“On the first day of each month, present an extra burnt offering to
the LORD of two young bulls, one ram, and seven one-year-old male
lambs, all with no defects. 12These must be accompanied by grain
offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil—six quarts* with
each bull, four quarts with the ram, 13and two quarts with each
lamb. This burnt offering will be a special gift, a pleasing aroma to
the LORD. 14You must also present a liquid offering with each
sacrifice: two quarts* of wine for each bull, a third of a gallon* for
the ram, and one quart* for each lamb. Present this monthly burnt
offering on the first day of each month throughout the year.

15“On the first day of each month, you must also offer one male
goat for a sin offering to the LORD. This is in addition to the regular
burnt offering and its accompanying liquid offering.

OFFERINGS FOR THE PASSOVER

16“On the fourteenth day of the first month,* you must celebrate the
LORD’s Passover. 17On the following day—the fifteenth day of the
month—a joyous, seven-day festival will begin, but no bread made
with yeast may be eaten. 18The first day of the festival will be an
official day for holy assembly, and no ordinary work may be done
on that day. 19As a special gift you must present a burnt offering to
the LORD—two young bulls, one ram, and seven one-year-old male
lambs, all with no defects. 20These will be accompanied by grain

offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil—six quarts with each bull, four quarts with the ram, 21and two quarts with each of the seven lambs. 22You must also offer a male goat as a sin offering to purify yourselves and make yourselves right with the LORD.*23Present these offerings in addition to your regular morning burnt offering. 24On each of the seven days of the festival, this is how you must prepare the food offering that is presented as a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. These will be offered in addition to the regular burnt offerings and liquid offerings. 25The seventh day of the festival will be another official day for holy assembly, and no ordinary work may be done on that day.

OFFERINGS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF HARVEST

26"At the Festival of Harvest,* when you present the first of your new grain to the LORD, you must call an official day for holy assembly, and you may do no ordinary work on that day. 27Present a special burnt offering on that day as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It will consist of two young bulls, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs. 28These will be accompanied by grain offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil—six quarts with each bull, four quarts with the ram, 29and two quarts with each of the seven lambs. 30Also, offer one male goat to purify yourselves and make yourselves right with the LORD. 31Prepare these special burnt offerings, along with their liquid offerings, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its accompanying grain offering. Be sure that all the animals you sacrifice have no defects.

Numbers 29

OFFERINGS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF TRUMPETS

1"Celebrate the Festival of Trumpets each year on the first day of the appointed month in early autumn.* You must call an official day for holy assembly, and you may do no ordinary work. 2On that day you must present a burnt offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It will consist of one young bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old

male lambs, all with no defects. 3These must be accompanied by grain offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil—six quarts* with the bull, four quarts* with the ram, 4and two quarts* with each of the seven lambs. 5In addition, you must sacrifice a male goat as a sin offering to purify yourselves and make yourselves right with the LORD.*6These special sacrifices are in addition to your regular monthly and daily burnt offerings, and they must be given with their prescribed grain offerings and liquid offerings. These offerings are given as a special gift to the LORD, a pleasing aroma to him.

OFFERINGS FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

7"Ten days later, on the tenth day of the same month,* you must call another holy assembly. On that day, the Day of Atonement, the people must go without food and must do no ordinary work. 8You must present a burnt offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It will consist of one young bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs, all with no defects. 9These offerings must be accompanied by the prescribed grain offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil—six quarts of choice flour with the bull, four quarts of choice flour with the ram, 10and two quarts of choice flour with each of the seven lambs. 11You must also sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering. This is in addition to the sin offering of atonement and the regular daily burnt offering with its grain offering, and their accompanying liquid offerings.

OFFERINGS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS

12"Five days later, on the fifteenth day of the same month,* you must call another holy assembly of all the people, and you may do no ordinary work on that day. It is the beginning of the Festival of Shelters,* a seven-day festival to the LORD. 13On the first day of the festival, you must present a burnt offering as a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It will consist of thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all with no defects. 14Each of these offerings must be accompanied by a grain offering of choice flour moistened with olive oil—six quarts for each

of the thirteen bulls, four quarts for each of the two rams, 15and two quarts for each of the fourteen lambs. 16You must also sacrifice a male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering and liquid offering.

17“On the second day of this seven-day festival, sacrifice twelve young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all with no defects. 18Each of these offerings of bulls, rams, and lambs must be accompanied by its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering. 19You must also sacrifice a male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering and liquid offering.

20“On the third day of the festival, sacrifice eleven young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all with no defects. 21Each of these offerings of bulls, rams, and lambs must be accompanied by its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering. 22You must also sacrifice a male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering and liquid offering.

23“On the fourth day of the festival, sacrifice ten young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all with no defects. 24Each of these offerings of bulls, rams, and lambs must be accompanied by its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering. 25You must also sacrifice a male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering and liquid offering.

26“On the fifth day of the festival, sacrifice nine young bulls, two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all with no defects. 27Each of these offerings of bulls, rams, and lambs must be accompanied by its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering. 28You must also sacrifice a male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering and liquid offering.

29“On the sixth day of the festival, sacrifice eight young bulls, two
rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all with no defects.
30Each of these offerings of bulls, rams, and lambs must be
accompanied by its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering.
31You must also sacrifice a male goat as a sin offering, in addition to
the regular burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering and
liquid offering.

32“On the seventh day of the festival, sacrifice seven young bulls,
two rams, and fourteen one-year-old male lambs, all with no
defects. 33Each of these offerings of bulls, rams, and lambs must be
accompanied by its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering.
34You must also sacrifice one male goat as a sin offering, in addition
to the regular burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering
and liquid offering.

35“On the eighth day of the festival, proclaim another holy day. You
must do no ordinary work on that day. 36You must present a burnt
offering as a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It will
consist of one young bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old male
lambs, all with no defects. 37Each of these offerings must be
accompanied by its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering.
38You must also sacrifice one male goat as a sin offering, in addition
to the regular burnt offering with its accompanying grain offering
and liquid offering.

39“You must present these offerings to the LORD at your annual
festivals. These are in addition to the sacrifices and offerings you
present in connection with vows, or as voluntary offerings, burnt
offerings, grain offerings, liquid offerings, or peace offerings.”

40*So Moses gave all of these instructions to the people of Israel as
the LORD had commanded him.

Numbers 30

LAWS CONCERNING VOWS

1*Then Moses summoned the leaders of the tribes of Israel and told
them, “This is what the LORD has commanded: 2A man who makes
a vow to the LORD or makes a pledge under oath must never break
it. He must do exactly what he said he would do.

3“If a young woman makes a vow to the LORD or a pledge under
oath while she is still living at her father’s home, 4and her father
hears of the vow or pledge and does not object to it, then all her
vows and pledges will stand. 5But if her father refuses to let her
fulfill the vow or pledge on the day he hears of it, then all her vows
and pledges will become invalid. The LORD will forgive her because
her father would not let her fulfill them.

6“Now suppose a young woman makes a vow or binds herself with
an impulsive pledge and later marries. 7If her husband learns of her
vow or pledge and does not object on the day he hears of it, her
vows and pledges will stand. 8But if her husband refuses to accept
her vow or impulsive pledge on the day he hears of it, he nullifies
her commitments, and the LORD will forgive her. 9If, however, a
woman is a widow or is divorced, she must fulfill all her vows and
pledges.

10“But suppose a woman is married and living in her husband’s
home when she makes a vow or binds herself with a pledge. 11If her
husband hears of it and does not object to it, her vow or pledge will
stand. 12But if her husband refuses to accept it on the day he hears
of it, her vow or pledge will be nullified, and the LORD will forgive
her. 13So her husband may either confirm or nullify any vows or
pledges she makes to deny herself. 14But if he does not object on the
day he hears of it, then he is agreeing to all her vows and pledges.
15If he waits more than a day and then tries to nullify a vow or
pledge, he will be punished for her guilt.”

16These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning
relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and

a young daughter who still lives at home.

Numbers 31

CONQUEST OF THE MIDIANITES

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2"On behalf of the people of Israel,
take revenge on the Midianites for leading them into idolatry. After
that, you will die and join your ancestors."

3So Moses said to the people, "Choose some men, and arm them to
fight the LORD's war of revenge against Midian. 4From each tribe of
Israel, send 1,000 men into battle." 5So they chose 1,000 men from
each tribe of Israel, a total of 12,000 men armed for battle. 6Then
Moses sent them out, 1,000 men from each tribe, and Phinehas son
of Eleazar the priest led them into battle. They carried along the
holy objects of the sanctuary and the trumpets for sounding the
charge. 7They attacked Midian as the LORD had commanded Moses,
and they killed all the men. 8All five of the Midianite kings—Evi,
Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—died in the battle. They also killed
Balaam son of Beor with the sword.

9Then the Israelite army captured the Midianite women and children and seized their cattle and flocks and all their wealth as plunder. 10They burned all the towns and villages where the Midianites had lived. 11After they had gathered the plunder and captives, both people and animals, 12they brought them all to Moses and Eleazar the priest, and to the whole community of Israel, which was camped on the plains of Moab beside the Jordan River, across from Jericho. 13Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the community went to meet them outside the camp. 14But Moses was furious with all the generals and captains* who had returned from the battle.

15"Why have you let all the women live?" he demanded. 16"These are the very ones who followed Balaam's advice and caused the people of Israel to rebel against the LORD at Mount Peor. They are the ones who caused the plague to strike the LORD's people. 17So kill all the boys and all the women who have had intercourse with a man. 18Only the young girls who are virgins may live; you may keep them for yourselves. 19And all of you who have killed anyone or touched a dead body must stay outside the camp for seven days. You must purify yourselves and your captives on the third and seventh days. 20Purify all your clothing, too, and everything made of leather, goat hair, or wood."

21Then Eleazar the priest said to the men who were in the battle, "The LORD has given Moses this legal requirement: 22Anything made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, or lead—23that is, all metals that do not burn—must be passed through fire in order to be made ceremonially pure. These metal objects must then be further purified with the water of purification. But everything that burns must be purified by the water alone. 24On the seventh day you must wash your clothes and be purified. Then you may return to the camp."

DIVISION OF THE PLUNDER

25And the LORD said to Moses, 26"You and Eleazar the priest and the family leaders of each tribe are to make a list of all the plunder

taken in the battle, including the people and animals. 27Then divide the plunder into two parts, and give half to the men who fought the battle and half to the rest of the people. 28From the army's portion, first give the LORD his share of the plunder—one of every 500 of the prisoners and of the cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats. 29Give this share of the army's half to Eleazar the priest as an offering to the LORD. 30From the half that belongs to the people of Israel, take one of every fifty of the prisoners and of the cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and other animals. Give this share to the Levites, who are in charge of maintaining the LORD's Tabernacle." 31So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32The plunder remaining from everything the fighting men had taken totaled 675,000 sheep and goats, 3372,000 cattle, 3461,000 donkeys, 35and 32,000 virgin girls.

36Half of the plunder was given to the fighting men. It totaled 337,500 sheep and goats, 37of which 675 were the LORD's share; 3836,000 cattle, of which 72 were the LORD's share; 3930,500 donkeys, of which 61 were the LORD's share; 40and 16,000 virgin girls, of whom 32 were the LORD's share. 41Moses gave all the LORD's share to Eleazar the priest, just as the LORD had directed him.

42Half of the plunder belonged to the people of Israel, and Moses separated it from the half belonging to the fighting men. 43It totaled 337,500 sheep and goats, 4436,000 cattle, 4530,500 donkeys, 46and 16,000 virgin girls. 47From the half-share given to the people, Moses took one of every fifty prisoners and animals and gave them to the Levites, who maintained the LORD's Tabernacle. All this was done as the LORD had commanded Moses.

48Then all the generals and captains came to Moses 49and said, "We, your servants, have accounted for all the men who went out to battle under our command; not one of us is missing! 50So we are presenting the items of gold we captured as an offering to the LORD from our share of the plunder—armbands, bracelets, rings, earrings,

and necklaces. This will purify our lives before the LORD and make us right with him.*”

51So Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from all the military commanders—all kinds of jewelry and crafted objects. 52In all, the gold that the generals and captains presented as a gift to the LORD weighed about 420 pounds.*53All the fighting men had taken some of the plunder for themselves. 54So Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted the gifts from the generals and captains and brought the gold to the Tabernacle* as a reminder to the LORD that the people of Israel belong to him.

Numbers 32

THE TRIBES EAST OF THE JORDAN

1The tribes of Reuben and Gad owned vast numbers of livestock. So when they saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were ideally suited for their flocks and herds, 2they came to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the other leaders of the community. They said, 3“Notice the towns of Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sibmah,* Nebo, and Beon. 4The LORD has conquered this whole area for the community of Israel, and it is ideally suited for all our livestock. 5If we have found favor with you, please let us have this land as our property instead of giving us land across the Jordan River.”

6“Do you intend to stay here while your brothers go across and do all the fighting?” Moses asked the men of Gad and Reuben. 7“Why do you want to discourage the rest of the people of Israel from going across to the land the LORD has given them? 8Your ancestors did the same thing when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land. 9After they went up to the valley of Eshcol and explored the land, they discouraged the people of Israel from entering the land the LORD was giving them. 10Then the LORD was very angry with them, and he vowed, 11‘Of all those I rescued from Egypt, no one who is twenty years old or older will ever see the land I swore

to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for they have not obeyed me wholeheartedly. 12The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they have wholeheartedly followed the LORD.'

13"The LORD was angry with Israel and made them wander in the wilderness for forty years until the entire generation that sinned in the LORD's sight had died. 14But here you are, a brood of sinners, doing exactly the same thing! You are making the LORD even angrier with Israel. 15If you turn away from him like this and he abandons them again in the wilderness, you will be responsible for destroying this entire nation!"

16But they approached Moses and said, "We simply want to build pens for our livestock and fortified towns for our wives and children. 17Then we will arm ourselves and lead our fellow Israelites into battle until we have brought them safely to their land. Meanwhile, our families will stay in the fortified towns we build here, so they will be safe from any attacks by the local people. 18We will not return to our homes until all the people of Israel have received their portions of land. 19But we do not claim any of the land on the other side of the Jordan. We would rather live here on the east side and accept this as our grant of land."

20Then Moses said, "If you keep your word and arm yourselves for the LORD's battles, 21and if your troops cross the Jordan and keep fighting until the LORD has driven out his enemies, 22then you may return when the LORD has conquered the land. You will have fulfilled your duty to the LORD and to the rest of the people of Israel. And the land on the east side of the Jordan will be your property from the LORD. 23But if you fail to keep your word, then you will have sinned against the LORD, and you may be sure that your sin will find you out. 24Go ahead and build towns for your families and pens for your flocks, but do everything you have promised."

25Then the men of Gad and Reuben replied, "We, your servants, will

follow your instructions exactly. 26Our children, wives, flocks, and
cattle will stay here in the towns of Gilead. 27But all who are able to
bear arms will cross over to fight for the LORD, just as you have
said."

28So Moses gave orders to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun,
and the leaders of the clans of Israel. 29He said, "The men of Gad
and Reuben who are armed for battle must cross the Jordan with
you to fight for the LORD. If they do, give them the land of Gilead
as their property when the land is conquered. 30But if they refuse to
arm themselves and cross over with you, then they must accept
land with the rest of you in the land of Canaan."

31The tribes of Gad and Reuben said again, "We are your servants,
and we will do as the LORD has commanded! 32We will cross the
Jordan into Canaan fully armed to fight for the LORD, but our
property will be here on this side of the Jordan."

33So Moses assigned land to the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and half the
tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph. He gave them the territory of King
Sihon of the Amorites and the land of King Og of Bashan—the
whole land with its cities and surrounding lands.

34The descendants of Gad built the towns of Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer,
35Atroth-shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, 36Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran.
These were all fortified towns with pens for their flocks.

37The descendants of Reuben built the towns of Heshbon, Elealeh,
Kiriathaim, 38Nebo, Baal-meon, and Sibmah. They changed the
names of some of the towns they conquered and rebuilt.

39Then the descendants of Makir of the tribe of Manasseh went to
Gilead and conquered it, and they drove out the Amorites living
there. 40So Moses gave Gilead to the Makirites, descendants of
Manasseh, and they settled there. 41The people of Jair, another clan
of the tribe of Manasseh, captured many of the towns in Gilead and

changed the name of that region to the Towns of Jair.*42Meanwhile,
a man named Nobah captured the town of Kenath and its
surrounding villages, and he renamed that area Nobah after himself.

Numbers 33

REMEMBERING ISRAEL'S JOURNEY

1This is the route the Israelites followed as they marched out of
Egypt under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. 2At the LORD's
direction, Moses kept a written record of their progress. These are
the stages of their march, identified by the different places where
they stopped along the way.

3They set out from the city of Rameses in early spring—on the
fifteenth day of the first month*—on the morning after the first
Passover celebration. The people of Israel left defiantly, in full view
of all the Egyptians. 4Meanwhile, the Egyptians were burying all
their firstborn sons, whom the LORD had killed the night before.
The LORD had defeated the gods of Egypt that night with great acts
of judgment!

5After leaving Rameses, the Israelites set up camp at Succoth.

6Then they left Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the
wilderness.

7They left Etham and turned back toward Pi-hahiroth, opposite
Baal-zephon, and camped near Migdol.

8They left Pi-hahiroth* and crossed the Red Sea* into the wilderness
beyond. Then they traveled for three days into the Etham
wilderness and camped at Marah.

9They left Marah and camped at Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees.

10They left Elim and camped beside the Red Sea.*

WILDERNESS OF SIN

11They left the Red Sea and camped in the wilderness of Sin.*

12They left the wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah.

13They left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

14They left Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

15They left Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai.

16They left the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-hattaavah.

17They left Kibroth-hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

18They left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

19They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-perez.

20They left Rimmon-perez and camped at Libnah.

21They left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

22They left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

23They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

24They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

25They left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

26They left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

27They left Tahath and camped at Terah.

28They left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

29They left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

30They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

31They left Moseroth and camped at Bene-jaakan.

32They left Bene-jaakan and camped at Hor-haggidgad.

33They left Hor-haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

34They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

35They left Abronah and camped at Ezion-geber.

36They left Ezion-geber and camped at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

37They left Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, at the border of Edom. 38While they were at the foot of Mount Hor, Aaron the priest was directed by the LORD to go up the mountain, and there he died. This happened in midsummer, on the first day of the fifth month* of the fortieth year after Israel's departure from Egypt. 39Aaron was 123 years old when he died there on Mount Hor.

40At that time the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev in the land of Canaan, heard that the people of Israel were approaching his land.

41Meanwhile, the Israelites left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

42Then they left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

43They left Punon and camped at Oboth.

44They left Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim on the border of Moab.

45They left Iye-abarim* and camped at Dibon-gad.

46They left Dibon-gad and camped at Almon-diblathaim.

47They left Almon-diblathaim and camped in the mountains east of the river,* near Mount Nebo.

48They left the mountains east of the river and camped on the plains
of Moab beside the Jordan River, across from Jericho. 49Along the
Jordan River they camped from Beth-jeshimoth as far as the
meadows of Acacia* on the plains of Moab.

50While they were camped near the Jordan River on the plains of
Moab opposite Jericho, the LORD said to Moses, 51"Give the
following instructions to the people of Israel: When you cross the
Jordan River into the land of Canaan, 52you must drive out all the
people living there. You must destroy all their carved and molten
images and demolish all their pagan shrines. 53Take possession of
the land and settle in it, because I have given it to you to occupy.
54You must distribute the land among the clans by sacred lot and in
proportion to their size. A larger portion of land will be allotted to
each of the larger clans, and a smaller portion will be allotted to
each of the smaller clans. The decision of the sacred lot is final. In
this way, the portions of land will be divided among your ancestral
tribes. 55But if you fail to drive out the people who live in the land,
those who remain will be like splinters in your eyes and thorns in
your sides. They will harass you in the land where you live. 56And I
will do to you what I had planned to do to them."

Numbers 34

BOUNDARIES OF THE LAND

1Then the LORD said to Moses, 2"Give these instructions to the
Israelites: When you come into the land of Canaan, which I am
giving you as your special possession, these will be the boundaries.
3The southern portion of your country will extend from the
wilderness of Zin, along the edge of Edom. The southern boundary
will begin on the east at the Dead Sea.*4It will then run south past
Scorpion Pass* in the direction of Zin. Its southernmost point will be
Kadesh-barnea, from which it will go to Hazar-addar, and on to
Azmon. 5From Azmon the boundary will turn toward the Brook of
Egypt and end at the Mediterranean Sea.*

6“Your western boundary will be the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

7“Your northern boundary will begin at the Mediterranean Sea and run east to Mount Hor, 8then to Lebo-hamath, and on through Zedad 9and Ziphron to Hazar-enan. This will be your northern boundary.

10“The eastern boundary will start at Hazar-enan and run south to Shepham, 11then down to Riblah on the east side of Ain. From there the boundary will run down along the eastern edge of the Sea of Galilee,* 12and then along the Jordan River to the Dead Sea. These are the boundaries of your land.”

13Then Moses told the Israelites, “This territory is the homeland you are to divide among yourselves by sacred lot. The LORD has commanded that the land be divided among the nine and a half remaining tribes. 14The families of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have already received their grants of land 15on the east side of the Jordan River, across from Jericho toward the sunrise.”

LEADERS TO DIVIDE THE LAND

16And the LORD said to Moses, 17“Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun are the men designated to divide the grants of land among the people. 18Enlist one leader from each tribe to help them with the task. 19These are the tribes and the names of the leaders:

	Leader
Judah	Caleb son of Jephunneh
Simeon	Shemuel son of Ammihud
Benjamin	Elidad son of Kislon
Dan	Bukki son of Jogli
Manasseh (descendant of Joseph)	Hanniel son of Ephod
Ephraim (descendant of Joseph)	Kemuel son of Shiphtan
Zebulun	Elizaphan son of Parnach

Pedaheel son of Azzan
Ahihud son of Shelomi
Pedaheel son of Ammihud

29These are the men the LORD has appointed to divide the grants of land in Canaan among the Israelites."

Numbers 35

TOWNS FOR THE LEVITES

1While Israel was camped beside the Jordan on the plains of Moab across from Jericho, the LORD said to Moses, 2"Command the people of Israel to give to the Levites from their property certain towns to live in, along with the surrounding pasturelands. 3These towns will be for the Levites to live in, and the surrounding lands will provide pasture for their cattle, flocks, and other livestock. 4The pastureland assigned to the Levites around these towns will extend 1,500 feet* from the town walls in every direction. 5Measure off 3,000 feet* outside the town walls in every direction—east, south, west, north—with the town at the center. This area will serve as the larger pastureland for the towns.

6"Six of the towns you give the Levites will be cities of refuge, where a person who has accidentally killed someone can flee for safety. In addition, give them forty-two other towns. 7In all, forty-eight towns with the surrounding pastureland will be given to the Levites. 8These towns will come from the property of the people of Israel. The larger tribes will give more towns to the Levites, while the smaller tribes will give fewer. Each tribe will give property in proportion to the size of its land."

CITIES OF REFUGE

9The LORD said to Moses, 10"Give the following instructions to the people of Israel.

“When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11designate
cities of refuge to which people can flee if they have killed someone
accidentally. 12These cities will be places of protection from a dead
person’s relatives who want to avenge the death. The slayer must
not be put to death before being tried by the community.
13Designate six cities of refuge for yourselves, 14three on the east
side of the Jordan River and three on the west in the land of
Canaan. 15These cities are for the protection of Israelites, foreigners
living among you, and traveling merchants. Anyone who
accidentally kills someone may flee there for safety.

16“But if someone strikes and kills another person with a piece of
iron, it is murder, and the murderer must be executed. 17Or if
someone with a stone in his hand strikes and kills another person, it
is murder, and the murderer must be put to death. 18Or if someone
strikes and kills another person with a wooden object, it is murder,
and the murderer must be put to death. 19The victim’s nearest
relative is responsible for putting the murderer to death. When they
meet, the avenger must put the murderer to death. 20So if someone
hates another person and waits in ambush, then pushes him or
throws something at him and he dies, it is murder. 21Or if someone
hates another person and hits him with a fist and he dies, it is
murder. In such cases, the avenger must put the murderer to death
when they meet.

22“But suppose someone pushes another person without having
shown previous hostility, or throws something that unintentionally
hits another person, 23or accidentally drops a huge stone on
someone, though they were not enemies, and the person dies. 24If
this should happen, the community must follow these regulations in
making a judgment between the slayer and the avenger, the victim’s
nearest relative: 25The community must protect the slayer from the
avenger and must escort the slayer back to live in the city of refuge
to which he fled. There he must remain until the death of the high
priest, who was anointed with the sacred oil.

26“But if the slayer ever leaves the limits of the city of refuge, 27and
the avenger finds him outside the city and kills him, it will not be

considered murder. 28The slayer should have stayed inside the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest, the slayer may return to his own property. 29These are legal requirements for you to observe from generation to generation, wherever you may live.

30"All murderers must be put to death, but only if evidence is presented by more than one witness. No one may be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. 31Also, you must never accept a ransom payment for the life of someone judged guilty of murder and subject to execution; murderers must always be put to death. 32And never accept a ransom payment from someone who has fled to a city of refuge, allowing a slayer to return to his property before the death of the high priest. 33This will ensure that the land where you live will not be polluted, for murder pollutes the land. And no sacrifice except the execution of the murderer can purify the land from murder.*34You must not defile the land where you live, for I live there myself. I am the LORD, who lives among the people of Israel."

Numbers 36

WOMEN WHO INHERIT PROPERTY

1Then the heads of the clans of Gilead—descendants of Makir, son of Manasseh, son of Joseph—came to Moses and the family leaders of Israel with a petition. 2They said, "Sir, the LORD instructed you to divide the land by sacred lot among the people of Israel. You were told by the LORD to give the grant of land owned by our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. 3But if they marry men from another tribe, their grants of land will go with them to the tribe into which they marry. In this way, the total area of our tribal land will be reduced. 4Then when the Year of Jubilee comes, their portion of land will be added to that of the new tribe, causing it to be lost forever to our ancestral tribe."

5So Moses gave the Israelites this command from the LORD: "The

claim of the men of the tribe of Joseph is legitimate. 6This is what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad: Let them marry anyone they like, as long as it is within their own ancestral tribe. 7None of the territorial land may pass from tribe to tribe, for all the land given to each tribe must remain within the tribe to which it was first allotted. 8The daughters throughout the tribes of Israel who are in line to inherit property must marry within their tribe, so that all the Israelites will keep their ancestral property. 9No grant of land may pass from one tribe to another; each tribe of Israel must keep its allotted portion of land."

10The daughters of Zelophehad did as the LORD commanded Moses. 11Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah all married cousins on their father's side. 12They married into the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. Thus, their inheritance of land remained within their ancestral tribe.

13These are the commands and regulations that the LORD gave to the people of Israel through Moses while they were camped on the plains of Moab beside the Jordan River, across from Jericho.

Deuteronomy

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34

WELCOME TO

DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell address. After forty years of leading God's people in the desert, he has brought them to the edge of the Promised Land. But before they claim their inheritance, Moses wants them to remember God's faithfulness throughout their journey from Egypt. Their parents had a firsthand experience of the plagues in Egypt, the escape from Pharaoh's army, the crossing of the Red Sea, and God's voice at Mount Sinai, but they had all died

in the wilderness. Now a new generation of Hebrews needs to claim the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their own. Moses recounts the stories of God's goodness and love to his people. He reminds them of their covenant promises to God and encourages them to believe that God will guide and protect them as he promised.

But they also need to obey and remain faithful to God. Deuteronomy is summed up in the famous words of the *Shema* (6:4-5): "Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength."

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Deuteronomy reviews many of the events from Exodus and Numbers, so you won't be stopping here. The key thing to know is that Moses dies and Joshua becomes the new leader of Israel. Your next stop is at Joshua 5:13.

2 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: On the direct route you'll find Moses urging the people to remember God's goodness and obey his instructions. Then you'll read the story of Joshua becoming the new leader of God's people. Your next stop is at Deuteronomy 8:1.

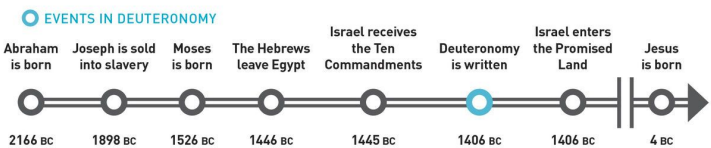
6 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: On this route you will get an in-depth view of what Moses says to the people before he dies. You'll also read some of the regulations God gives to his people as guidelines for their society. Your next stop is at Deuteronomy 4:1.

FINDING JESUS IN DEUTERONOMY

Moses has been Israel's first and greatest leader. Nearing the end of his life and leadership, Moses promises that a prophet will come who will be like him, representing them before God. Fifteen centuries later, Jews were still waiting for the appearance of the Prophet like Moses (John 6:14; 7:40). Their waiting ended with Jesus.

Deuteronomy contains instructions for any future kings of Israel to keep the book of the law in their minds and hearts, obeying all that God has commanded (Deuteronomy 17:19). Jesus is the only King who accomplished this.



Deuteronomy 1

INTRODUCTION TO MOSES' FIRST ADDRESS

1These are the words that Moses spoke to all the people of Israel
while they were in the wilderness east of the Jordan River. They
were camped in the Jordan Valley* near Suph, between Paran on
one side and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-zahab on the other.

2Normally it takes only eleven days to travel from Mount Sinai* to
Kadesh-barnea, going by way of Mount Seir. 3But forty years after
the Israelites left Egypt, on the first day of the eleventh month,*
Moses addressed the people of Israel, telling them everything the
LORD had commanded him to say. 4This took place after he had
defeated King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, and at
Edrei had defeated King Og of Bashan, who ruled in Ashtaroth.

5While the Israelites were in the land of Moab east of the Jordan
River, Moses carefully explained the LORD's instructions as follows.

THE COMMAND TO LEAVE SINAI

6"When we were at Mount Sinai, the LORD our God said to us, 'You
have stayed at this mountain long enough. 7It is time to break camp
and move on. Go to the hill country of the Amorites and to all the
neighboring regions—the Jordan Valley, the hill country, the
western foothills,* the Negev, and the coastal plain. Go to the land
of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, and all the way to the great
Euphrates River. 8Look, I am giving all this land to you! Go in and
occupy it, for it is the land the LORD swore to give to your
ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to all their descendants.'"

MOSES APPOINTS LEADERS FROM EACH TRIBE

9Moses continued, "At that time I told you, 'You are too great a
burden for me to carry all by myself. 10The LORD your God has
increased your population, making you as numerous as the stars!

11And may the LORD, the God of your ancestors, multiply you a
thousand times more and bless you as he promised! 12But you are
such a heavy load to carry! How can I deal with all your problems
and bickering? 13Choose some well-respected men from each tribe
who are known for their wisdom and understanding, and I will
appoint them as your leaders.'

14"Then you responded, 'Your plan is a good one.' 15So I took the
wise and respected men you had selected from your tribes and
appointed them to serve as judges and officials over you. Some
were responsible for a thousand people, some for a hundred, some
for fifty, and some for ten.

16"At that time I instructed the judges, 'You must hear the cases of
your fellow Israelites and the foreigners living among you. Be
perfectly fair in your decisions 17and impartial in your judgments.
Hear the cases of those who are poor as well as those who are rich.
Don't be afraid of anyone's anger, for the decision you make is
God's decision. Bring me any cases that are too difficult for you,
and I will handle them.'

18"At that time I gave you instructions about everything you were to
do.

SCOUTS EXPLORE THE LAND

19"Then, just as the LORD our God commanded us, we left Mount
Sinai and traveled through the great and terrifying wilderness, as
you yourselves remember, and headed toward the hill country of
the Amorites. When we arrived at Kadesh-barnea, 20I said to you,
'You have now reached the hill country of the Amorites that the
LORD our God is giving us. 21Look! He has placed the land in front
of you. Go and occupy it as the LORD, the God of your ancestors,
has promised you. Don't be afraid! Don't be discouraged!'

22"But you all came to me and said, 'First, let's send out scouts to
explore the land for us. They will advise us on the best route to take

and which towns we should enter.'

23"This seemed like a good idea to me, so I chose twelve scouts, one
from each of your tribes. 24They headed for the hill country and
came to the valley of Eshcol and explored it. 25They picked some of
its fruit and brought it back to us. And they reported, 'The land the
LORD our God has given us is indeed a good land.'

ISRAEL'S REBELLION AGAINST THE LORD

26"But you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God
and refused to go in. 27You complained in your tents and said, 'The
LORD must hate us. That's why he has brought us here from Egypt
—to hand us over to the Amorites to be slaughtered. 28Where can
we go? Our brothers have demoralized us with their report. They
tell us, "The people of the land are taller and more powerful than
we are, and their towns are large, with walls rising high into the
sky! We even saw giants there—the descendants of Anak!"'

29"But I said to you, 'Don't be shocked or afraid of them! 30The
LORD your God is going ahead of you. He will fight for you, just as
you saw him do in Egypt. 31And you saw how the LORD your God
cared for you all along the way as you traveled through the
wilderness, just as a father cares for his child. Now he has brought
you to this place.'

32"But even after all he did, you refused to trust the LORD your
God, 33who goes before you looking for the best places to camp,
guiding you with a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by
day.

34"When the LORD heard your complaining, he became very angry.
So he solemnly swore, 35'Not one of you from this wicked
generation will live to see the good land I swore to give your
ancestors, 36except Caleb son of Jephunneh. He will see this land
because he has followed the LORD completely. I will give to him
and his descendants some of the very land he explored during his

scouting mission.’

37“And the LORD was also angry with me because of you. He said to
me, ‘Moses, not even you will enter the Promised Land! 38Instead,
your assistant, Joshua son of Nun, will lead the people into the
land. Encourage him, for he will lead Israel as they take possession
of it. 39I will give the land to your little ones—your innocent
children. You were afraid they would be captured, but they will be
the ones who occupy it. 40As for you, turn around now and go on
back through the wilderness toward the Red Sea.*’

41“Then you confessed, ‘We have sinned against the LORD! We will
go into the land and fight for it, as the LORD our God has
commanded us.’ So your men strapped on their weapons, thinking it
would be easy to attack the hill country.

42“But the LORD told me to tell you, ‘Do not attack, for I am not
with you. If you go ahead on your own, you will be crushed by your
enemies.’

43“This is what I told you, but you would not listen. Instead, you
again rebelled against the LORD’s command and arrogantly went
into the hill country to fight. 44But the Amorites who lived there
came out against you like a swarm of bees. They chased and
battered you all the way from Seir to Hormah. 45Then you returned
and wept before the LORD, but he refused to listen. 46So you stayed
there at Kadesh for a long time.

Deuteronomy 2

REMEMBERING ISRAEL’S WANDERINGS

1“Then we turned around and headed back across the wilderness
toward the Red Sea,* just as the LORD had instructed me, and we
wandered around in the region of Mount Seir for a long time.

2“Then at last the LORD said to me, 3‘You have been wandering
around in this hill country long enough; turn to the north. 4Give
these orders to the people: “You will pass through the country
belonging to your relatives the Edomites, the descendants of Esau,
who live in Seir. The Edomites will feel threatened, so be careful.
5Do not bother them, for I have given them all the hill country
around Mount Seir as their property, and I will not give you even
one square foot of their land. 6If you need food to eat or water to
drink, pay them for it. 7For the LORD your God has blessed you in
everything you have done. He has watched your every step through
this great wilderness. During these forty years, the LORD your God
has been with you, and you have lacked nothing.”’

8“So we bypassed the territory of our relatives, the descendants of
Esau, who live in Seir. We avoided the road through the Arabah
Valley that comes up from Elath and Ezion-geber.

“Then as we turned north along the desert route through Moab, 9the
LORD warned us, ‘Do not bother the Moabites, the descendants of
Lot, or start a war with them. I have given them Ar as their
property, and I will not give you any of their land.’”

10(A race of giants called the Emites had once lived in the area of
Ar. They were as strong and numerous and tall as the Anakites,
another race of giants. 11Both the Emites and the Anakites are also
known as the Rephaites, though the Moabites call them Emites. 12In
earlier times the Horites had lived in Seir, but they were driven out
and displaced by the descendants of Esau, just as Israel drove out
the people of Canaan when the LORD gave Israel their land.)

13Moses continued, “Then the LORD said to us, ‘Get moving. Cross
the Zered Brook.’ So we crossed the brook.

14“Thirty-eight years passed from the time we first left Kadesh-
barnea until we finally crossed the Zered Brook! By then, all the
men old enough to fight in battle had died in the wilderness, as the
LORD had vowed would happen. 15The LORD struck them down

until they had all been eliminated from the community.

16“When all the men of fighting age had died, 17the LORD said to
me, 18‘Today you will cross the border of Moab at Ar 19and enter the
land of the Ammonites, the descendants of Lot. But do not bother
them or start a war with them. I have given the land of Ammon to
them as their property, and I will not give you any of their land.’”

20(That area was once considered the land of the Rephaites, who
had lived there, though the Ammonites call them Zamzummites.
21They were also as strong and numerous and tall as the Anakites.
But the LORD destroyed them so the Ammonites could occupy their
land. 22He had done the same for the descendants of Esau who lived
in Seir, for he destroyed the Horites so they could settle there in
their place. The descendants of Esau live there to this day. 23A
similar thing happened when the Caphtorites from Crete* invaded
and destroyed the Avvites, who had lived in villages in the area of
Gaza.)

24Moses continued, “Then the LORD said, ‘Now get moving! Cross
the Arnon Gorge. Look, I will hand over to you Sihon the Amorite,
king of Heshbon, and I will give you his land. Attack him and begin
to occupy the land. 25Beginning today I will make people
throughout the earth terrified because of you. When they hear
reports about you, they will tremble with dread and fear.’”

VICTORY OVER SIHON OF HESHBON

26Moses continued, “From the wilderness of Kedemoth I sent
ambassadors to King Sihon of Heshbon with this proposal of peace:

27‘Let us travel through your land. We will stay on the main road
and won’t turn off into the fields on either side. 28Sell us food to eat
and water to drink, and we will pay for it. All we want is
permission to pass through your land. 29The descendants of Esau
who live in Seir allowed us to go through their country, and so did
the Moabites, who live in Ar. Let us pass through until we cross the

Jordan into the land the LORD our God is giving us.'

30"But King Sihon of Heshbon refused to allow us to pass through, because the LORD your God made Sihon stubborn and defiant so he could help you defeat him, as he has now done.

31"Then the LORD said to me, 'Look, I have begun to hand King Sihon and his land over to you. Begin now to conquer and occupy his land.'

32"Then King Sihon declared war on us and mobilized his forces at Jahaz. 33But the LORD our God handed him over to us, and we crushed him, his sons, and all his people. 34We conquered all his towns and completely destroyed* everyone—men, women, and children. Not a single person was spared. 35We took all the livestock as plunder for ourselves, along with anything of value from the towns we ransacked.

36"The LORD our God also helped us conquer Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Gorge, and the town in the gorge, and the whole area as far as Gilead. No town had walls too strong for us. 37However, we avoided the land of the Ammonites all along the Jabbok River and the towns in the hill country—all the places the LORD our God had commanded us to leave alone.

Deuteronomy 3

VICTORY OVER OG OF BASHAN

1"Next we turned and headed for the land of Bashan, where King Og and his entire army attacked us at Edrei. 2But the LORD told me, 'Do not be afraid of him, for I have given you victory over Og and his entire army, and I will give you all his land. Treat him just as you treated King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon.'

3"So the LORD our God handed King Og and all his people over to

us, and we killed them all. Not a single person survived. 4We conquered all sixty of his towns—the entire Argob region in his kingdom of Bashan. Not a single town escaped our conquest. 5These towns were all fortified with high walls and barred gates. We also took many unwalled villages at the same time. 6We completely destroyed* the kingdom of Bashan, just as we had destroyed King Sihon of Heshbon. We destroyed all the people in every town we conquered—men, women, and children alike. 7But we kept all the livestock for ourselves and took plunder from all the towns.

8"So we took the land of the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River—all the way from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon. 9(Mount Hermon is called Sirion by the Sidonians, and the Amorites call it Senir.) 10We had now conquered all the cities on the plateau and all Gilead and Bashan, as far as the towns of Salecah and Edrei, which were part of Og's kingdom in Bashan. 11(King Og of Bashan was the last survivor of the giant Rephaites. His bed was made of iron and was more than thirteen feet long and six feet wide.* It can still be seen in the Ammonite city of Rabbah.)

LAND DIVISION EAST OF THE JORDAN

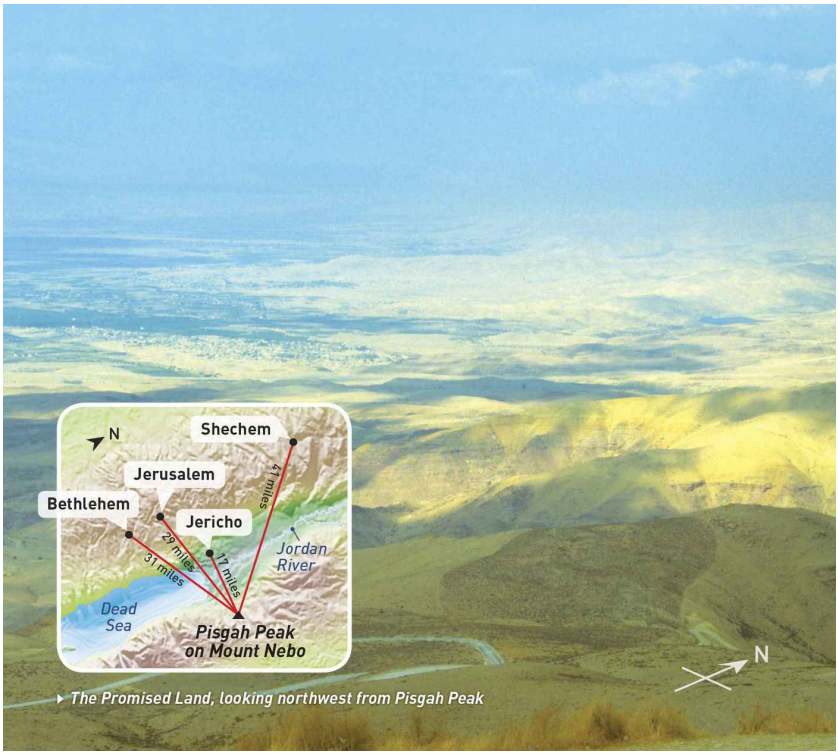
12"When we took possession of this land, I gave to the tribes of Reuben and Gad the territory beyond Aroer along the Arnon Gorge, plus half of the hill country of Gilead with its towns. 13Then I gave the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan—Og's former kingdom—to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (This entire Argob region of Bashan used to be known as the land of the Rephaites. 14Jair, a leader from the tribe of Manasseh, conquered the whole Argob region in Bashan, all the way to the border of the Geshurites and Maacathites. Jair renamed this region after himself, calling it the Towns of Jair,* as it is still known today.) 15I gave Gilead to the clan of Makir. 16But I also gave part of Gilead to the tribes of Reuben and Gad. The area I gave them extended from the middle of the Arnon Gorge in the south to the Jabbok River on the Ammonite frontier. 17They also received the Jordan Valley, all the way from the Sea of Galilee down to the Dead Sea,* with the Jordan River serving as the western boundary. To the east were the slopes of Pisgah.

18“At that time I gave this command to the tribes that would live
east of the Jordan: ‘Although the LORD your God has given you this
land as your property, all your fighting men must cross the Jordan
ahead of your Israelite relatives, armed and ready to assist them.
19Your wives, children, and numerous livestock, however, may stay
behind in the towns I have given you. 20When the LORD has given
security to the rest of the Israelites, as he has to you, and when they
occupy the land the LORD your God is giving them across the
Jordan River, then you may all return here to the land I have given
you.’

MOSES FORBIDDEN TO ENTER THE LAND

21“At that time I gave Joshua this charge: ‘You have seen for
yourself everything the LORD your God has done to these two
kings. He will do the same to all the kingdoms on the west side of
the Jordan. 22Do not be afraid of the nations there, for the LORD
your God will fight for you.’

23“At that time I pleaded with the LORD and said, 24‘O Sovereign
LORD, you have only begun to show your greatness and the
strength of your hand to me, your servant. Is there any god in
heaven or on earth who can perform such great and mighty deeds
as you do? 25Please let me cross the Jordan to see the wonderful
land on the other side, the beautiful hill country and the Lebanon
mountains.’



PISGAH PEAK

26“But the LORD was angry with me because of you, and he would
not listen to me. ‘That’s enough!’ he declared. ‘Speak of it no more.
27But go up to Pisgah Peak, and look over the land in every
direction. Take a good look, but you may not cross the Jordan
River. 28Instead, commission Joshua and encourage and strengthen
him, for he will lead the people across the Jordan. He will give
them all the land you now see before you as their possession.’ 29So
we stayed in the valley near Beth-peor.

Deuteronomy 4

MOSES URGES ISRAEL TO OBEY

1“And now, Israel, listen carefully to these decrees and regulations
that I am about to teach you. Obey them so that you may live, so
you may enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your
ancestors, is giving you. 2Do not add to or subtract from these
commands I am giving you. Just obey the commands of the LORD
your God that I am giving you.

3“You saw for yourself what the LORD did to you at Baal-peor.
There the LORD your God destroyed everyone who had worshiped
Baal, the god of Peor. 4But all of you who were faithful to the LORD
your God are still alive today—every one of you.

5“Look, I now teach you these decrees and regulations just as the
LORD my God commanded me, so that you may obey them in the
land you are about to enter and occupy. 6Obey them completely,
and you will display your wisdom and intelligence among the
surrounding nations. When they hear all these decrees, they will
exclaim, ‘How wise and prudent are the people of this great nation!’

7For what great nation has a god as near to them as the LORD our
God is near to us whenever we call on him? 8And what great nation
has decrees and regulations as righteous and fair as this body of
instructions that I am giving you today?

9"But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have
seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as
you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and
grandchildren. 10Never forget the day when you stood before the
LORD your God at Mount Sinai,* where he told me, 'Summon the
people before me, and I will personally instruct them. Then they
will learn to fear me as long as they live, and they will teach their
children to fear me also.'

11"You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while
flames from the mountain shot into the sky. The mountain was
shrouded in black clouds and deep darkness. 12And the LORD spoke
to you from the heart of the fire. You heard the sound of his words
but didn't see his form; there was only a voice. 13He proclaimed his
covenant—the Ten Commandments*—which he commanded you to
keep, and which he wrote on two stone tablets. 14It was at that time
that the LORD commanded me to teach you his decrees and
regulations so you would obey them in the land you are about to
enter and occupy.

A WARNING AGAINST IDOLATRY

15"But be very careful! You did not see the LORD's form on the day
he spoke to you from the heart of the fire at Mount Sinai. 16So do
not corrupt yourselves by making an idol in any form—whether of a
man or a woman, 17an animal on the ground, a bird in the sky, 18a
small animal that scurries along the ground, or a fish in the deepest
sea. 19And when you look up into the sky and see the sun, moon,
and stars—all the forces of heaven—don't be seduced into
worshiping them. The LORD your God gave them to all the peoples
of the earth. 20Remember that the LORD rescued you from the iron-
smelting furnace of Egypt in order to make you his very own people
and his special possession, which is what you are today.

21“But the LORD was angry with me because of you. He vowed that
I would not cross the Jordan River into the good land the LORD
your God is giving you as your special possession. 22You will cross
the Jordan to occupy the land, but I will not. Instead, I will die here
on the east side of the river. 23So be careful not to break the
covenant the LORD your God has made with you. Do not make
idols of any shape or form, for the LORD your God has forbidden
this. 24The LORD your God is a devouring fire; he is a jealous God.

25“In the future, when you have children and grandchildren and
have lived in the land a long time, do not corrupt yourselves by
making idols of any kind. This is evil in the sight of the LORD your
God and will arouse his anger.

26“Today I call on heaven and earth as witnesses against you. If you
break my covenant, you will quickly disappear from the land you
are crossing the Jordan to occupy. You will live there only a short
time; then you will be utterly destroyed. 27For the LORD will scatter
you among the nations, where only a few of you will survive.
28There, in a foreign land, you will worship idols made from wood
and stone—gods that neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. 29But
from there you will search again for the LORD your God. And if you
search for him with all your heart and soul, you will find him.

30“In the distant future, when you are suffering all these things, you
will finally return to the LORD your God and listen to what he tells
you. 31For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not
abandon you or destroy you or forget the solemn covenant he made
with your ancestors.

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

32“Now search all of history, from the time God created people on
the earth until now, and search from one end of the heavens to the
other. Has anything as great as this ever been seen or heard before?
33Has any nation ever heard the voice of God* speaking from fire—
as you did—and survived? 34Has any other god dared to take a

nation for himself out of another nation by means of trials, miraculous signs, wonders, war, a strong hand, a powerful arm, and terrifying acts? Yet that is what the LORD your God did for you in Egypt, right before your eyes.

35“He showed you these things so you would know that the LORD is God and there is no other. 36He let you hear his voice from heaven so he could instruct you. He let you see his great fire here on earth so he could speak to you from it. 37Because he loved your ancestors, he chose to bless their descendants, and he personally brought you out of Egypt with a great display of power. 38He drove out nations far greater than you, so he could bring you in and give you their land as your special possession, as it is today.

39“So remember this and keep it firmly in mind: The LORD is God both in heaven and on earth, and there is no other. 40If you obey all the decrees and commands I am giving you today, all will be well with you and your children. I am giving you these instructions so you will enjoy a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

EASTERN CITIES OF REFUGE

41Then Moses set apart three cities of refuge east of the Jordan River. 42Anyone who killed another person unintentionally, without previous hostility, could flee there to live in safety. 43These were the cities: Bezer on the wilderness plateau for the tribe of Reuben; Ramoth in Gilead for the tribe of Gad; Golan in Bashan for the tribe of Manasseh.

INTRODUCTION TO MOSES' SECOND ADDRESS

44This is the body of instruction that Moses presented to the
Israelites. 45These are the laws, decrees, and regulations that Moses
gave to the people of Israel when they left Egypt, 46and as they
camped in the valley near Beth-peor east of the Jordan River. (This
land was formerly occupied by the Amorites under King Sihon, who
ruled from Heshbon. But Moses and the Israelites destroyed him
and his people when they came up from Egypt. 47Israel took
possession of his land and that of King Og of Bashan—the two
Amorite kings east of the Jordan. 48So Israel conquered the entire
area from Aroer at the edge of the Arnon Gorge all the way to
Mount Sirion,* also called Mount Hermon. 49And they conquered
the eastern bank of the Jordan River as far south as the Dead Sea,*
below the slopes of Pisgah.)

FACING GOD DEUTERONOMY 5:1-29

Deuteronomy 5

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THE COVENANT COMMUNITY

1Moses called all the people of Israel together and said, "Listen
carefully, Israel. Hear the decrees and regulations I am giving you
today, so you may learn them and obey them!

2"The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Mount Sinai.*3The

LORD did not make this covenant with our ancestors, but with all of
us who are alive today. 4At the mountain the LORD spoke to you
face to face from the heart of the fire. 5I stood as an intermediary
between you and the LORD, for you were afraid of the fire and did
not want to approach the mountain. He spoke to me, and I passed
his words on to you. This is what he said:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

6"I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of
Egypt, the place of your slavery.

7"You must not have any other god but me.

8"You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind, or an image
of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 9You must
not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God,
am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other
gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire
family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations
of those who reject me. 10But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand
generations on those* who love me and obey my commands.

11"You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD
will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

12"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your
God has commanded you. 13You have six days each week for your
ordinary work, 14but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest
dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your
household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and
daughters, your male and female servants, your oxen and donkeys
and other livestock, and any foreigners living among you. All your
male and female servants must rest as you do. 15Remember that you

were once slaves in Egypt, but the LORD your God brought you out with his strong hand and powerful arm. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to rest on the Sabbath day.

16“Honor your father and mother, as the LORD your God commanded you. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

17“You must not murder.

18“You must not commit adultery.

19“You must not steal.

20“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.

21“You must not covet your neighbor’s wife. You must not covet your neighbor’s house or land, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.

22“The LORD spoke these words to all of you assembled there at the foot of the mountain. He spoke with a loud voice from the heart of the fire, surrounded by clouds and deep darkness. This was all he said at that time, and he wrote his words on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

23“But when you heard the voice from the heart of the darkness, while the mountain was blazing with fire, all your tribal leaders and elders came to me. 24They said, ‘Look, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice from the heart of the fire. Today we have seen that God can speak to us humans, and yet we live! 25But now, why should we risk death

again? If the LORD our God speaks to us again, we will certainly die
and be consumed by this awesome fire. 26Can any living thing hear
the voice of the living God from the heart of the fire as we did and
yet survive? 27Go yourself and listen to what the LORD our God
says. Then come and tell us everything he tells you, and we will
listen and obey.'

28"The LORD heard the request you made to me. And he said, 'I
have heard what the people said to you, and they are right. 29Oh,
that they would always have hearts like this, that they might fear
me and obey all my commands! If they did, they and their
descendants would prosper forever. 30Go and tell them, "Return to
your tents." 31But you stand here with me so I can give you all my
commands, decrees, and regulations. You must teach them to the
people so they can obey them in the land I am giving them as their
possession.'"

32So Moses told the people, "You must be careful to obey all the
commands of the LORD your God, following his instructions in
every detail. 33Stay on the path that the LORD your God has
commanded you to follow. Then you will live long and prosperous
lives in the land you are about to enter and occupy.

Deuteronomy 6

A CALL FOR WHOLEHEARTED COMMITMENT

1"These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the LORD
your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the
land you are about to enter and occupy, 2and you and your children
and grandchildren must fear the LORD your God as long as you
live. If you obey all his decrees and commands, you will enjoy a
long life. 3Listen closely, Israel, and be careful to obey. Then all will
go well with you, and you will have many children in the land
flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your
ancestors, promised you.

4“Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.* 5And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. 6And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. 8Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 9Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

10“The LORD your God will soon bring you into the land he swore to give you when he made a vow to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a land with large, prosperous cities that you did not build. 11The houses will be richly stocked with goods you did not produce. You will draw water from cisterns you did not dig, and you will eat from vineyards and olive trees you did not plant. When you have eaten your fill in this land, 12be careful not to forget the LORD, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. 13You must fear the LORD your God and serve him. When you take an oath, you must use only his name.

14“You must not worship any of the gods of neighboring nations, 15for the LORD your God, who lives among you, is a jealous God. His anger will flare up against you, and he will wipe you from the face of the earth. 16You must not test the LORD your God as you did when you complained at Massah. 17You must diligently obey the commands of the LORD your God—all the laws and decrees he has given you. 18Do what is right and good in the LORD’s sight, so all will go well with you. Then you will enter and occupy the good land that the LORD swore to give your ancestors. 19You will drive out all the enemies living in the land, just as the LORD said you would.

20“In the future your children will ask you, ‘What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the LORD our God has commanded us to obey?’

21“Then you must tell them, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but
the LORD brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand. 22The LORD
did miraculous signs and wonders before our eyes, dealing
terrifying blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. 23He
brought us out of Egypt so he could give us this land he had sworn
to give our ancestors. 24And the LORD our God commanded us to
obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us
and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day. 25For we will be
counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the LORD
our God has given us.’

Deuteronomy 7

THE PRIVILEGE OF HOLINESS

1“When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are about
to enter and occupy, he will clear away many nations ahead of you:
the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites,
and Jebusites. These seven nations are greater and more numerous
than you. 2When the LORD your God hands these nations over to
you and you conquer them, you must completely destroy* them.
Make no treaties with them and show them no mercy. 3You must
not intermarry with them. Do not let your daughters and sons
marry their sons and daughters, 4for they will lead your children
away from me to worship other gods. Then the anger of the LORD
will burn against you, and he will quickly destroy you. 5This is what
you must do. You must break down their pagan altars and shatter
their sacred pillars. Cut down their Asherah poles and burn their
idols. 6For you are a holy people, who belong to the LORD your
God. Of all the people on earth, the LORD your God has chosen you
to be his own special treasure.

7“The LORD did not set his heart on you and choose you because
you were more numerous than other nations, for you were the
smallest of all nations! 8Rather, it was simply that the LORD loves
you, and he was keeping the oath he had sworn to your ancestors.
That is why the LORD rescued you with such a strong hand from

your slavery and from the oppressive hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. 9Understand, therefore, that the LORD your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands. 10But he does not hesitate to punish and destroy those who reject him. 11Therefore, you must obey all these commands, decrees, and regulations I am giving you today.

12"If you listen to these regulations and faithfully obey them, the LORD your God will keep his covenant of unfailing love with you, as he promised with an oath to your ancestors. 13He will love you and bless you, and he will give you many children. He will give fertility to your land and your animals. When you arrive in the land he swore to give your ancestors, you will have large harvests of grain, new wine, and olive oil, and great herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. 14You will be blessed above all the nations of the earth. None of your men or women will be childless, and all your livestock will bear young. 15And the LORD will protect you from all sickness. He will not let you suffer from the terrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all your enemies!

16"You must destroy all the nations the LORD your God hands over to you. Show them no mercy, and do not worship their gods, or they will trap you. 17Perhaps you will think to yourselves, 'How can we ever conquer these nations that are so much more powerful than we are?' 18But don't be afraid of them! Just remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all the land of Egypt. 19Remember the great terrors the LORD your God sent against them. You saw it all with your own eyes! And remember the miraculous signs and wonders, and the strong hand and powerful arm with which he brought you out of Egypt. The LORD your God will use this same power against all the people you fear. 20And then the LORD your God will send terror* to drive out the few survivors still hiding from you!

21"No, do not be afraid of those nations, for the LORD your God is among you, and he is a great and awesome God. 22The LORD your God will drive those nations out ahead of you little by little. You

will not clear them away all at once, otherwise the wild animals would multiply too quickly for you. 23But the LORD your God will hand them over to you. He will throw them into complete confusion until they are destroyed. 24He will put their kings in your power, and you will erase their names from the face of the earth. No one will be able to stand against you, and you will destroy them all.

25“You must burn their idols in fire, and you must not covet the silver or gold that covers them. You must not take it or it will become a trap to you, for it is detestable to the LORD your God. 26Do not bring any detestable objects into your home, for then you will be destroyed, just like them. You must utterly detest such things, for they are set apart for destruction.

Deuteronomy 8

A CALL TO REMEMBER AND OBEY

1“Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then
you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land
the LORD swore to give your ancestors. 2Remember how the LORD
your God led you through the wilderness for these forty years,
humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find
out whether or not you would obey his commands. 3Yes, he
humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with
manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He
did it to teach you that people do not live by bread alone; rather,
we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4For
all these forty years your clothes didn’t wear out, and your feet
didn’t blister or swell. 5Think about it: Just as a parent disciplines a
child, the LORD your God disciplines you for your own good.

6“So obey the commands of the LORD your God by walking in his
ways and fearing him. 7For the LORD your God is bringing you into
a good land of flowing streams and pools of water, with fountains
and springs that gush out in the valleys and hills. 8It is a land of
wheat and barley; of grapevines, fig trees, and pomegranates; of

olive oil and honey. 9It is a land where food is plentiful and nothing
is lacking. It is a land where iron is as common as stone, and copper
is abundant in the hills. 10When you have eaten your fill, be sure to
praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

11"But that is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you
do not forget the LORD your God and disobey his commands,
regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. 12For when you
have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live
in, 13and when your flocks and herds have become very large and
your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, be
careful! 14Do not become proud at that time and forget the LORD
your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt. 15Do
not forget that he led you through the great and terrifying
wilderness with its poisonous snakes and scorpions, where it was so
hot and dry. He gave you water from the rock! 16He fed you with
manna in the wilderness, a food unknown to your ancestors. He did
this to humble you and test you for your own good. 17He did all this
so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth
with my own strength and energy.' 18Remember the LORD your
God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order
to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath.

19"But I assure you of this: If you ever forget the LORD your God
and follow other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them, you
will certainly be destroyed. 20Just as the LORD has destroyed other
nations in your path, you also will be destroyed if you refuse to
obey the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 9

VICTORY BY GOD'S GRACE

1"Listen, O Israel! Today you are about to cross the Jordan River to
take over the land belonging to nations much greater and more
powerful than you. They live in cities with walls that reach to the
sky! 2The people are strong and tall—descendants of the famous

Anakite giants. You've heard the saying, 'Who can stand up to the Anakites?' 3But recognize today that the LORD your God is the one who will cross over ahead of you like a devouring fire to destroy them. He will subdue them so that you will quickly conquer them and drive them out, just as the LORD has promised.

4"After the LORD your God has done this for you, don't say in your hearts, 'The LORD has given us this land because we are such good people!' No, it is because of the wickedness of the other nations that he is pushing them out of your way. 5It is not because you are so good or have such integrity that you are about to occupy their land. The LORD your God will drive these nations out ahead of you only because of their wickedness, and to fulfill the oath he swore to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6You must recognize that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land because you are good, for you are not—you are a stubborn people.

REMEMBERING THE GOLD CALF

7"Remember and never forget how angry you made the LORD your God out in the wilderness. From the day you left Egypt until now, you have been constantly rebelling against him. 8Even at Mount Sinai* you made the LORD so angry he was ready to destroy you. 9This happened when I was on the mountain receiving the tablets of stone inscribed with the words of the covenant that the LORD had made with you. I was there for forty days and forty nights, and all that time I ate no food and drank no water. 10The LORD gave me the two tablets on which God had written with his own finger all the words he had spoken to you from the heart of the fire when you were assembled at the mountain.

11“At the end of the forty days and nights, the LORD handed me the
two stone tablets inscribed with the words of the covenant. 12Then
the LORD said to me, ‘Get up! Go down immediately, for the people
you brought out of Egypt have corrupted themselves. How quickly
they have turned away from the way I commanded them to live!
They have melted gold and made an idol for themselves!’

13“The LORD also said to me, ‘I have seen how stubborn and
rebellious these people are. 14Leave me alone so I may destroy them
and erase their name from under heaven. Then I will make a mighty
nation of your descendants, a nation larger and more powerful than
they are.’

15“So while the mountain was blazing with fire I turned and came
down, holding in my hands the two stone tablets inscribed with the
terms of the covenant. 16There below me I could see that you had
sinned against the LORD your God. You had melted gold and made
a calf idol for yourselves. How quickly you had turned away from
the path the LORD had commanded you to follow! 17So I took the
stone tablets and threw them to the ground, smashing them before
your eyes.

18“Then, as before, I threw myself down before the LORD for forty
days and nights. I ate no bread and drank no water because of the
great sin you had committed by doing what the LORD hated,
provoking him to anger. 19I feared that the furious anger of the
LORD, which turned him against you, would drive him to destroy
you. But again he listened to me. 20The LORD was so angry with
Aaron that he wanted to destroy him, too. But I prayed for Aaron,
and the LORD spared him. 21I took your sin—the calf you had made
—and I melted it down in the fire and ground it into fine dust. Then
I threw the dust into the stream that flows down the mountain.

22“You also made the LORD angry at Taberah,* Massah,* and
Kibroth-hattaavah.*23And at Kadesh-barnea the LORD sent you out
with this command: ‘Go up and take over the land I have given

you.’ But you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God
and refused to put your trust in him or obey him. 24Yes, you have
been rebelling against the LORD as long as I have known you.

25“That is why I threw myself down before the LORD for forty days
and nights—for the LORD said he would destroy you. 26I prayed to
the LORD and said, ‘O Sovereign LORD, do not destroy them. They
are your own people. They are your special possession, whom you
redeemed from Egypt by your mighty power and your strong hand.
27Please overlook the stubbornness and the awful sin of these
people, and remember instead your servants Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob. 28If you destroy these people, the Egyptians will say, “The
Israelites died because the LORD wasn’t able to bring them to the
land he had promised to give them.” Or they might say, “He
destroyed them because he hated them; he deliberately took them
into the wilderness to slaughter them.” 29But they are your people
and your special possession, whom you brought out of Egypt by
your great strength and powerful arm.’

Deuteronomy 10

A NEW COPY OF THE COVENANT

1“At that time the LORD said to me, ‘Chisel out two stone tablets
like the first ones. Also make a wooden Ark—a sacred chest to store
them in. Come up to me on the mountain, 2and I will write on the
tablets the same words that were on the ones you smashed. Then
place the tablets in the Ark.’

3“So I made an Ark of acacia wood and cut two stone tablets like
the first two. Then I went up the mountain with the tablets in my
hand. 4Once again the LORD wrote the Ten Commandments* on the
tablets and gave them to me. They were the same words the LORD
had spoken to you from the heart of the fire on the day you were
assembled at the foot of the mountain. 5Then I turned and came
down the mountain and placed the tablets in the Ark of the
Covenant, which I had made, just as the LORD commanded me.

And the tablets are still there in the Ark.”

6(The people of Israel set out from the wells of the people of
Jaakan* and traveled to Moserah, where Aaron died and was
buried. His son Eleazar ministered as high priest in his place. 7Then
they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from there to Jotbathah, a land
with many brooks and streams. 8At that time the LORD set apart the
tribe of Levi to carry the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant, and to stand
before the LORD as his ministers, and to pronounce blessings in his
name. These are their duties to this day. 9That is why the Levites
have no share of property or possession of land among the other
Israelite tribes. The LORD himself is their special possession, as the
LORD your God told them.)

10“As for me, I stayed on the mountain in the LORD’s presence for
forty days and nights, as I had done the first time. And once again
the LORD listened to my pleas and agreed not to destroy you.
11Then the LORD said to me, ‘Get up and resume the journey, and
lead the people to the land I swore to give to their ancestors, so
they may take possession of it.’

A CALL TO LOVE AND OBEDIENCE

12“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you?
He requires only that you fear the LORD your God, and live in a
way that pleases him, and love him and serve him with all your
heart and soul. 13And you must always obey the LORD’s commands
and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good.

14“Look, the highest heavens and the earth and everything in it all
belong to the LORD your God. 15Yet the LORD chose your ancestors
as the objects of his love. And he chose you, their descendants,
above all other nations, as is evident today. 16Therefore, change
your hearts* and stop being stubborn.

17“For the LORD your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He

is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed. 18He ensures that orphans and widows receive justice. He shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing. 19So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt. 20You must fear the LORD your God and worship him and cling to him. Your oaths must be in his name alone. 21He alone is your God, the only one who is worthy of your praise, the one who has done these mighty miracles that you have seen with your own eyes. 22When your ancestors went down into Egypt, there were only seventy of them. But now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky!

Deuteronomy 11

1"You must love the LORD your God and always obey his requirements, decrees, regulations, and commands. 2Keep in mind that I am not talking now to your children, who have never experienced the discipline of the LORD your God or seen his greatness and his strong hand and powerful arm. 3They didn't see the miraculous signs and wonders he performed in Egypt against Pharaoh and all his land. 4They didn't see what the LORD did to the armies of Egypt and to their horses and chariots—how he drowned them in the Red Sea* as they were chasing you. He destroyed them, and they have not recovered to this very day!

5"Your children didn't see how the LORD cared for you in the wilderness until you arrived here. 6They didn't see what he did to Dathan and Abiram (the sons of Eliab, a descendant of Reuben) when the earth opened its mouth in the Israelite camp and swallowed them, along with their households and tents and every living thing that belonged to them. 7But you have seen the LORD perform all these mighty deeds with your own eyes!

THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

8"Therefore, be careful to obey every command I am giving you

today, so you may have strength to go in and take over the land you are about to enter. 9If you obey, you will enjoy a long life in the land the LORD swore to give to your ancestors and to you, their descendants—a land flowing with milk and honey! 10For the land you are about to enter and take over is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you planted your seed and made irrigation ditches with your foot as in a vegetable garden. 11Rather, the land you will soon take over is a land of hills and valleys with plenty of rain—12a land that the LORD your God cares for. He watches over it through each season of the year!

13"If you carefully obey the commands I am giving you today, and if you love the LORD your God and serve him with all your heart and soul, 14then he will send the rains in their proper seasons—the early and late rains—so you can bring in your harvests of grain, new wine, and olive oil. 15He will give you lush pastureland for your livestock, and you yourselves will have all you want to eat.

16"But be careful. Don't let your heart be deceived so that you turn away from the LORD and serve and worship other gods. 17If you do, the LORD's anger will burn against you. He will shut up the sky and hold back the rain, and the ground will fail to produce its harvests. Then you will quickly die in that good land the LORD is giving you.

18"So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 19Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. 20Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 21so that as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors.

22"Be careful to obey all these commands I am giving you. Show love to the LORD your God by walking in his ways and holding tightly to him. 23Then the LORD will drive out all the nations ahead of you, though they are much greater and stronger than you, and

you will take over their land. 24Wherever you set foot, that land will be yours. Your frontiers will stretch from the wilderness in the south to Lebanon in the north, and from the Euphrates River in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.*25No one will be able to stand against you, for the LORD your God will cause the people to fear and dread you, as he promised, wherever you go in the whole land.

26"Look, today I am giving you the choice between a blessing and a curse! 27You will be blessed if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today. 28But you will be cursed if you reject the commands of the LORD your God and turn away from him and worship gods you have not known before.

29"When the LORD your God brings you into the land and helps you take possession of it, you must pronounce the blessing at Mount Gerizim and the curse at Mount Ebal. 30(These two mountains are west of the Jordan River in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Jordan Valley,* near the town of Gilgal, not far from the oaks of Moreh.) 31For you are about to cross the Jordan River to take over the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you take that land and are living in it, 32you must be careful to obey all the decrees and regulations I am giving you today.

Deuteronomy 12

THE LORD'S CHOSEN PLACE FOR WORSHIP

1"These are the decrees and regulations you must be careful to obey when you live in the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must obey them as long as you live.

2"When you drive out the nations that live there, you must destroy all the places where they worship their gods—high on the mountains, up on the hills, and under every green tree. 3Break down their altars and smash their sacred pillars. Burn their Asherah poles and cut down their carved idols. Completely erase the names of

their gods!

4“Do not worship the LORD your God in the way these pagan
peoples worship their gods. 5Rather, you must seek the LORD your
God at the place of worship he himself will choose from among all
the tribes—the place where his name will be honored. 6There you
will bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, your
sacred offerings, your offerings to fulfill a vow, your voluntary
offerings, and your offerings of the firstborn animals of your herds
and flocks. 7There you and your families will feast in the presence
of the LORD your God, and you will rejoice in all you have
accomplished because the LORD your God has blessed you.

8“Your pattern of worship will change. Today all of you are doing as
you please, 9because you have not yet arrived at the place of rest,
the land the LORD your God is giving you as your special
possession. 10But you will soon cross the Jordan River and live in
the land the LORD your God is giving you. When he gives you rest
from all your enemies and you’re living safely in the land, 11you
must bring everything I command you—your burnt offerings, your
sacrifices, your tithes, your sacred offerings, and your offerings to
fulfill a vow—to the designated place of worship, the place the
LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored.

12“You must celebrate there in the presence of the LORD your God
with your sons and daughters and all your servants. And remember
to include the Levites who live in your towns, for they will receive
no allotment of land among you. 13Be careful not to sacrifice your
burnt offerings just anywhere you like. 14You may do so only at the
place the LORD will choose within one of your tribal territories.
There you must offer your burnt offerings and do everything I
command you.

15“But you may butcher your animals and eat their meat in any
town whenever you want. You may freely eat the animals with
which the LORD your God blesses you. All of you, whether
ceremonially clean or unclean, may eat that meat, just as you now

eat gazelle and deer. 16But you must not consume the blood. You must pour it out on the ground like water.

17“But you may not eat your offerings in your hometown—neither the tithe of your grain and new wine and olive oil, nor the firstborn of your flocks and herds, nor any offering to fulfill a vow, nor your voluntary offerings, nor your sacred offerings. 18You must eat these in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose. Eat them there with your children, your servants, and the Levites who live in your towns, celebrating in the presence of the LORD your God in all you do. 19And be very careful never to neglect the Levites as long as you live in your land.

20“When the LORD your God expands your territory as he has promised, and you have the urge to eat meat, you may freely eat meat whenever you want. 21It might happen that the designated place of worship—the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored—is a long way from your home. If so, you may butcher any of the cattle, sheep, or goats the LORD has given you, and you may freely eat the meat in your hometown, as I have commanded you. 22Anyone, whether ceremonially clean or unclean, may eat that meat, just as you do now with gazelle and deer. 23But never consume the blood, for the blood is the life, and you must not consume the lifeblood with the meat. 24Instead, pour out the blood on the ground like water. 25Do not consume the blood, so that all may go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what pleases the LORD.

26“Take your sacred gifts and your offerings given to fulfill a vow to the place the LORD chooses. 27You must offer the meat and blood of your burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD your God. The blood of your other sacrifices must be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, but you may eat the meat. 28Be careful to obey all my commands, so that all will go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and pleasing to the LORD your God.

29“When the LORD your God goes ahead of you and destroys the
nations and you drive them out and live in their land, 30do not fall
into the trap of following their customs and worshiping their gods.
Do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘How do these nations
worship their gods? I want to follow their example.’ 31You must not
worship the LORD your God the way the other nations worship
their gods, for they perform for their gods every detestable act that
the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters as
sacrifices to their gods.

32*“So be careful to obey all the commands I give you. You must not
add anything to them or subtract anything from them.

Deuteronomy 13

A WARNING AGAINST IDOLATRY

1*“Suppose there are prophets among you or those who dream
dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles,
2and the predicted signs or miracles occur. If they then say, ‘Come,
let us worship other gods’—gods you have not known before—3do
not listen to them. The LORD your God is testing you to see if you
truly love him with all your heart and soul. 4Serve only the LORD
your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his
voice, and cling to him. 5The false prophets or visionaries who try
to lead you astray must be put to death, for they encourage
rebellion against the LORD your God, who redeemed you from
slavery and brought you out of the land of Egypt. Since they try to
lead you astray from the way the LORD your God commanded you
to live, you must put them to death. In this way you will purge the
evil from among you.

6“Suppose someone secretly entices you—even your brother, your
son or daughter, your beloved wife, or your closest friend—and
says, ‘Let us go worship other gods’—gods that neither you nor your
ancestors have known. 7They might suggest that you worship the

gods of peoples who live nearby or who come from the ends of the earth. 8But do not give in or listen. Have no pity, and do not spare or protect them. 9You must put them to death! Strike the first blow yourself, and then all the people must join in. 10Stone the guilty ones to death because they have tried to draw you away from the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of slavery. 11Then all Israel will hear about it and be afraid, and no one will act so wickedly again.

12“When you begin living in the towns the LORD your God is giving you, you may hear 13that scoundrels among you are leading their fellow citizens astray by saying, ‘Let us go worship other gods’—gods you have not known before. 14In such cases, you must examine the facts carefully. If you find that the report is true and such a detestable act has been committed among you, 15you must attack that town and completely destroy* all its inhabitants, as well as all the livestock. 16Then you must pile all the plunder in the middle of the open square and burn it. Burn the entire town as a burnt offering to the LORD your God. That town must remain a ruin forever; it may never be rebuilt. 17Keep none of the plunder that has been set apart for destruction. Then the LORD will turn from his fierce anger and be merciful to you. He will have compassion on you and make you a large nation, just as he swore to your ancestors.

18“The LORD your God will be merciful only if you listen to his voice and keep all his commands that I am giving you today, doing what pleases him.

Deuteronomy 14

CEREMONIALLY CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS

1“Since you are the people of the LORD your God, never cut yourselves or shave the hair above your foreheads in mourning for the dead. 2You have been set apart as holy to the LORD your God, and he has chosen you from all the nations of the earth to be his

own special treasure.

3“You must not eat any detestable animals that are ceremonially
unclean. 4These are the animals* you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the
goat, 5the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the addax,
the antelope, and the mountain sheep.

6“You may eat any animal that has completely split hooves and
chews the cud, 7but if the animal doesn’t have both, it may not be
eaten. So you may not eat the camel, the hare, or the hyrax.* They
chew the cud but do not have split hooves, so they are ceremonially
unclean for you. 8And you may not eat the pig. It has split hooves
but does not chew the cud, so it is ceremonially unclean for you.
You may not eat the meat of these animals or even touch their
carcasses.

9“Of all the marine animals, you may eat whatever has both fins
and scales. 10You may not, however, eat marine animals that do not
have both fins and scales. They are ceremonially unclean for you.

11“You may eat any bird that is ceremonially clean. 12These are the
birds you may not eat: the griffon vulture, the bearded vulture, the
black vulture, 13the kite, the falcon, buzzards of all kinds, 14ravens
of all kinds, 15the eagle owl, the short-eared owl, the seagull, hawks
of all kinds, 16the little owl, the great owl, the barn owl, 17the desert
owl, the Egyptian vulture, the cormorant, 18the stork, herons of all
kinds, the hoopoe, and the bat.

19“All winged insects that walk along the ground are ceremonially
unclean for you and may not be eaten. 20But you may eat any
winged bird or insect that is ceremonially clean.

21“You must not eat anything that has died a natural death. You
may give it to a foreigner living in your town, or you may sell it to
a stranger. But do not eat it yourselves, for you are set apart as holy
to the LORD your God.

“You must not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk.

THE GIVING OF TITHES

22“You must set aside a tithe of your crops—one-tenth of all the
crops you harvest each year. 23Bring this tithe to the designated
place of worship—the place the LORD your God chooses for his
name to be honored—and eat it there in his presence. This applies
to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn males
of your flocks and herds. Doing this will teach you always to fear
the LORD your God.

24“Now when the LORD your God blesses you with a good harvest,
the place of worship he chooses for his name to be honored might
be too far for you to bring the tithe. 25If so, you may sell the tithe
portion of your crops and herds, put the money in a pouch, and go
to the place the LORD your God has chosen. 26When you arrive, you
may use the money to buy any kind of food you want—cattle,
sheep, goats, wine, or other alcoholic drink. Then feast there in the
presence of the LORD your God and celebrate with your household.
27And do not neglect the Levites in your town, for they will receive
no allotment of land among you.

28“At the end of every third year, bring the entire tithe of that year’s
harvest and store it in the nearest town. 29Give it to the Levites, who
will receive no allotment of land among you, as well as to the
foreigners living among you, the orphans, and the widows in your
towns, so they can eat and be satisfied. Then the LORD your God
will bless you in all your work.

Deuteronomy 15

RELEASE FOR DEBTORS

1“At the end of every seventh year you must cancel the debts of
everyone who owes you money. 2This is how it must be done.
Everyone must cancel the loans they have made to their fellow
Israelites. They must not demand payment from their neighbors or
relatives, for the LORD’s time of release has arrived. 3This release
from debt, however, applies only to your fellow Israelites—not to
the foreigners living among you.

4“There should be no poor among you, for the LORD your God will
greatly bless you in the land he is giving you as a special possession.
5You will receive this blessing if you are careful to obey all the
commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today. 6The
LORD your God will bless you as he has promised. You will lend
money to many nations but will never need to borrow. You will rule
many nations, but they will not rule over you.

7“But if there are any poor Israelites in your towns when you arrive
in the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-

hearted or tightfisted toward them. 8Instead, be generous and lend
them whatever they need. 9Do not be mean-spirited and refuse
someone a loan because the year for canceling debts is close at
hand. If you refuse to make the loan and the needy person cries out
to the LORD, you will be considered guilty of sin. 10Give generously
to the poor, not grudgingly, for the LORD your God will bless you
in everything you do. 11There will always be some in the land who
are poor. That is why I am commanding you to share freely with
the poor and with other Israelites in need.

RELEASE FOR HEBREW SLAVES

12"If a fellow Hebrew sells himself or herself to be your servant* and
serves you for six years, in the seventh year you must set that
servant free.

13"When you release a male servant, do not send him away empty-
handed. 14Give him a generous farewell gift from your flock, your
threshing floor, and your winepress. Share with him some of the
bounty with which the LORD your God has blessed you.
15Remember that you were once slaves in the land of Egypt and the
LORD your God redeemed you! That is why I am giving you this
command.

16"But suppose your servant says, 'I will not leave you,' because he
loves you and your family, and he has done well with you. 17In that
case, take an awl and push it through his earlobe into the door.
After that, he will be your servant for life. And do the same for your
female servants.

18"You must not consider it a hardship when you release your
servants. Remember that for six years they have given you services
worth double the wages of hired workers, and the LORD your God
will bless you in all you do.

SACRIFICING FIRSTBORN MALE ANIMALS

19“You must set aside for the LORD your God all the firstborn males
from your flocks and herds. Do not use the firstborn of your herds
to work your fields, and do not shear the firstborn of your flocks.
20Instead, you and your family must eat these animals in the
presence of the LORD your God each year at the place he chooses.
21But if this firstborn animal has any defect, such as lameness or
blindness, or if anything else is wrong with it, you must not
sacrifice it to the LORD your God. 22Instead, use it for food for your
family in your hometown. Anyone, whether ceremonially clean or
unclean, may eat it, just as anyone may eat a gazelle or deer. 23But
you must not consume the blood. You must pour it out on the
ground like water.

Deuteronomy 16

PASSOVER AND THE FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

1“In honor of the LORD your God, celebrate the Passover each year
in the early spring, in the month of Abib,* for that was the month in
which the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2Your
Passover sacrifice may be from either the flock or the herd, and it
must be sacrificed to the LORD your God at the designated place of
worship—the place he chooses for his name to be honored. 3Eat it
with bread made without yeast. For seven days the bread you eat
must be made without yeast, as when you escaped from Egypt in
such a hurry. Eat this bread—the bread of suffering—so that as long
as you live you will remember the day you departed from Egypt.
4Let no yeast be found in any house throughout your land for those
seven days. And when you sacrifice the Passover lamb on the

evening of the first day, do not let any of the meat remain until the next morning.

5“You may not sacrifice the Passover in just any of the towns that the LORD your God is giving you. 6You must offer it only at the designated place of worship—the place the LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored. Sacrifice it there in the evening as the sun goes down on the anniversary of your exodus from Egypt. 7Roast the lamb and eat it in the place the LORD your God chooses. Then you may go back to your tents the next morning. 8For the next six days you may not eat any bread made with yeast. On the seventh day proclaim another holy day in honor of the LORD your God, and no work may be done on that day.

THE FESTIVAL OF HARVEST

9“Count off seven weeks from when you first begin to cut the grain at the time of harvest. 10Then celebrate the Festival of Harvest* to honor the LORD your God. Bring him a voluntary offering in proportion to the blessings you have received from him. 11This is a time to celebrate before the LORD your God at the designated place of worship he will choose for his name to be honored. Celebrate with your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites from your towns, and the foreigners, orphans, and widows who live among you. 12Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt, so be careful to obey all these decrees.

THE FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS

13“You must observe the Festival of Shelters* for seven days at the end of the harvest season, after the grain has been threshed and the grapes have been pressed. 14This festival will be a happy time of celebrating with your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows from your towns. 15For seven days you must celebrate this festival to honor the LORD your God at the place he chooses, for it is he who blesses you with bountiful harvests and gives you success in all your

work. This festival will be a time of great joy for all.

16“Each year every man in Israel must celebrate these three festivals: the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Harvest, and the Festival of Shelters. On each of these occasions, all men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he chooses, but they must not appear before the LORD without a gift for him. 17All must give as they are able, according to the blessings given to them by the LORD your God.

JUSTICE FOR THE PEOPLE

18“Appoint judges and officials for yourselves from each of your tribes in all the towns the LORD your God is giving you. They must judge the people fairly. 19You must never twist justice or show partiality. Never accept a bribe, for bribes blind the eyes of the wise and corrupt the decisions of the godly. 20Let true justice prevail, so you may live and occupy the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

21“You must never set up a wooden Asherah pole beside the altar you build for the LORD your God. 22And never set up sacred pillars for worship, for the LORD your God hates them.

Deuteronomy 17

1“Never sacrifice sick or defective cattle, sheep, or goats to the LORD your God, for he detests such gifts.

2“When you begin living in the towns the LORD your God is giving you, a man or woman among you might do evil in the sight of the LORD your God and violate the covenant. 3For instance, they might serve other gods or worship the sun, the moon, or any of the stars—the forces of heaven—which I have strictly forbidden. 4When you hear about it, investigate the matter thoroughly. If it is true that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, 5then the man or

woman who has committed such an evil act must be taken to the gates of the town and stoned to death. 6But never put a person to death on the testimony of only one witness. There must always be two or three witnesses. 7The witnesses must throw the first stones, and then all the people may join in. In this way, you will purge the evil from among you.

8"Suppose a case arises in a local court that is too hard for you to decide—for instance, whether someone is guilty of murder or only of manslaughter, or a difficult lawsuit, or a case involving different kinds of assault. Take such legal cases to the place the LORD your God will choose, 9and present them to the Levitical priests or the judge on duty at that time. They will hear the case and declare the verdict. 10You must carry out the verdict they announce and the sentence they prescribe at the place the LORD chooses. You must do exactly what they say. 11After they have interpreted the law and declared their verdict, the sentence they impose must be fully executed; do not modify it in any way. 12Anyone arrogant enough to reject the verdict of the judge or of the priest who represents the LORD your God must die. In this way you will purge the evil from Israel. 13Then everyone else will hear about it and be afraid to act so arrogantly.

GUIDELINES FOR A KING

14"You are about to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you take it over and settle there, you may think, 'We should select a king to rule over us like the other nations around us.' 15If this happens, be sure to select as king the man the LORD your God chooses. You must appoint a fellow Israelite; he may not be a foreigner.

16"The king must not build up a large stable of horses for himself or send his people to Egypt to buy horses, for the LORD has told you, 'You must never return to Egypt.' 17The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will turn his heart away from the LORD. And he must not accumulate large amounts of wealth in

silver and gold for himself.

18“When he sits on the throne as king, he must copy for himself this
body of instruction on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical
priests. 19He must always keep that copy with him and read it daily
as long as he lives. That way he will learn to fear the LORD his God
by obeying all the terms of these instructions and decrees. 20This
regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud and acting
as if he is above his fellow citizens. It will also prevent him from
turning away from these commands in the smallest way. And it will
ensure that he and his descendants will reign for many generations
in Israel.

Deuteronomy 18

GIFTS FOR THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES

1“Remember that the Levitical priests—that is, the whole of the
tribe of Levi—will receive no allotment of land among the other
tribes in Israel. Instead, the priests and Levites will eat from the
special gifts given to the LORD, for that is their share. 2They will
have no land of their own among the Israelites. The LORD himself is
their special possession, just as he promised them.

3“These are the parts the priests may claim as their share from the
cattle, sheep, and goats that the people bring as offerings: the
shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. 4You must also give to the
priests the first share of the grain, the new wine, the olive oil, and
the wool at shearing time. 5For the LORD your God chose the tribe
of Levi out of all your tribes to minister in the LORD’s name
forever.

6“Suppose a Levite chooses to move from his town in Israel,
wherever he is living, to the place the LORD chooses for worship.
7He may minister there in the name of the LORD his God, just like
all his fellow Levites who are serving the LORD there. 8He may eat

his share of the sacrifices and offerings, even if he also receives support from his family.

A CALL TO HOLY LIVING

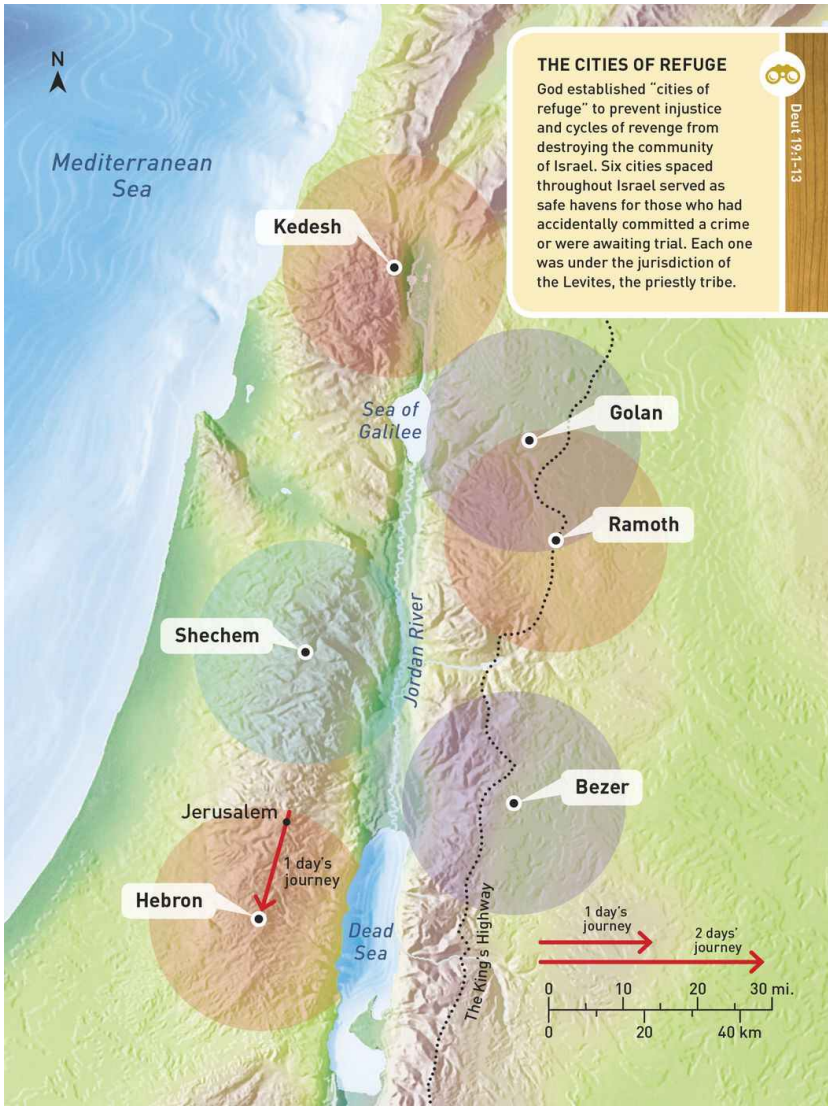
9“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, be very careful not to imitate the detestable customs of the nations living there. 10For example, never sacrifice your son or daughter as a burnt offering.* And do not let your people practice fortune-telling, or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, 11or cast spells, or function as mediums or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. 12Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD. It is because the other nations have done these detestable things that the LORD your God will drive them out ahead of you. 13But you must be blameless before the LORD your God. 14The nations you are about to displace consult sorcerers and fortune-tellers, but the LORD your God forbids you to do such things.”

TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS

15Moses continued, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. 16For this is what you yourselves requested of the LORD your God when you were assembled at Mount Sinai.* You said, ‘Don’t let us hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore or see this blazing fire, for we will die.’

17“Then the LORD said to me, ‘What they have said is right. 18I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him. 19I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf. 20But any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die.’

21“But you may wonder, ‘How will we know whether or not a
prophecy is from the LORD?’ 22If the prophet speaks in the LORD’s
name but his prediction does not happen or come true, you will
know that the LORD did not give that message. That prophet has
spoken without my authority and need not be feared.



THE CITIES OF REFUGE

Deuteronomy 19

CITIES OF REFUGE

1“When the LORD your God destroys the nations whose land he is
giving you, you will take over their land and settle in their towns
and homes. 2Then you must set apart three cities of refuge in the
land the LORD your God is giving you. 3Survey the territory,* and
divide the land the LORD your God is giving you into three
districts, with one of these cities in each district. Then anyone who
has killed someone can flee to one of the cities of refuge for safety.

4“If someone kills another person unintentionally, without previous
hostility, the slayer may flee to any of these cities to live in safety.
5For example, suppose someone goes into the forest with a neighbor
to cut wood. And suppose one of them swings an ax to chop down a
tree, and the ax head flies off the handle, killing the other person.
In such cases, the slayer may flee to one of the cities of refuge to
live in safety.

6“If the distance to the nearest city of refuge is too far, an enraged
avenger might be able to chase down and kill the person who
caused the death. Then the slayer would die unfairly, since he had
never shown hostility toward the person who died. 7That is why I
am commanding you to set aside three cities of refuge.

8“And if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he swore to
your ancestors, and gives you all the land he promised them, 9you
must designate three additional cities of refuge. (He will give you
this land if you are careful to obey all the commands I have given
you—if you always love the LORD your God and walk in his ways.)
10That way you will prevent the death of innocent people in the
land the LORD your God is giving you as your special possession.
You will not be held responsible for the death of innocent people.

11“But suppose someone is hostile toward a neighbor and
deliberately ambushes and murders him and then flees to one of the
cities of refuge. 12In that case, the elders of the murderer’s
hometown must send agents to the city of refuge to bring him back
and hand him over to the dead person’s avenger to be put to death.
13Do not feel sorry for that murderer! Purge from Israel the guilt of

murdering innocent people; then all will go well with you.

CONCERN FOR JUSTICE

14“When you arrive in the land the LORD your God is giving you as
your special possession, you must never steal anyone’s land by
moving the boundary markers your ancestors set up to mark their
property.

15“You must not convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of only
one witness. The facts of the case must be established by the
testimony of two or three witnesses.

16“If a malicious witness comes forward and accuses someone of a
crime, 17then both the accuser and accused must appear before the
LORD by coming to the priests and judges in office at that time.
18The judges must investigate the case thoroughly. If the accuser
has brought false charges against his fellow Israelite, 19you must
impose on the accuser the sentence he intended for the other
person. In this way, you will purge such evil from among you.
20Then the rest of the people will hear about it and be afraid to do
such an evil thing. 21You must show no pity for the guilty! Your rule
should be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand,
foot for foot.

Deuteronomy 20

REGULATIONS CONCERNING WAR

1“When you go out to fight your enemies and you face horses and
chariots and an army greater than your own, do not be afraid. The
LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, is with
you! 2When you prepare for battle, the priest must come forward to
speak to the troops. 3He will say to them, ‘Listen to me, all you men
of Israel! Do not be afraid as you go out to fight your enemies
today! Do not lose heart or panic or tremble before them. 4For the
LORD your God is going with you! He will fight for you against
your enemies, and he will give you victory!’

5“Then the officers of the army must address the troops and say,
‘Has anyone here just built a new house but not yet dedicated it? If
so, you may go home! You might be killed in the battle, and
someone else would dedicate your house. 6Has anyone here just
planted a vineyard but not yet eaten any of its fruit? If so, you may
go home! You might die in battle, and someone else would eat the
first fruit. 7Has anyone here just become engaged to a woman but
not yet married her? Well, you may go home and get married! You
might die in the battle, and someone else would marry her.’

8“Then the officers will also say, ‘Is anyone here afraid or worried?
If you are, you may go home before you frighten anyone else.’
9When the officers have finished speaking to their troops, they will
appoint the unit commanders.

10“As you approach a town to attack it, you must first offer its
people terms for peace. 11If they accept your terms and open the
gates to you, then all the people inside will serve you in forced
labor. 12But if they refuse to make peace and prepare to fight, you
must attack the town. 13When the LORD your God hands the town
over to you, use your swords to kill every man in the town. 14But
you may keep for yourselves all the women, children, livestock, and
other plunder. You may enjoy the plunder from your enemies that
the LORD your God has given you.

15“But these instructions apply only to distant towns, not to the
towns of the nations in the land you will enter. 16In those towns that
the LORD your God is giving you as a special possession, destroy
every living thing. 17You must completely destroy* the Hittites,
Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, just as the
LORD your God has commanded you. 18This will prevent the people
of the land from teaching you to imitate their detestable customs in
the worship of their gods, which would cause you to sin deeply
against the LORD your God.

19“When you are attacking a town and the war drags on, you must
not cut down the trees with your axes. You may eat the fruit, but do
not cut down the trees. Are the trees your enemies, that you should
attack them? 20You may only cut down trees that you know are not
valuable for food. Use them to make the equipment you need to
attack the enemy town until it falls.

Deuteronomy 21

CLEANSING FOR UNSOLVED MURDER

1"When you are in the land the LORD your God is giving you,
someone may be found murdered in a field, and you don't know
who committed the murder. 2In such a case, your elders and judges
must measure the distance from the site of the crime to the nearby
towns. 3When the nearest town has been determined, that town's
elders must select from the herd a heifer that has never been
trained or yoked to a plow. 4They must lead it down to a valley that
has not been plowed or planted and that has a stream running
through it. There in the valley they must break the heifer's neck.
5Then the Levitical priests must step forward, for the LORD your
God has chosen them to minister before him and to pronounce
blessings in the LORD's name. They are to decide all legal and
criminal cases.

6"The elders of the town must wash their hands over the heifer
whose neck was broken. 7Then they must say, 'Our hands did not
shed this person's blood, nor did we see it happen. 8O LORD, forgive
your people Israel whom you have redeemed. Do not charge your
people with the guilt of murdering an innocent person.' Then they
will be absolved of the guilt of this person's blood. 9By following
these instructions, you will do what is right in the LORD's sight and
will cleanse the guilt of murder from your community.

MARRIAGE TO A CAPTIVE WOMAN

10"Suppose you go out to war against your enemies and the LORD

your God hands them over to you, and you take some of them as captives. 11And suppose you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you are attracted to her and want to marry her. 12If this happens, you may take her to your home, where she must shave her head, cut her nails, 13and change the clothes she was wearing when she was captured. She will stay in your home, but let her mourn for her father and mother for a full month. Then you may marry her, and you will be her husband and she will be your wife. 14But if you marry her and she does not please you, you must let her go free. You may not sell her or treat her as a slave, for you have humiliated her.

RIGHTS OF THE FIRSTBORN

15"Suppose a man has two wives, but he loves one and not the other, and both have given him sons. And suppose the firstborn son is the son of the wife he does not love. 16When the man divides his inheritance, he may not give the larger inheritance to his younger son, the son of the wife he loves, as if he were the firstborn son. 17He must recognize the rights of his oldest son, the son of the wife he does not love, by giving him a double portion. He is the first son of his father's virility, and the rights of the firstborn belong to him.

DEALING WITH A REBELLIOUS SON

18"Suppose a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or mother, even though they discipline him. 19In such a case, the father and mother must take the son to the elders as they hold court at the town gate. 20The parents must say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and refuses to obey. He is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21Then all the men of his town must stone him to death. In this way, you will purge this evil from among you, and all Israel will hear about it and be afraid.

VARIOUS REGULATIONS

22"If someone has committed a crime worthy of death and is

executed and hung on a tree,*23the body must not remain hanging from the tree overnight. You must bury the body that same day, for anyone who is hung* is cursed in the sight of God. In this way, you will prevent the defilement of the land the LORD your God is giving you as your special possession.

Deuteronomy 22

1"If you see your neighbor's ox or sheep or goat wandering away, don't ignore your responsibility.* Take it back to its owner. 2If its owner does not live nearby or you don't know who the owner is, take it to your place and keep it until the owner comes looking for it. Then you must return it. 3Do the same if you find your neighbor's donkey, clothing, or anything else your neighbor loses. Don't ignore your responsibility.

4"If you see that your neighbor's donkey or ox has collapsed on the road, do not look the other way. Go and help your neighbor get it back on its feet!

5"A woman must not put on men's clothing, and a man must not wear women's clothing. Anyone who does this is detestable in the sight of the LORD your God.

6"If you happen to find a bird's nest in a tree or on the ground, and there are young ones or eggs in it with the mother sitting in the nest, do not take the mother with the young. 7You may take the young, but let the mother go, so that you may prosper and enjoy a long life.

8"When you build a new house, you must build a railing around the edge of its flat roof. That way you will not be considered guilty of murder if someone falls from the roof.

9"You must not plant any other crop between the rows of your

vineyard. If you do, you are forbidden to use either the grapes from the vineyard or the other crop.

10“You must not plow with an ox and a donkey harnessed together.

11“You must not wear clothing made of wool and linen woven together.

12“You must put four tassels on the hem of the cloak with which you cover yourself—on the front, back, and sides.

REGULATIONS FOR SEXUAL PURITY

13“Suppose a man marries a woman, but after sleeping with her, he turns against her 14and publicly accuses her of shameful conduct, saying, ‘When I married this woman, I discovered she was not a virgin.’ 15Then the woman’s father and mother must bring the proof of her virginity to the elders as they hold court at the town gate. 16Her father must say to them, ‘I gave my daughter to this man to be his wife, and now he has turned against her. 17He has accused her of shameful conduct, saying, “I discovered that your daughter was not a virgin.” But here is the proof of my daughter’s virginity.’ Then they must spread her bed sheet before the elders. 18The elders must then take the man and punish him. 19They must also fine him 100 pieces of silver,* which he must pay to the woman’s father because he publicly accused a virgin of Israel of shameful conduct. The woman will then remain the man’s wife, and he may never divorce her.

20“But suppose the man’s accusations are true, and he can show that she was not a virgin. 21The woman must be taken to the door of her father’s home, and there the men of the town must stone her to death, for she has committed a disgraceful crime in Israel by being promiscuous while living in her parents’ home. In this way, you will purge this evil from among you.

22“If a man is discovered committing adultery, both he and the
woman must die. In this way, you will purge Israel of such evil.

23“Suppose a man meets a young woman, a virgin who is engaged
to be married, and he has sexual intercourse with her. If this
happens within a town, 24you must take both of them to the gates of
that town and stone them to death. The woman is guilty because
she did not scream for help. The man must die because he violated
another man’s wife. In this way, you will purge this evil from
among you.

25“But if the man meets the engaged woman out in the country, and
he rapes her, then only the man must die. 26Do nothing to the young
woman; she has committed no crime worthy of death. She is as
innocent as a murder victim. 27Since the man raped her out in the
country, it must be assumed that she screamed, but there was no
one to rescue her.

28“Suppose a man has intercourse with a young woman who is a
virgin but is not engaged to be married. If they are discovered, 29he
must pay her father fifty pieces of silver.* Then he must marry the
young woman because he violated her, and he may never divorce
her as long as he lives.

30*“A man must not marry his father’s former wife, for this would
violate his father.

Deuteronomy 23

REGULATIONS CONCERNING WORSHIP

1*“If a man’s testicles are crushed or his penis is cut off, he may not
be admitted to the assembly of the LORD.

2“If a person is illegitimate by birth, neither he nor his descendants
for ten generations may be admitted to the assembly of the LORD.

3“No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants for ten
generations may be admitted to the assembly of the LORD. 4These
nations did not welcome you with food and water when you came
out of Egypt. Instead, they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in
distant Aram-naharaim to curse you. 5But the LORD your God
refused to listen to Balaam. He turned the intended curse into a
blessing because the LORD your God loves you. 6As long as you live,
you must never promote the welfare and prosperity of the
Ammonites or Moabites.

7“Do not detest the Edomites or the Egyptians, because the
Edomites are your relatives and you lived as foreigners among the
Egyptians. 8The third generation of Edomites and Egyptians may
enter the assembly of the LORD.

MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS

9“When you go to war against your enemies, be sure to stay away
from anything that is impure.

10“Any man who becomes ceremonially defiled because of a
nocturnal emission must leave the camp and stay away all day.
11Toward evening he must bathe himself, and at sunset he may
return to the camp.

12“You must have a designated area outside the camp where you
can go to relieve yourself. 13Each of you must have a spade as part
of your equipment. Whenever you relieve yourself, dig a hole with
the spade and cover the excrement. 14The camp must be holy, for
the LORD your God moves around in your camp to protect you and
to defeat your enemies. He must not see any shameful thing among
you, or he will turn away from you.

15“If slaves should escape from their masters and take refuge with
you, you must not hand them over to their masters. 16Let them live
among you in any town they choose, and do not oppress them.

17“No Israelite, whether man or woman, may become a temple
prostitute. 18When you are bringing an offering to fulfill a vow, you
must not bring to the house of the LORD your God any offering
from the earnings of a prostitute, whether a man* or a woman, for
both are detestable to the LORD your God.

19“Do not charge interest on the loans you make to a fellow
Israelite, whether you loan money, or food, or anything else. 20You
may charge interest to foreigners, but you may not charge interest
to Israelites, so that the LORD your God may bless you in
everything you do in the land you are about to enter and occupy.

21“When you make a vow to the LORD your God, be prompt in
fulfilling whatever you promised him. For the LORD your God
demands that you promptly fulfill all your vows, or you will be
guilty of sin. 22However, it is not a sin to refrain from making a
vow. 23But once you have voluntarily made a vow, be careful to
fulfill your promise to the LORD your God.

24“When you enter your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat your fill
of grapes, but you must not carry any away in a basket. 25And when
you enter your neighbor’s field of grain, you may pluck the heads of
grain with your hand, but you must not harvest it with a sickle.

Deuteronomy 24

1“Suppose a man marries a woman but she does not please him.
Having discovered something wrong with her, he writes a document
of divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house.
2When she leaves his house, she is free to marry another man. 3But
if the second husband also turns against her, writes a document of
divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away, or if he dies, 4the first

husband may not marry her again, for she has been defiled. That would be detestable to the LORD. You must not bring guilt upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as a special possession.

5“A newly married man must not be drafted into the army or be given any other official responsibilities. He must be free to spend one year at home, bringing happiness to the wife he has married.

6“It is wrong to take a set of millstones, or even just the upper millstone, as security for a loan, for the owner uses it to make a living.

7“If anyone kidnaps a fellow Israelite and treats him as a slave or sells him, the kidnapper must die. In this way, you will purge the evil from among you.

8“In all cases involving serious skin diseases,* be careful to follow the instructions of the Levitical priests; obey all the commands I have given them. 9Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam as you were coming from Egypt.

10“If you lend anything to your neighbor, do not enter his house to pick up the item he is giving as security. 11You must wait outside while he goes in and brings it out to you. 12If your neighbor is poor and gives you his cloak as security for a loan, do not keep the cloak overnight. 13Return the cloak to its owner by sunset so he can stay warm through the night and bless you, and the LORD your God will count you as righteous.

14“Never take advantage of poor and destitute laborers, whether they are fellow Israelites or foreigners living in your towns. 15You must pay them their wages each day before sunset because they are poor and are counting on it. If you don’t, they might cry out to the LORD against you, and it would be counted against you as sin.

16“Parents must not be put to death for the sins of their children,
nor children for the sins of their parents. Those deserving to die
must be put to death for their own crimes.

17“True justice must be given to foreigners living among you and to
orphans, and you must never accept a widow’s garment as security
for her debt. 18Always remember that you were slaves in Egypt and
that the LORD your God redeemed you from your slavery. That is
why I have given you this command.

19“When you are harvesting your crops and forget to bring in a
bundle of grain from your field, don’t go back to get it. Leave it for
the foreigners, orphans, and widows. Then the LORD your God will
bless you in all you do. 20When you beat the olives from your olive
trees, don’t go over the boughs twice. Leave the remaining olives
for the foreigners, orphans, and widows. 21When you gather the
grapes in your vineyard, don’t glean the vines after they are picked.
Leave the remaining grapes for the foreigners, orphans, and
widows. 22Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt.
That is why I am giving you this command.

Deuteronomy 25

1“Suppose two people take a dispute to court, and the judges
declare that one is right and the other is wrong. 2If the person in the
wrong is sentenced to be flogged, the judge must command him to
lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of lashes
appropriate to the crime. 3But never give more than forty lashes;
more than forty lashes would publicly humiliate your neighbor.

4“You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out
the grain.

5“If two brothers are living together on the same property and one

of them dies without a son, his widow may not be married to anyone from outside the family. Instead, her husband's brother should marry her and have intercourse with her to fulfill the duties of a brother-in-law. 6The first son she bears to him will be considered the son of the dead brother, so that his name will not be forgotten in Israel.

7"But if the man refuses to marry his brother's widow, she must go to the town gate and say to the elders assembled there, 'My husband's brother refuses to preserve his brother's name in Israel—he refuses to fulfill the duties of a brother-in-law by marrying me.' 8The elders of the town will then summon him and talk with him. If he still refuses and says, 'I don't want to marry her,' 9the widow must walk over to him in the presence of the elders, pull his sandal from his foot, and spit in his face. Then she must declare, 'This is what happens to a man who refuses to provide his brother with children.' 10Ever afterward in Israel his family will be referred to as 'the family of the man whose sandal was pulled off'!

11"If two Israelite men get into a fight and the wife of one tries to rescue her husband by grabbing the testicles of the other man, 12you must cut off her hand. Show her no pity.

13"You must use accurate scales when you weigh out merchandise, 14and you must use full and honest measures. 15Yes, always use honest weights and measures, so that you may enjoy a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you. 16All who cheat with dishonest weights and measures are detestable to the LORD your God.

17"Never forget what the Amalekites did to you as you came from Egypt. 18They attacked you when you were exhausted and weary, and they struck down those who were straggling behind. They had no fear of God. 19Therefore, when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your enemies in the land he is giving you as a special possession, you must destroy the Amalekites and erase their memory from under heaven. Never forget this!

Deuteronomy 26

HARVEST OFFERINGS AND TITHES

1“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you as a
special possession and you have conquered it and settled there, 2put
some of the first produce from each crop you harvest into a basket
and bring it to the designated place of worship—the place the
LORD your God chooses for his name to be honored. 3Go to the
priest in charge at that time and say to him, ‘With this gift I
acknowledge to the LORD your God that I have entered the land he
swore to our ancestors he would give us.’ 4The priest will then take
the basket from your hand and set it before the altar of the LORD
your God.

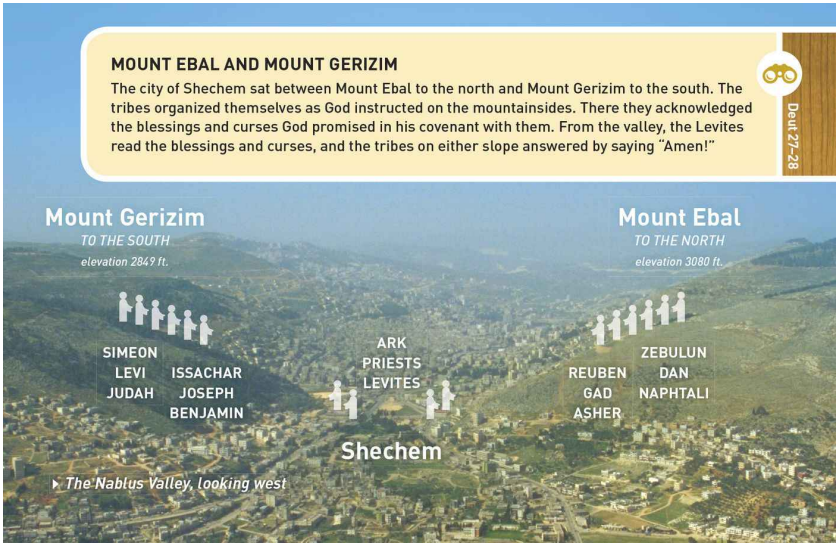
5“You must then say in the presence of the LORD your God, ‘My
ancestor Jacob was a wandering Aramean who went to live as a
foreigner in Egypt. His family arrived few in number, but in Egypt
they became a large and mighty nation. 6When the Egyptians
oppressed and humiliated us by making us their slaves, 7we cried
out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors. He heard our cries and
saw our hardship, toil, and oppression. 8So the LORD brought us out
of Egypt with a strong hand and powerful arm, with overwhelming
terror, and with miraculous signs and wonders. 9He brought us to
this place and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey! 10And
now, O LORD, I have brought you the first portion of the harvest
you have given me from the ground.’ Then place the produce before
the LORD your God, and bow to the ground in worship before him.
11Afterward you may go and celebrate because of all the good
things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.
Remember to include the Levites and the foreigners living among
you in the celebration.

12“Every third year you must offer a special tithe of your crops. In
this year of the special tithe you must give your tithes to the
Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows, so that they will have
enough to eat in your towns. 13Then you must declare in the

presence of the LORD your God, ‘I have taken the sacred gift from my house and have given it to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows, just as you commanded me. I have not violated or forgotten any of your commands. 14I have not eaten any of it while in mourning; I have not handled it while I was ceremonially unclean; and I have not offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed the LORD my God and have done everything you commanded me. 15Now look down from your holy dwelling place in heaven and bless your people Israel and the land you swore to our ancestors to give us—a land flowing with milk and honey.’

A CALL TO OBEY THE LORD’S COMMANDS

16“Today the LORD your God has commanded you to obey all these decrees and regulations. So be careful to obey them wholeheartedly. 17You have declared today that the LORD is your God. And you have promised to walk in his ways, and to obey his decrees, commands, and regulations, and to do everything he tells you. 18The LORD has declared today that you are his people, his own special treasure, just as he promised, and that you must obey all his commands. 19And if you do, he will set you high above all the other nations he has made. Then you will receive praise, honor, and renown. You will be a nation that is holy to the LORD your God, just as he promised.”



MOUNT EBAL AND MOUNT GERIZIM

Deuteronomy 27

THE ALTAR ON MOUNT EBAL

1Then Moses and the leaders of Israel gave this charge to the
people: “Obey all these commands that I am giving you today.
2When you cross the Jordan River and enter the land the LORD
your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with
plaster. 3Write this whole body of instruction on them when you
cross the river to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you—
a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of
your ancestors, promised you. 4When you cross the Jordan, set up
these stones at Mount Ebal and coat them with plaster, as I am
commanding you today.

5“Then build an altar there to the LORD your God, using natural,
uncut stones. You must not shape the stones with an iron tool.
6Build the altar of uncut stones, and use it to offer burnt offerings to
the LORD your God. 7Also sacrifice peace offerings on it, and
celebrate by feasting there before the LORD your God. 8You must

clearly write all these instructions on the stones coated with plaster."

9Then Moses and the Levitical priests addressed all Israel as follows:
"O Israel, be quiet and listen! Today you have become the people of
the LORD your God. 10So you must obey the LORD your God by
keeping all these commands and decrees that I am giving you
today."

CURSES FROM MOUNT EBAL

11That same day Moses also gave this charge to the people: 12"When
you cross the Jordan River, the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah,
Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin must stand on Mount Gerizim to
proclaim a blessing over the people. 13And the tribes of Reuben,
Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali must stand on Mount Ebal
to proclaim a curse.

14"Then the Levites will shout to all the people of Israel:

15'Cursed is anyone who carves or casts an idol and secretly sets it up. These idols, the work of craftsmen, are detestable to the LORD.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

16'Cursed is anyone who dishonors father or mother.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

17'Cursed is anyone who steals property from a neighbor by moving a boundary marker.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

18'Cursed is anyone who leads a blind person astray on the road.'

And all the people will reply, 'Amen.'

19‘Cursed is anyone who denies justice to foreigners, orphans, or widows.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

20‘Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with one of his father’s wives, for he has violated his father.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

21‘Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with an animal.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

22‘Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with his sister, whether she is the daughter of his father or his mother.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

23‘Cursed is anyone who has sexual intercourse with his mother-in-law.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

24‘Cursed is anyone who attacks a neighbor in secret.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

25‘Cursed is anyone who accepts payment to kill an innocent person.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

26‘Cursed is anyone who does not affirm and obey the terms of these instructions.’

And all the people will reply, ‘Amen.’

Deuteronomy 28

BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE

1“If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully keep all his
commands that I am giving you today, the LORD your God will set
you high above all the nations of the world. 2You will experience all
these blessings if you obey the LORD your God:

3Your towns and your fields will be blessed.

4Your children and your crops will be blessed.
The offspring of your herds and flocks will be blessed.

5Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be blessed.

6Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be blessed.

7“The LORD will conquer your enemies when they attack you. They
will attack you from one direction, but they will scatter from you in
seven!

8“The LORD will guarantee a blessing on everything you do and
will fill your storehouses with grain. The LORD your God will bless
you in the land he is giving you.

9“If you obey the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his
ways, the LORD will establish you as his holy people as he swore he
would do. 10Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a
people claimed by the LORD, and they will stand in awe of you.

11“The LORD will give you prosperity in the land he swore to your
ancestors to give you, blessing you with many children, numerous
livestock, and abundant crops. 12The LORD will send rain at the
proper time from his rich treasury in the heavens and will bless all
the work you do. You will lend to many nations, but you will never
need to borrow from them. 13If you listen to these commands of the
LORD your God that I am giving you today, and if you carefully
obey them, the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and
you will always be on top and never at the bottom. 14You must not

turn away from any of the commands I am giving you today, nor follow after other gods and worship them.

CURSES FOR DISOBEDIENCE

15"But if you refuse to listen to the LORD your God and do not obey all the commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overwhelm you:

16Your towns and your fields will be cursed.

17Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be cursed.

18Your children and your crops will be cursed.
The offspring of your herds and flocks will be cursed.

19Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be cursed.

20"The LORD himself will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in everything you do, until at last you are completely destroyed for doing evil and abandoning me. 21The LORD will afflict you with diseases until none of you are left in the land you are about to enter and occupy. 22The LORD will strike you with wasting diseases, fever, and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, and with blight and mildew. These disasters will pursue you until you die. 23The skies above will be as unyielding as bronze, and the earth beneath will be as hard as iron. 24The LORD will change the rain that falls on your land into powder, and dust will pour down from the sky until you are destroyed.

25"The LORD will cause you to be defeated by your enemies. You will attack your enemies from one direction, but you will scatter from them in seven! You will be an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26Your corpses will be food for all the scavenging birds and wild animals, and no one will be there to chase them away.

27"The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with

tumors, scurvy, and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. 28The LORD will strike you with madness, blindness, and panic. 29You will grope around in broad daylight like a blind person groping in the darkness, but you will not find your way. You will be oppressed and robbed continually, and no one will come to save you.

30"You will be engaged to a woman, but another man will sleep with her. You will build a house, but someone else will live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but you will never enjoy its fruit. 31Your ox will be butchered before your eyes, but you will not eat a single bite of the meat. Your donkey will be taken from you, never to be returned. Your sheep and goats will be given to your enemies, and no one will be there to help you. 32You will watch as your sons and daughters are taken away as slaves. Your heart will break for them, but you won't be able to help them. 33A foreign nation you have never heard about will eat the crops you worked so hard to grow. You will suffer under constant oppression and harsh treatment. 34You will go mad because of all the tragedy you see around you. 35The LORD will cover your knees and legs with incurable boils. In fact, you will be covered from head to foot.

36"The LORD will exile you and your king to a nation unknown to you and your ancestors. There in exile you will worship gods of wood and stone! 37You will become an object of horror, ridicule, and mockery among all the nations to which the LORD sends you.

38"You will plant much but harvest little, for locusts will eat your crops. 39You will plant vineyards and care for them, but you will not drink the wine or eat the grapes, for worms will destroy the vines. 40You will grow olive trees throughout your land, but you will never use the olive oil, for the fruit will drop before it ripens. 41You will have sons and daughters, but you will lose them, for they will be led away into captivity. 42Swarms of insects will destroy your trees and crops.

43"The foreigners living among you will become stronger and stronger, while you become weaker and weaker. 44They will lend

money to you, but you will not lend to them. They will be the head, and you will be the tail!

45“If you refuse to listen to the LORD your God and to obey the commands and decrees he has given you, all these curses will pursue and overtake you until you are destroyed. 46These horrors will serve as a sign and warning among you and your descendants forever. 47If you do not serve the LORD your God with joy and enthusiasm for the abundant benefits you have received, 48you will serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you. You will be left hungry, thirsty, naked, and lacking in everything. The LORD will put an iron yoke on your neck, oppressing you harshly until he has destroyed you.

49“The LORD will bring a distant nation against you from the end of the earth, and it will swoop down on you like a vulture. It is a nation whose language you do not understand, 50a fierce and heartless nation that shows no respect for the old and no pity for the young. 51Its armies will devour your livestock and crops, and you will be destroyed. They will leave you no grain, new wine, olive oil, calves, or lambs, and you will starve to death. 52They will attack your cities until all the fortified walls in your land—the walls you trusted to protect you—are knocked down. They will attack all the towns in the land the LORD your God has given you.

53“The siege and terrible distress of the enemy’s attack will be so severe that you will eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you. 54The most tenderhearted man among you will have no compassion for his own brother, his beloved wife, and his surviving children. 55He will refuse to share with them the flesh he is devouring—the flesh of one of his own children—because he has nothing else to eat during the siege and terrible distress that your enemy will inflict on all your towns. 56The most tender and delicate woman among you—so delicate she would not so much as touch the ground with her foot—will be selfish toward the husband she loves and toward her own son or daughter. 57She will hide from them the afterbirth and the new baby she has borne, so that she herself can secretly eat them. She will have

nothing else to eat during the siege and terrible distress that your enemy will inflict on all your towns.

58“If you refuse to obey all the words of instruction that are written in this book, and if you do not fear the glorious and awesome name of the LORD your God, 59then the LORD will overwhelm you and your children with indescribable plagues. These plagues will be intense and without relief, making you miserable and unbearably sick. 60He will afflict you with all the diseases of Egypt that you feared so much, and you will have no relief. 61The LORD will afflict you with every sickness and plague there is, even those not mentioned in this Book of Instruction, until you are destroyed. 62Though you become as numerous as the stars in the sky, few of you will be left because you would not listen to the LORD your God.

63“Just as the LORD has found great pleasure in causing you to prosper and multiply, the LORD will find pleasure in destroying you. You will be torn from the land you are about to enter and occupy. 64For the LORD will scatter you among all the nations from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship foreign gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, gods made of wood and stone! 65There among those nations you will find no peace or place to rest. And the LORD will cause your heart to tremble, your eyesight to fail, and your soul to despair. 66Your life will constantly hang in the balance. You will live night and day in fear, unsure if you will survive. 67In the morning you will say, ‘If only it were night!’ And in the evening you will say, ‘If only it were morning!’ For you will be terrified by the awful horrors you see around you. 68Then the LORD will send you back to Egypt in ships, to a destination I promised you would never see again. There you will offer to sell yourselves to your enemies as slaves, but no one will buy you.”

Deuteronomy 29

1*These are the terms of the covenant the LORD commanded Moses to make with the Israelites while they were in the land of Moab, in

addition to the covenant he had made with them at Mount Sinai.*

MOSES REVIEWS THE COVENANT

2*Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them, "You have
seen with your own eyes everything the LORD did in the land of
Egypt to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to his whole country—
3all the great tests of strength, the miraculous signs, and the
amazing wonders. 4But to this day the LORD has not given you
minds that understand, nor eyes that see, nor ears that hear! 5For
forty years I led you through the wilderness, yet your clothes and
sandals did not wear out. 6You ate no bread and drank no wine or
other alcoholic drink, but he provided for you so you would know
that he is the LORD your God.

7"When we came here, King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of
Bashan came out to fight against us, but we defeated them. 8We
took their land and gave it to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and to
the half-tribe of Manasseh as their grant of land.

9"Therefore, obey the terms of this covenant so that you will
prosper in everything you do. 10All of you—tribal leaders, elders,
officers, all the men of Israel—are standing today in the presence of
the LORD your God. 11Your little ones and your wives are with you,
as well as the foreigners living among you who chop your wood and
carry your water. 12You are standing here today to enter into the
covenant of the LORD your God. The LORD is making this
covenant, including the curses. 13By entering into the covenant
today, he will establish you as his people and confirm that he is
your God, just as he promised you and as he swore to your
ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

14"But you are not the only ones with whom I am making this
covenant with its curses. 15I am making this covenant both with you
who stand here today in the presence of the LORD our God, and
also with the future generations who are not standing here today.

16“You remember how we lived in the land of Egypt and how we
traveled through the lands of enemy nations as we left. 17You have
seen their detestable practices and their idols* made of wood, stone,
silver, and gold. 18I am making this covenant with you so that no
one among you—no man, woman, clan, or tribe—will turn away
from the LORD our God to worship these gods of other nations, and
so that no root among you bears bitter and poisonous fruit.

19“Those who hear the warnings of this curse should not
congratulate themselves, thinking, ‘I am safe, even though I am
following the desires of my own stubborn heart.’ This would lead to
utter ruin! 20The LORD will never pardon such people. Instead his
anger and jealousy will burn against them. All the curses written in
this book will come down on them, and the LORD will erase their
names from under heaven. 21The LORD will separate them from all
the tribes of Israel, to pour out on them all the curses of the
covenant recorded in this Book of Instruction.

22“Then the generations to come, both your own descendants and
the foreigners who come from distant lands, will see the devastation
of the land and the diseases the LORD inflicts on it. 23They will
exclaim, ‘The whole land is devastated by sulfur and salt. It is a
wasteland with nothing planted and nothing growing, not even a
blade of grass. It is like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah
and Zeboiim, which the LORD destroyed in his intense anger.’

24“And all the surrounding nations will ask, ‘Why has the LORD
done this to this land? Why was he so angry?’

25“And the answer will be, ‘This happened because the people of the
land abandoned the covenant that the LORD, the God of their
ancestors, made with them when he brought them out of the land of
Egypt. 26Instead, they turned away to serve and worship gods they
had not known before, gods that were not from the LORD. 27That is
why the LORD’s anger has burned against this land, bringing down
on it every curse recorded in this book. 28In great anger and fury the
LORD uprooted his people from their land and banished them to

another land, where they still live today!’

29“The LORD our God has secrets known to no one. We are not
accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable
forever for all that he has revealed to us, so that we may obey all
the terms of these instructions.

Deuteronomy 30

A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LORD

1“In the future, when you experience all these blessings and curses I
have listed for you, and when you are living among the nations to
which the LORD your God has exiled you, take to heart all these
instructions. 2If at that time you and your children return to the
LORD your God, and if you obey with all your heart and all your
soul all the commands I have given you today, 3then the LORD your
God will restore your fortunes. He will have mercy on you and
gather you back from all the nations where he has scattered you.
4Even though you are banished to the ends of the earth,* the LORD
your God will gather you from there and bring you back again. 5The
LORD your God will return you to the land that belonged to your
ancestors, and you will possess that land again. Then he will make
you even more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors!

6“The LORD your God will change your heart* and the hearts of all
your descendants, so that you will love him with all your heart and
soul and so you may live! 7The LORD your God will inflict all these
curses on your enemies and on those who hate and persecute you.
8Then you will again obey the LORD and keep all his commands
that I am giving you today.

9“The LORD your God will then make you successful in everything
you do. He will give you many children and numerous livestock,
and he will cause your fields to produce abundant harvests, for the
LORD will again delight in being good to you as he was to your

ancestors. 10The LORD your God will delight in you if you obey his voice and keep the commands and decrees written in this Book of Instruction, and if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul.

THE CHOICE OF LIFE OR DEATH

11"This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you, and it is not beyond your reach. 12It is not kept in heaven, so distant that you must ask, 'Who will go up to heaven and bring it down so we can hear it and obey?' 13It is not kept beyond the sea, so far away that you must ask, 'Who will cross the sea to bring it to us so we can hear it and obey?' 14No, the message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart so that you can obey it.

15"Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. 16For I command you this day to love the LORD your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy.

17"But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, 18then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.

19"Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! 20You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This* is the key to your life. And if you love and obey the LORD, you will live long in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Deuteronomy 31

JOSHUA BECOMES ISRAEL'S LEADER

1When Moses had finished giving these instructions* to all the
people of Israel, 2he said, "I am now 120 years old, and I am no
longer able to lead you. The LORD has told me, 'You will not cross
the Jordan River.' 3But the LORD your God himself will cross over
ahead of you. He will destroy the nations living there, and you will

take possession of their land. Joshua will lead you across the river, just as the LORD promised.

4“The LORD will destroy the nations living in the land, just as he destroyed Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites. 5The LORD will hand over to you the people who live there, and you must deal with them as I have commanded you. 6So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.”

7Then Moses called for Joshua, and as all Israel watched, he said to him, “Be strong and courageous! For you will lead these people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors he would give them. You are the one who will divide it among them as their grants of land. 8Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.”

PUBLIC READING OF THE BOOK OF INSTRUCTION

9So Moses wrote this entire body of instruction in a book and gave it to the priests, who carried the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant, and to the elders of Israel. 10Then Moses gave them this command: “At the end of every seventh year, the Year of Release, during the Festival of Shelters, 11you must read this Book of Instruction to all the people of Israel when they assemble before the LORD your God at the place he chooses. 12Call them all together—men, women, children, and the foreigners living in your towns—so they may hear this Book of Instruction and learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully obey all the terms of these instructions. 13Do this so that your children who have not known these instructions will hear them and will learn to fear the LORD your God. Do this as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.”

ISRAEL'S DISOBEDIENCE PREDICTED

14Then the LORD said to Moses, "The time has come for you to die. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the Tabernacle,* so that I may commission him there." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the Tabernacle. 15And the LORD appeared to them in a pillar of cloud that stood at the entrance to the sacred tent.

16The LORD said to Moses, "You are about to die and join your ancestors. After you are gone, these people will begin to worship foreign gods, the gods of the land where they are going. They will abandon me and break my covenant that I have made with them. 17Then my anger will blaze forth against them. I will abandon them, hiding my face from them, and they will be devoured. Terrible trouble will come down on them, and on that day they will say, 'These disasters have come down on us because God is no longer among us!' 18At that time I will hide my face from them on account of all the evil they commit by worshiping other gods.

19"So write down the words of this song, and teach it to the people of Israel. Help them learn it, so it may serve as a witness for me against them. 20For I will bring them into the land I swore to give their ancestors—a land flowing with milk and honey. There they will become prosperous, eat all the food they want, and become fat. But they will begin to worship other gods; they will despise me and break my covenant. 21And when great disasters come down on them, this song will stand as evidence against them, for it will never be forgotten by their descendants. I know the intentions of these people, even now before they have entered the land I swore to give them."

22So that very day Moses wrote down the words of the song and taught it to the Israelites.

23Then the LORD commissioned Joshua son of Nun with these words: “Be strong and courageous, for you must bring the people of Israel into the land I swore to give them. I will be with you.”

24When Moses had finished writing this entire body of instruction in a book, 25he gave this command to the Levites who carried the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant: 26“Take this Book of Instruction and place it beside the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD your God, so it may remain there as a witness against the people of Israel. 27For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Even now, while I am still alive and am here with you, you have rebelled against the LORD. How much more rebellious will you be after my death!

28“Now summon all the elders and officials of your tribes, so that I can speak to them directly and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt and will turn from the way I have commanded you to follow. In the days to come, disaster will come down on you, for you will do what is evil in the LORD’s sight, making him very angry with your actions.”

SONGS DEUTERONOMY 31:30–32:47

THE SONG OF MOSES

30So Moses recited this entire song publicly to the assembly of Israel:

Deuteronomy 32

1“Listen, O heavens, and I will speak!
Hear, O earth, the words that I say!

2Let my teaching fall on you like rain; let my speech settle like dew.
Let my words fall like rain on tender grass, like gentle showers on young plants.

3I will proclaim the name of the LORD; how glorious is our God!

4He is the Rock; his deeds are perfect.
Everything he does is just and fair.
He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright he is!

5“But they have acted corruptly toward him; when they act so perversely, are they really his children?*
They are a deceitful and twisted generation.

6Is this the way you repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people?
Isn’t he your Father who created you?
Has he not made you and established you?

7Remember the days of long ago; think about the generations past.
Ask your father, and he will inform you.
Inquire of your elders, and they will tell you.

8When the Most High assigned lands to the nations, when he
divided up the human race, he established the boundaries of the
peoples according to the number in his heavenly court.*

9“For the people of Israel belong to the LORD; Jacob is his special
possession.

10He found them in a desert land, in an empty, howling wasteland.
He surrounded them and watched over them; he guarded them as
he would guard his own eyes.*

11Like an eagle that rouses her chicks and hovers over her young, so
he spread his wings to take them up and carried them safely on his
pinions.

12The LORD alone guided them; they followed no foreign gods.

13He let them ride over the highlands and feast on the crops of the
fields.
He nourished them with honey from the rock and olive oil from the
stony ground.

14He fed them yogurt from the herd and milk from the flock,
together with the fat of lambs.
He gave them choice rams from Bashan, and goats, together with
the choicest wheat.
You drank the finest wine, made from the juice of grapes.

15“But Israel* soon became fat and unruly; the people grew heavy,
plump, and stuffed!
Then they abandoned the God who had made them; they made light
of the Rock of their salvation.

16They stirred up his jealousy by worshiping foreign gods; they

provoked his fury with detestable deeds.

17They offered sacrifices to demons, which are not God, to gods
they had not known before, to new gods only recently arrived, to
gods their ancestors had never feared.

18You neglected the Rock who had fathered you; you forgot the God
who had given you birth.

19“The LORD saw this and drew back, provoked to anger by his own
sons and daughters.

20He said, ‘I will abandon them; then see what becomes of them.
For they are a twisted generation, children without integrity.

21They have roused my jealousy by worshiping things that are not
God; they have provoked my anger with their useless idols.
Now I will rouse their jealousy through people who are not even a
people; I will provoke their anger through the foolish Gentiles.

22For my anger blazes forth like fire and burns to the depths of the
grave.*
It devours the earth and all its crops and ignites the foundations of
the mountains.

23I will heap disasters upon them and shoot them down with my
arrows.

24I will weaken them with famine, burning fever, and deadly
disease.
I will send the fangs of wild beasts and poisonous snakes that glide
in the dust.

25Outside, the sword will bring death, and inside, terror will strike
both young men and young women, both infants and the aged.

26I would have annihilated them, wiping out even the memory of
them.

27But I feared the taunt of Israel’s enemy, who might misunderstand

and say, “Our own power has triumphed!
The LORD had nothing to do with this!”’

28“But Israel is a senseless nation; the people are foolish, without understanding.

29Oh, that they were wise and could understand this!
Oh, that they might know their fate!

30How could one person chase a thousand of them, and two people put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the LORD had given them up?

31But the rock of our enemies is not like our Rock, as even they recognize.*

32Their vine grows from the vine of Sodom, from the vineyards of Gomorrah.
Their grapes are poison, and their clusters are bitter.

33Their wine is the venom of serpents, the deadly poison of cobras.

34“The LORD says, ‘Am I not storing up these things, sealing them away in my treasury?

35I will take revenge; I will pay them back.
In due time their feet will slip.
Their day of disaster will arrive, and their destiny will overtake them.’

36“Indeed, the LORD will give justice to his people, and he will change his mind about* his servants, when he sees their strength is gone and no one is left, slave or free.

37Then he will ask, ‘Where are their gods, the rocks they fled to for refuge?

38Where now are those gods, who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their offerings?

Let those gods arise and help you!
Let them provide you with shelter!

39Look now; I myself am he!
There is no other god but me!
I am the one who kills and gives life; I am the one who wounds and heals; no one can be rescued from my powerful hand!

40Now I raise my hand to heaven and declare, “As surely as I live,

41when I sharpen my flashing sword and begin to carry out justice, I will take revenge on my enemies and repay those who reject me.

42I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword will devour flesh— the blood of the slaughtered and the captives, and the heads of the enemy leaders.”’

43“Rejoice with him, you heavens, and let all of God’s angels worship him.*
Rejoice with his people, you Gentiles, and let all the angels be strengthened in him.*
For he will avenge the blood of his children*; he will take revenge against his enemies.
He will repay those who hate him*
and cleanse his people’s land.”

44So Moses came with Joshua* son of Nun and recited all the words of this song to the people.

45When Moses had finished reciting all these words to the people of Israel, 46he added: “Take to heart all the words of warning I have given you today. Pass them on as a command to your children so they will obey every word of these instructions. 47These instructions are not empty words—they are your life! By obeying them you will enjoy a long life in the land you will occupy when you cross the Jordan River.”

MOSES’ DEATH FORETOLD

48That same day the LORD said to Moses, 49“Go to Moab, to the
mountains east of the river,* and climb Mount Nebo, which is across
from Jericho. Look out across the land of Canaan, the land I am
giving to the people of Israel as their own special possession. 50Then
you will die there on the mountain. You will join your ancestors,
just as Aaron, your brother, died on Mount Hor and joined his
ancestors. 51For both of you betrayed me with the Israelites at the
waters of Meribah at Kadesh* in the wilderness of Zin. You failed to
demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel there. 52So you will
see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land I am
giving to the people of Israel.”

Deuteronomy 33

MOSES BLESSES THE PEOPLE

1This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, gave to the people
of Israel before his death:

2“The LORD came from Mount Sinai and dawned upon us* from
Mount Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran and came from
Meribah-kadesh with flaming fire at his right hand.*

3Indeed, he loves his people;*
all his holy ones are in his hands.
They follow in his steps and accept his teaching.

4Moses gave us the LORD’s instruction, the special possession of the
people of Israel.*

5The LORD became king in Israel*— when the leaders of the people
assembled, when the tribes of Israel gathered as one.”

6Moses said this about the tribe of Reuben:*

“Let the tribe of Reuben live and not die out, though they are few in number.”

7Moses said this about the tribe of Judah: “O LORD, hear the cry of Judah and bring them together as a people.

Give them strength to defend their cause; help them against their enemies!”

8Moses said this about the tribe of Levi: “O LORD, you have given your Thummim and Urim—the sacred lots— to your faithful servants the Levites.*

You put them to the test at Massah and struggled with them at the waters of Meribah.

9The Levites obeyed your word and guarded your covenant.
They were more loyal to you than to their own parents.
They ignored their relatives and did not acknowledge their own children.

10They teach your regulations to Jacob; they give your instructions to Israel.
They present incense before you and offer whole burnt offerings on the altar.

11Bless the ministry of the Levites, O LORD, and accept all the work of their hands.
Hit their enemies where it hurts the most; strike down their foes so they never rise again.”

12Moses said this about the tribe of Benjamin: “The people of Benjamin are loved by the LORD

and live in safety beside him.
He surrounds them continuously and preserves them from every harm.”

13Moses said this about the tribes of Joseph: “May their land be blessed by the LORD

with the precious gift of dew from the heavens and water from beneath the earth;

14with the rich fruit that grows in the sun, and the rich harvest produced each month;

15with the finest crops of the ancient mountains, and the abundance from the everlasting hills;

16with the best gifts of the earth and its bounty, and the favor of the one who appeared in the burning bush.
May these blessings rest on Joseph's head, crowning the brow of the prince among his brothers.

17Joseph has the majesty of a young bull; he has the horns of a wild ox.
He will gore distant nations, even to the ends of the earth.
This is my blessing for the multitudes of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh."

18Moses said this about the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar*: "May the people of Zebulun prosper in their travels.

May the people of Issachar prosper at home in their tents.

19They summon the people to the mountain to offer proper sacrifices there.
They benefit from the riches of the sea and the hidden treasures in the sand."

20Moses said this about the tribe of Gad: "Blessed is the one who enlarges Gad's territory!

Gad is poised there like a lion to tear off an arm or a head.

21The people of Gad took the best land for themselves; a leader's share was assigned to them.
When the leaders of the people were assembled, they carried out the LORD's justice and obeyed his regulations for Israel."

22Moses said this about the tribe of Dan: "Dan is a lion's cub,

leaping out from Bashan.”

23Moses said this about the tribe of Naphtali: “O Naphtali, you are
rich in favor and full of the LORD’s blessings; may you possess the
west and the south.”

24Moses said this about the tribe of Asher: “May Asher be blessed
above other sons; may he be esteemed by his brothers; may he
bathe his feet in olive oil.

25May the bolts of your gates be of iron and bronze; may you be
secure all your days.”

26“There is no one like the God of Israel.*
He rides across the heavens to help you, across the skies in majestic
splendor.

27The eternal God is your refuge, and his everlasting arms are under
you.
He drives out the enemy before you; he cries out, ‘Destroy them!’

28So Israel will live in safety, prosperous Jacob in security, in a land
of grain and new wine, while the heavens drop down dew.

29How blessed you are, O Israel!
Who else is like you, a people saved by the LORD?
He is your protecting shield and your triumphant sword!
Your enemies will cringe before you, and you will stomp on their
backs!”

Deuteronomy 34

THE DEATH OF MOSES

1Then Moses went up to Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab and
climbed Pisgah Peak, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD
showed him the whole land, from Gilead as far as Dan; 2all the land
of Naphtali; the land of Ephraim and Manasseh; all the land of
Judah, extending to the Mediterranean Sea*; 3the Negev; the Jordan
Valley with Jericho—the city of palms—as far as Zoar. 4Then the
LORD said to Moses, "This is the land I promised on oath to
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your
descendants.' I have now allowed you to see it with your own eyes,
but you will not enter the land."

5So Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab,
just as the LORD had said. 6The LORD buried him* in a valley near
Beth-peor in Moab, but to this day no one knows the exact place.
7Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyesight was clear,
and he was as strong as ever. 8The people of Israel mourned for
Moses on the plains of Moab for thirty days, until the customary
period of mourning was over.

9Now Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses
had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him,
doing just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10There has never been another prophet in Israel like Moses, whom
the LORD knew face to face. 11The LORD sent him to perform all the
miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh,
and all his servants, and his entire land. 12With mighty power,
Moses performed terrifying acts in the sight of all Israel.

WELCOME TO

JOSHUA

After Moses dies, Joshua becomes the people's new leader, their commander-in-chief, as they set out to conquer the Promised Land. He follows God's leading as God goes before them every step of the way. God is with them as they cross the Jordan River. He is with them as they march around the walls of Jericho and as they proceed to claim the territory.

They fight three campaigns: one in the center of the country, one in the south, and finally one in the north. With each battle, the people must do two things: trust and obey God, and be strong and courageous. When they follow God's command, they are victorious. When they don't, they are defeated. The battle and the victory belong to God, not to the power of a human army.

After these victories, Joshua divides the land among the twelve tribes. Peace and rest finally come to Israel in their new land. Toward the end of his life, Joshua calls the people together to renew their covenant with God and to pledge to serve him only.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: The conquest of Jericho—a highlight of the book of Joshua—is the only stop you'll make in this book. You'll enjoy the suspenseful story and see God's control throughout the whole event. Your first stop is at Joshua 5:13.

3 STOPS

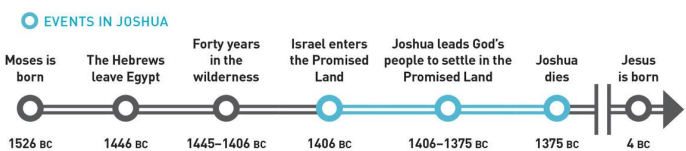
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The Hebrews conquer Canaan with God's help, but his help comes in many forms. You'll see how God protects his people and prepares the way ahead of them. Your first stop is at Joshua 2:1.

7 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Seven major stories in Joshua will give you an overview of several battles under God's leadership. God is the strength behind Israel's ability to conquer the various regions of Canaan. You'll also read Joshua's famous farewell speech. Your first stop is at Joshua 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN JOSHUA

Jesus and Joshua are closely related names, both meaning “the Lord saves.” When Joshua led God’s people into the Promised Land to conquer it, God affirmed their mission by sending “the commander of the LORD’s army” (5:13-15). Many interpreters believe this commander who appeared to Joshua was the Son of God himself. Joshua foreshadowed Jesus when he, with God’s divine leadership, helped his people conquer the sinful nations of Canaan. Jesus helps us conquer sin and overcome evil as we follow him. Joshua brought justice to the land and peace to God’s people. Similarly, Jesus will bring both peace and justice to the world.



DON'T FEAR JOSHUA 1:1-9

Joshua 1

THE LORD'S CHARGE TO JOSHUA 1AFTER THE DEATH OF MOSES THE LORD'S SERVANT, THE LORD SPOKE TO JOSHUA SON OF NUN, MOSES' ASSISTANT. HE SAID, 2"MOSES MY SERVANT IS DEAD. THEREFORE, THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO LEAD THESE PEOPLE, THE ISRAELITES, ACROSS THE JORDAN RIVER INTO THE LAND I AM GIVING THEM. 3I PROMISE YOU WHAT I PROMISED MOSES: 'WHEREVER YOU SET FOOT, YOU WILL BE ON LAND I HAVE GIVEN YOU— 4FROM THE NEGEV WILDERNESS IN THE SOUTH TO THE

LEBANON MOUNTAINS IN THE NORTH, FROM THE EUPHRATES RIVER IN THE EAST TO THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA* IN THE WEST, INCLUDING ALL THE LAND OF THE HITTITES.’ 5NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST YOU AS LONG AS YOU LIVE. FOR I WILL BE WITH YOU AS I WAS WITH MOSES. I WILL NOT FAIL YOU OR ABANDON YOU.

6“Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. 7Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. 8Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. 9This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

JOSHUA’S CHARGE TO THE ISRAELITES

10Joshua then commanded the officers of Israel, 11“Go through the camp and tell the people to get their provisions ready. In three days you will cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you.”

12Then Joshua called together the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. He told them, 13“Remember what Moses, the servant of the LORD, commanded you: ‘The LORD your God is giving you a place of rest. He has given you this land.’ 14Your wives, children, and livestock may remain here in the land Moses assigned to you on the east side of the Jordan River. But your strong warriors, fully armed, must lead the other tribes across the Jordan to help them conquer their territory. Stay with them 15until the LORD gives them rest, as he has given you rest, and until they, too, possess the land the LORD your God is giving them. Only then may you return and settle here on the east side of the Jordan River in the land that Moses, the servant of the LORD, assigned to you.”

16They answered Joshua, “We will do whatever you command us,
and we will go wherever you send us. 17We will obey you just as we
obeyed Moses. And may the LORD your God be with you as he was
with Moses. 18Anyone who rebels against your orders and does not
obey your words and everything you command will be put to death.
So be strong and courageous!”

JESUS’ FAMILY JOSHUA 2:1-24

Joshua 2

RAHAB PROTECTS THE SPIES

1Then Joshua secretly sent out two spies from the Israelite camp at
Acacia Grove.* He instructed them, “Scout out the land on the other
side of the Jordan River, especially around Jericho.” So the two
men set out and came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and
stayed there that night.

2But someone told the king of Jericho, “Some Israelites have come
here tonight to spy out the land.” 3So the king of Jericho sent orders
to Rahab: “Bring out the men who have come into your house, for
they have come here to spy out the whole land.”

4Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, “Yes, the men
were here earlier, but I didn’t know where they were from. 5They
left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don’t know
where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with
them.” 6(Actually, she had taken them up to the roof and hidden
them beneath bundles of flax she had laid out.) 7So the king’s men
went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow
crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king’s men had
left, the gate of Jericho was shut.

8Before the spies went to sleep that night, Rahab went up on the
roof to talk with them. 9“I know the LORD has given you this land,”
she told them. “We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is
living in terror. 10For we have heard how the LORD made a dry
path for you through the Red Sea* when you left Egypt. And we
know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of
the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed.*11No
wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to
fight after hearing such things. For the LORD your God is the
supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.

12“Now swear to me by the LORD that you will be kind to me and
my family since I have helped you. Give me some guarantee that
13when Jericho is conquered, you will let me live, along with my
father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all their families.”

14“We offer our own lives as a guarantee for your safety,” the men
agreed. “If you don’t betray us, we will keep our promise and be
kind to you when the LORD gives us the land.”

15Then, since Rahab’s house was built into the town wall, she let
them down by a rope through the window. 16“Escape to the hill
country,” she told them. “Hide there for three days from the men
searching for you. Then, when they have returned, you can go on
your way.”

17Before they left, the men told her, “We will be bound by the oath
we have taken only if you follow these instructions. 18When we
come into the land, you must leave this scarlet rope hanging from
the window through which you let us down. And all your family
members—your father, mother, brothers, and all your relatives—
must be here inside the house. 19If they go out into the street and
are killed, it will not be our fault. But if anyone lays a hand on
people inside this house, we will accept the responsibility for their
death. 20If you betray us, however, we are not bound by this oath in
any way.”

21“I accept your terms,” she replied. And she sent them on their
way, leaving the scarlet rope hanging from the window.

22The spies went up into the hill country and stayed there three
days. The men who were chasing them searched everywhere along
the road, but they finally returned without success.

23Then the two spies came down from the hill country, crossed the
Jordan River, and reported to Joshua all that had happened to
them. 24“The LORD has given us the whole land,” they said, “for all
the people in the land are terrified of us.”

▸ *The Jordan River, with the Sea of Galilee in the background*

THE JORDAN RIVER

Joshua 3

THE ISRAELITES CROSS THE JORDAN

1Early the next morning Joshua and all the Israelites left Acacia
Grove* and arrived at the banks of the Jordan River, where they
camped before crossing. 2Three days later the Israelite officers went
through the camp, 3giving these instructions to the people: “When
you see the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the
LORD your God, move out from your positions and follow them.
4Since you have never traveled this way before, they will guide you.
Stay about half a mile* behind them, keeping a clear distance
between you and the Ark. Make sure you don’t come any closer.”

5Then Joshua told the people, “Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the
LORD will do great wonders among you.”

6In the morning Joshua said to the priests, “Lift up the Ark of the
Covenant and lead the people across the river.” And so they started
out and went ahead of the people.

7The LORD told Joshua, “Today I will begin to make you a great
leader in the eyes of all the Israelites. They will know that I am
with you, just as I was with Moses. 8Give this command to the
priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant: ‘When you reach the
banks of the Jordan River, take a few steps into the river and stop
there.’”

9So Joshua told the Israelites, “Come and listen to what the LORD
your God says. 10Today you will know that the living God is among
you. He will surely drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites,
Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites ahead of you.
11Look, the Ark of the Covenant, which belongs to the Lord of the
whole earth, will lead you across the Jordan River! 12Now choose
twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. 13The
priests will carry the Ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth. As
soon as their feet touch the water, the flow of water will be cut off
upstream, and the river will stand up like a wall.”

14So the people left their camp to cross the Jordan, and the priests
who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant went ahead of them. 15It
was the harvest season, and the Jordan was overflowing its banks.
But as soon as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark
touched the water at the river's edge, 16the water above that point
began backing up a great distance away at a town called Adam,
which is near Zarethan. And the water below that point flowed on
to the Dead Sea* until the riverbed was dry. Then all the people
crossed over near the town of Jericho.

17Meanwhile, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the LORD's
Covenant stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed as the
people passed by. They waited there until the whole nation of Israel
had crossed the Jordan on dry ground.

Joshua 4

MEMORIALS TO THE JORDAN CROSSING

1When all the people had crossed the Jordan, the LORD said to
Joshua, 2"Now choose twelve men, one from each tribe. 3Tell them,
'Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are
standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them
up at the place where you will camp tonight.'"

4So Joshua called together the twelve men he had chosen—one
from each of the tribes of Israel. 5He told them, "Go into the middle
of the Jordan, in front of the Ark of the LORD your God. Each of
you must pick up one stone and carry it out on your shoulder—
twelve stones in all, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. 6We
will use these stones to build a memorial. In the future your
children will ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 7Then you can
tell them, 'They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing
when the Ark of the LORD's Covenant went across.' These stones
will stand as a memorial among the people of Israel forever."

8So the men did as Joshua had commanded them. They took twelve

stones from the middle of the Jordan River, one for each tribe, just as the LORD had told Joshua. They carried them to the place where they camped for the night and constructed the memorial there.

9Joshua also set up another pile of twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, at the place where the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant were standing. And they are there to this day.

10The priests who were carrying the Ark stood in the middle of the river until all of the LORD's commands that Moses had given to Joshua were carried out. Meanwhile, the people hurried across the riverbed. 11And when everyone was safely on the other side, the priests crossed over with the Ark of the LORD as the people watched.

12The armed warriors from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh led the Israelites across the Jordan, just as Moses had directed. 13These armed men—about 40,000 strong—were ready for battle, and the LORD was with them as they crossed over to the plains of Jericho.

14That day the LORD made Joshua a great leader in the eyes of all the Israelites, and for the rest of his life they revered him as much as they had revered Moses.

15The LORD had said to Joshua, 16"Command the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant* to come up out of the riverbed." 17So Joshua gave the command. 18As soon as the priests carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant came up out of the riverbed and their feet

were on high ground, the water of the Jordan returned and overflowed its banks as before.

19The people crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month.* Then they camped at Gilgal, just east of Jericho. 20It was there at Gilgal that Joshua piled up the twelve stones taken from the Jordan River.

21Then Joshua said to the Israelites, “In the future your children will ask, ‘What do these stones mean?’ 22Then you can tell them, ‘This is where the Israelites crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’ 23For the LORD your God dried up the river right before your eyes, and he kept it dry until you were all across, just as he did at the Red Sea* when he dried it up until we had all crossed over. 24He did this so all the nations of the earth might know that the LORD’s hand is powerful, and so you might fear the LORD your God forever.”

Joshua 5

1When all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings who lived along the Mediterranean coast* heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan River so the people of Israel could cross, they lost heart and were paralyzed with fear because of them.

ISRAEL REESTABLISHES COVENANT CEREMONIES

2At that time the LORD told Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise this second generation of Israelites.*” 3So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the entire male population of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth.*

4Joshua had to circumcise them because all the men who were old enough to fight in battle when they left Egypt had died in the

wilderness. 5Those who left Egypt had all been circumcised, but none of those born after the Exodus, during the years in the wilderness, had been circumcised. 6The Israelites had traveled in the wilderness for forty years until all the men who were old enough to fight in battle when they left Egypt had died. For they had disobeyed the LORD, and the LORD vowed he would not let them enter the land he had sworn to give us—a land flowing with milk and honey. 7So Joshua circumcised their sons—those who had grown up to take their fathers' places—for they had not been circumcised on the way to the Promised Land. 8After all the males had been circumcised, they rested in the camp until they were healed.

9Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the shame of your slavery in Egypt." So that place has been called Gilgal* to this day.

10While the Israelites were camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month.*11The very next day they began to eat unleavened bread and roasted grain harvested from the land. 12No manna appeared on the day they first ate from the crops of the land, and it was never seen again. So from that time on the Israelites ate from the crops of Canaan.

THE LORD'S COMMANDER CONFRONTS JOSHUA 13**WHEN JOSHUA WAS NEAR THE TOWN OF JERICHO, HE LOOKED UP AND SAW A MAN STANDING IN FRONT OF HIM WITH SWORD IN HAND. JOSHUA WENT UP TO HIM AND DEMANDED, "ARE YOU FRIEND OR FOE?"**

14"Neither one," he replied. "I am the commander of the LORD's army."

At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. "I am at your command," Joshua said. "What do you want your servant to do?"

15The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did as he was told.

EXCAVATION AT JERICHO

Joshua 6

THE FALL OF JERICHO

1Now the gates of Jericho were tightly shut because the people
were afraid of the Israelites. No one was allowed to go out or in.
2But the LORD said to Joshua, “I have given you Jericho, its king,
and all its strong warriors. 3You and your fighting men should
march around the town once a day for six days. 4Seven priests will
walk ahead of the Ark, each carrying a ram’s horn. On the seventh
day you are to march around the town seven times, with the priests
blowing the horns. 5When you hear the priests give one long blast
on the rams’ horns, have all the people shout as loud as they can.
Then the walls of the town will collapse, and the people can charge
straight into the town.”

6So Joshua called together the priests and said, “Take up the Ark of
the LORD’s Covenant, and assign seven priests to walk in front of it,
each carrying a ram’s horn.” 7Then he gave orders to the people:
“March around the town, and the armed men will lead the way in
front of the Ark of the LORD.”

8After Joshua spoke to the people, the seven priests with the rams’

horns started marching in the presence of the LORD, blowing the horns as they marched. And the Ark of the LORD's Covenant followed behind them. 9Some of the armed men marched in front of the priests with the horns and some behind the Ark, with the priests continually blowing the horns. 10"Do not shout; do not even talk," Joshua commanded. "Not a single word from any of you until I tell you to shout. Then shout!" 11So the Ark of the LORD was carried around the town once that day, and then everyone returned to spend the night in the camp.

12Joshua got up early the next morning, and the priests again carried the Ark of the LORD. 13The seven priests with the rams' horns marched in front of the Ark of the LORD, blowing their horns. Again the armed men marched both in front of the priests with the horns and behind the Ark of the LORD. All this time the priests were blowing their horns. 14On the second day they again marched around the town once and returned to the camp. They followed this pattern for six days.

15On the seventh day the Israelites got up at dawn and marched around the town as they had done before. But this time they went around the town seven times. 16The seventh time around, as the priests sounded the long blast on their horns, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the town! 17Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed* as an offering to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies.

18"Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. 19Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the LORD and must be brought into his treasury."

20When the people heard the sound of the rams' horns, they shouted as loud as they could. Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the town and captured it. 21They

completely destroyed everything in it with their swords—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys.

22Meanwhile, Joshua said to the two spies, “Keep your promise. Go to the prostitute’s house and bring her out, along with all her family.”

23The men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, mother, brothers, and all the other relatives who were with her. They moved her whole family to a safe place near the camp of Israel.

24Then the Israelites burned the town and everything in it. Only the things made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron were kept for the treasury of the LORD’s house. 25So Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute and her relatives who were with her in the house, because she had hidden the spies Joshua sent to Jericho. And she lives among the Israelites to this day.

26At that time Joshua invoked this curse: “May the curse of the LORD fall on anyone who tries to rebuild the town of Jericho.

At the cost of his firstborn son, he will lay its foundation.
At the cost of his youngest son, he will set up its gates.”

27So the LORD was with Joshua, and his reputation spread throughout the land.

Joshua 7

AI DEFEATS THE ISRAELITES

1But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for
the LORD.* A man named Achan had stolen some of these dedicated
things, so the LORD was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was
the son of Carmi, a descendant of Zimri* son of Zerah, of the tribe
of Judah.

2Joshua sent some of his men from Jericho to spy out the town of
Ai, east of Bethel, near Beth-aven. 3When they returned, they told
Joshua, “There’s no need for all of us to go up there; it won’t take
more than two or three thousand men to attack Ai. Since there are
so few of them, don’t make all our people struggle to go up there.”

4So approximately 3,000 warriors were sent, but they were soundly
defeated. The men of Ai 5chased the Israelites from the town gate as
far as the quarries,* and they killed about thirty-six who were
retreating down the slope. The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at
this turn of events, and their courage melted away.

6Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw
dust on their heads, and bowed face down to the ground before the
Ark of the LORD until evening. 7Then Joshua cried out, “Oh,
Sovereign LORD, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if
you are going to let the Amorites kill us? If only we had been
content to stay on the other side! 8Lord, what can I say now that
Israel has fled from its enemies? 9For when the Canaanites and all

the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe our name off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?"

10But the LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? 11Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings. 12That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat. For now Israel itself has been set apart for destruction. I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction.

13"Get up! Command the people to purify themselves in preparation for tomorrow. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Hidden among you, O Israel, are things set apart for the LORD. You will never defeat your enemies until you remove these things from among you.

14"In the morning you must present yourselves by tribes, and the LORD will point out the tribe to which the guilty man belongs. That tribe must come forward with its clans, and the LORD will point out the guilty clan. That clan will then come forward, and the LORD will point out the guilty family. Finally, each member of the guilty family must come forward one by one. 15The one who has stolen what was set apart for destruction will himself be burned with fire, along with everything he has, for he has broken the covenant of the LORD and has done a horrible thing in Israel."

ACHAN'S SIN

16Early the next morning Joshua brought the tribes of Israel before the LORD, and the tribe of Judah was singled out. 17Then the clans of Judah came forward, and the clan of Zerah was singled out. Then the families of Zerah came forward, and the family of Zimri was singled out. 18Every member of Zimri's family was brought forward

person by person, and Achan was singled out.

19Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the
God of Israel, by telling the truth. Make your confession and tell me
what you have done. Don’t hide it from me.”

20Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the
God of Israel. 21Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from
Babylon,* 200 silver coins,* and a bar of gold weighing more than a
pound.* I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden
in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than
the rest.”

22So Joshua sent some men to make a search. They ran to the tent
and found the stolen goods hidden there, just as Achan had said,
with the silver buried beneath the rest. 23They took the things from
the tent and brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites. Then
they laid them on the ground in the presence of the LORD.

24Then Joshua and all the Israelites took Achan, the silver, the robe,
the bar of gold, his sons, daughters, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats,
tent, and everything he had, and they brought them to the valley of
Achor. 25Then Joshua said to Achan, “Why have you brought
trouble on us? The LORD will now bring trouble on you.” And all
the Israelites stoned Achan and his family and burned their bodies.
26They piled a great heap of stones over Achan, which remains to
this day. That is why the place has been called the Valley of
Trouble* ever since. So the LORD was no longer angry.

Joshua 8

THE ISRAELITES DEFEAT AI

1Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid or discouraged.
Take all your fighting men and attack Ai, for I have given you the
king of Ai, his people, his town, and his land. 2You will destroy

them as you destroyed Jericho and its king. But this time you may keep the plunder and the livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the town."

3So Joshua and all the fighting men set out to attack Ai. Joshua chose 30,000 of his best warriors and sent them out at night 4with these orders: "Hide in ambush close behind the town and be ready for action. 5When our main army attacks, the men of Ai will come out to fight as they did before, and we will run away from them. 6We will let them chase us until we have drawn them away from the town. For they will say, 'The Israelites are running away from us as they did before.' Then, while we are running from them, 7you will jump up from your ambush and take possession of the town, for the LORD your God will give it to you. 8Set the town on fire, as the LORD has commanded. You have your orders."

9So they left and went to the place of ambush between Bethel and the west side of Ai. But Joshua remained among the people in the camp that night. 10Early the next morning Joshua roused his men and started toward Ai, accompanied by the elders of Israel. 11All the fighting men who were with Joshua marched in front of the town and camped on the north side of Ai, with a valley between them and the town. 12That night Joshua sent about 5,000 men to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the town. 13So they stationed the main army north of the town and the ambush west of the town. Joshua himself spent that night in the valley.

14When the king of Ai saw the Israelites across the valley, he and all his army hurried out early in the morning and attacked the Israelites at a place overlooking the Jordan Valley.* But he didn't realize there was an ambush behind the town. 15Joshua and the Israelite army fled toward the wilderness as though they were badly beaten. 16Then all the men in the town were called out to chase after them. In this way, they were lured away from the town. 17There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel* who did not chase after the Israelites, and the town was left wide open.

18Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Point the spear in your hand
toward Ai, for I will hand the town over to you.” Joshua did as he
was commanded. 19As soon as Joshua gave this signal, all the men
in ambush jumped up from their position and poured into the town.
They quickly captured it and set it on fire.

20When the men of Ai looked behind them, smoke from the town
was filling the sky, and they had nowhere to go. For the Israelites
who had fled in the direction of the wilderness now turned on their
pursuers. 21When Joshua and all the other Israelites saw that the
ambush had succeeded and that smoke was rising from the town,
they turned and attacked the men of Ai. 22Meanwhile, the Israelites
who were inside the town came out and attacked the enemy from
the rear. So the men of Ai were caught in the middle, with Israelite
fighters on both sides. Israel attacked them, and not a single person
survived or escaped. 23Only the king of Ai was taken alive and
brought to Joshua.

24When the Israelite army finished chasing and killing all the men
of Ai in the open fields, they went back and finished off everyone
inside. 25So the entire population of Ai, including men and women,
was wiped out that day—12,000 in all. 26For Joshua kept holding
out his spear until everyone who had lived in Ai was completely
destroyed.*27Only the livestock and the treasures of the town were
not destroyed, for the Israelites kept these as plunder for
themselves, as the LORD had commanded Joshua. 28So Joshua
burned the town of Ai,* and it became a permanent mound of ruins,
desolate to this very day.

29Joshua impaled the king of Ai on a sharpened pole and left him
there until evening. At sunset the Israelites took down the body, as
Joshua commanded, and threw it in front of the town gate. They
piled a great heap of stones over him that can still be seen today.

THE LORD’S COVENANT RENEWED

30Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, on

Mount Ebal. 31He followed the commands that Moses the LORD's
servant had written in the Book of Instruction: "Make me an altar
from stones that are uncut and have not been shaped with iron
tools."* Then on the altar they presented burnt offerings and peace
offerings to the LORD. 32And as the Israelites watched, Joshua
copied onto the stones of the altar* the instructions Moses had given
them.

33Then all the Israelites—foreigners and native-born alike—along
with the elders, officers, and judges, were divided into two groups.
One group stood in front of Mount Gerizim, the other in front of
Mount Ebal. Each group faced the other, and between them stood
the Levitical priests carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant. This
was all done according to the commands that Moses, the servant of
the LORD, had previously given for blessing the people of Israel.

34Joshua then read to them all the blessings and curses Moses had
written in the Book of Instruction. 35Every word of every command
that Moses had ever given was read to the entire assembly of Israel,
including the women and children and the foreigners who lived
among them.

Joshua 9

THE GIBEONITES DECEIVE ISRAEL

1Now all the kings west of the Jordan River heard about what had
happened. These were the kings of the Hittites, Amorites,
Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who lived in the hill
country, in the western foothills,* and along the coast of the
Mediterranean Sea* as far north as the Lebanon mountains. 2These
kings combined their armies to fight as one against Joshua and the
Israelites.

3But when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to
Jericho and Ai, 4they resorted to deception to save themselves. They
sent ambassadors to Joshua, loading their donkeys with weathered

saddlebags and old, patched wineskins. 5They put on worn-out,
patched sandals and ragged clothes. And the bread they took with
them was dry and moldy. 6When they arrived at the camp of Israel
at Gilgal, they told Joshua and the men of Israel, “We have come
from a distant land to ask you to make a peace treaty with us.”

7The Israelites replied to these Hivites, “How do we know you don’t
live nearby? For if you do, we cannot make a treaty with you.”

8They replied, “We are your servants.”

“But who are you?” Joshua demanded. “Where do you come from?”

9They answered, “Your servants have come from a very distant
country. We have heard of the might of the LORD your God and of
all he did in Egypt. 10We have also heard what he did to the two
Amorite kings east of the Jordan River—King Sihon of Heshbon and
King Og of Bashan (who lived in Ashtaroth). 11So our elders and all
our people instructed us, ‘Take supplies for a long journey. Go meet
with the people of Israel and tell them, “We are your servants;
please make a treaty with us.”’

12“This bread was hot from the ovens when we left our homes. But
now, as you can see, it is dry and moldy. 13These wineskins were
new when we filled them, but now they are old and split open. And
our clothing and sandals are worn out from our very long journey.”

14So the Israelites examined their food, but they did not consult the
LORD. 15Then Joshua made a peace treaty with them and
guaranteed their safety, and the leaders of the community ratified
their agreement with a binding oath.

16Three days after making the treaty, they learned that these people
actually lived nearby! 17The Israelites set out at once to investigate
and reached their towns in three days. The names of these towns
were Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim. 18But the

Israelites did not attack the towns, for the Israelite leaders had made a vow to them in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

The people of Israel grumbled against their leaders because of the treaty. 19But the leaders replied, “Since we have sworn an oath in the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel, we cannot touch them. 20This is what we must do. We must let them live, for divine anger would come upon us if we broke our oath. 21Let them live.” So they made them woodcutters and water carriers for the entire community, as the Israelite leaders directed.

22Joshua called together the Gibeonites and said, “Why did you lie to us? Why did you say that you live in a distant land when you live right here among us? 23May you be cursed! From now on you will always be servants who cut wood and carry water for the house of my God.”

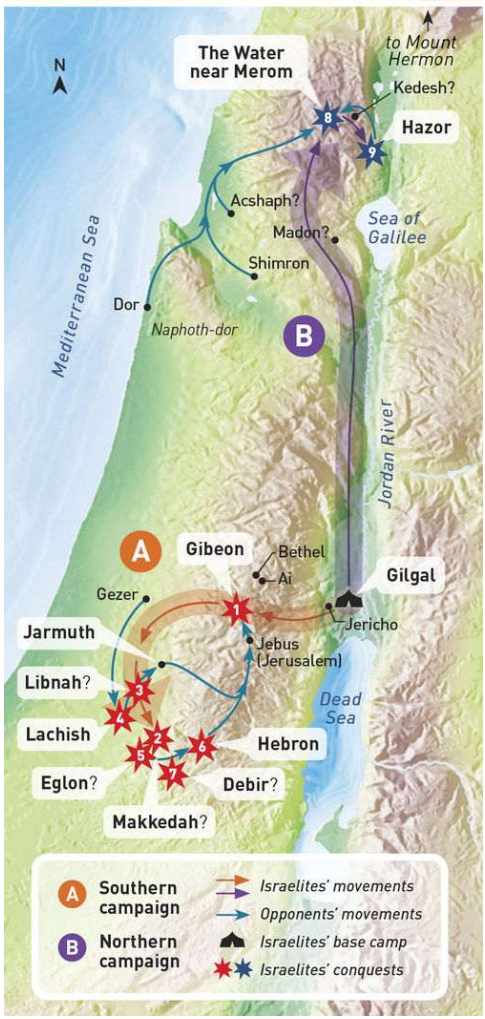
24They replied, “We did it because we—your servants—were clearly told that the LORD your God commanded his servant Moses to give you this entire land and to destroy all the people living in it. So we feared greatly for our lives because of you. That is why we have done this. 25Now we are at your mercy—do to us whatever you think is right.”

26So Joshua did not allow the people of Israel to kill them. 27But that day he made the Gibeonites the woodcutters and water carriers for the community of Israel and for the altar of the LORD—wherever the LORD would choose to build it. And that is what they do to this day.

CONQUERING CANAAN

Israel conquered the land in two phases, first in the south, then in the north. Both campaigns, though, were initiated not by Israel but by the Canaanites already living in the land. The king of Jerusalem attacked Gibeon, initiating the southern campaign. Later the king of Hazor instigated Israel's northern campaign. Joshua 12 summarizes all the kings that Israel defeated. This map shows the major battlegrounds of each campaign.

Josh 10–12



CONQUERING CANAAN

Joshua 10

ISRAEL DEFEATS THE SOUTHERN ARMIES

1Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had captured
and completely destroyed* Ai and killed its king, just as he had
destroyed the town of Jericho and killed its king. He also learned
that the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel and were now their
allies. 2He and his people became very afraid when they heard all
this because Gibeon was a large town—as large as the royal cities
and larger than Ai. And the Gibeonite men were strong warriors.

3So King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem sent messengers to several other
kings: Hoham of Hebron, Piram of Jarmuth, Japhia of Lachish, and
Debir of Eglon. 4"Come and help me destroy Gibeon," he urged
them, "for they have made peace with Joshua and the people of
Israel." 5So these five Amorite kings combined their armies for a
united attack. They moved all their troops into place and attacked
Gibeon.

6The men of Gibeon quickly sent messengers to Joshua at his camp
in Gilgal. "Don't abandon your servants now!" they pleaded. "Come
at once! Save us! Help us! For all the Amorite kings who live in the
hill country have joined forces to attack us."

7So Joshua and his entire army, including his best warriors, left
Gilgal and set out for Gibeon. 8"Do not be afraid of them," the
LORD said to Joshua, "for I have given you victory over them. Not a
single one of them will be able to stand up to you."

9Joshua traveled all night from Gilgal and took the Amorite armies
by surprise. 10The LORD threw them into a panic, and the Israelites
slaughtered great numbers of them at Gibeon. Then the Israelites
chased the enemy along the road to Beth-horon, killing them all
along the way to Azekah and Makkedah. 11As the Amorites

retreated down the road from Beth-horon, the LORD destroyed them with a terrible hailstorm from heaven that continued until they reached Azekah. The hail killed more of the enemy than the Israelites killed with the sword.

12On the day the LORD gave the Israelites victory over the Amorites, Joshua prayed to the LORD in front of all the people of Israel. He said, “Let the sun stand still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon.”

13So the sun stood still and the moon stayed in place until the nation of Israel had defeated its enemies.

Is this event not recorded in *The Book of Jashar**? The sun stayed in the middle of the sky, and it did not set as on a normal day.*14There has never been a day like this one before or since, when the LORD answered such a prayer. Surely the LORD fought for Israel that day!

15Then Joshua and the Israelite army returned to their camp at Gilgal.

JOSHUA KILLS THE FIVE SOUTHERN KINGS

16During the battle the five kings escaped and hid in a cave at Makkedah. 17When Joshua heard that they had been found, 18he issued this command: “Cover the opening of the cave with large rocks, and place guards at the entrance to keep the kings inside. 19The rest of you continue chasing the enemy and cut them down from the rear. Don’t give them a chance to get back to their towns,

for the LORD your God has given you victory over them.”

20So Joshua and the Israelite army continued the slaughter and completely crushed the enemy. They totally wiped out the five armies except for a tiny remnant that managed to reach their fortified towns. 21Then the Israelites returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah. After that, no one dared to speak even a word against Israel.

22Then Joshua said, “Remove the rocks covering the opening of the cave, and bring the five kings to me.” 23So they brought the five kings out of the cave—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. 24When they brought them out, Joshua told the commanders of his army, “Come and put your feet on the kings’ necks.” And they did as they were told.

25“Don’t ever be afraid or discouraged,” Joshua told his men. “Be strong and courageous, for the LORD is going to do this to all of your enemies.” 26Then Joshua killed each of the five kings and impaled them on five sharpened poles, where they hung until evening.

27As the sun was going down, Joshua gave instructions for the bodies of the kings to be taken down from the poles and thrown into the cave where they had been hiding. Then they covered the opening of the cave with a pile of large rocks, which remains to this very day.

ISRAEL DESTROYS THE SOUTHERN TOWNS

28That same day Joshua captured and destroyed the town of Makkedah. He killed everyone in it, including the king, leaving no survivors. He destroyed them all, and he killed the king of Makkedah as he had killed the king of Jericho. 29Then Joshua and the Israelites went to Libnah and attacked it. 30There, too, the LORD gave them the town and its king. He killed everyone in it, leaving no survivors. Then Joshua killed the king of Libnah as he had killed

the king of Jericho.

31From Libnah, Joshua and the Israelites went to Lachish and attacked it. 32Here again, the LORD gave them Lachish. Joshua took it on the second day and killed everyone in it, just as he had done at Libnah. 33During the attack on Lachish, King Horam of Gezer arrived with his army to help defend the town. But Joshua's men killed him and his army, leaving no survivors.

34Then Joshua and the Israelite army went on to Eglon and attacked it. 35They captured it that day and killed everyone in it. He completely destroyed everyone, just as he had done at Lachish. 36From Eglon, Joshua and the Israelite army went up to Hebron and attacked it. 37They captured the town and killed everyone in it, including its king, leaving no survivors. They did the same thing to all of its surrounding villages. And just as he had done at Eglon, he completely destroyed the entire population.

38Then Joshua and the Israelites turned back and attacked Debir. 39He captured the town, its king, and all of its surrounding villages. He completely destroyed everyone in it, leaving no survivors. He did to Debir and its king just what he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king.

40So Joshua conquered the whole region—the kings and people of the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills,* and the mountain slopes. He completely destroyed everyone in the land, leaving no survivors, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. 41Joshua slaughtered them from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza and from the region around the town of Goshen up to Gibeon. 42Joshua conquered all these kings and their land in a single campaign, for the LORD, the God of Israel, was fighting for his people.

43Then Joshua and the Israelite army returned to their camp at Gilgal.

Joshua 11

ISRAEL DEFEATS THE NORTHERN ARMIES

1When King Jabin of Hazor heard what had happened, he sent
messages to the following kings: King Jobab of Madon; the king of
Shimron; the king of Acshaph; 2all the kings of the northern hill
country; the kings in the Jordan Valley south of Galilee*; the kings
in the Galilean foothills*; the kings of Naphoth-dor on the west; 3the
kings of Canaan, both east and west; the kings of the Amorites, the
Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites in the hill country, and the
Hivites in the towns on the slopes of Mount Hermon in the land of
Mizpah.

4All these kings came out to fight. Their combined armies formed a
vast horde. And with all their horses and chariots, they covered the
landscape like the sand on the seashore. 5The kings joined forces
and established their camp around the water near Merom to fight
against Israel.

6Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them. By this
time tomorrow I will hand all of them over to Israel as dead men.

Then you must cripple their horses and burn their chariots.”

7So Joshua and all his fighting men traveled to the water near
Merom and attacked suddenly. 8And the LORD gave them victory
over their enemies. The Israelites chased them as far as Greater
Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and eastward into the valley of
Mizpah, until not one enemy warrior was left alive. 9Then Joshua
crippled the horses and burned all the chariots, as the LORD had
instructed.

HAZOR

10Joshua then turned back and captured Hazor and killed its king.
(Hazor had at one time been the capital of all these kingdoms.)
11The Israelites completely destroyed* every living thing in the city,
leaving no survivors. Not a single person was spared. And then
Joshua burned the city.

12Joshua slaughtered all the other kings and their people,
completely destroying them, just as Moses, the servant of the LORD,
had commanded. 13But the Israelites did not burn any of the towns
built on mounds except Hazor, which Joshua burned. 14And the
Israelites took all the plunder and livestock of the ravaged towns for
themselves. But they killed all the people, leaving no survivors. 15As
the LORD had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded
Joshua. And Joshua did as he was told, carefully obeying all the
commands that the LORD had given to Moses.

16So Joshua conquered the entire region—the hill country, the
entire Negev, the whole area around the town of Goshen, the
western foothills, the Jordan Valley,* the mountains of Israel, and
the Galilean foothills. 17The Israelite territory now extended all the
way from Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir in the south, as far
north as Baal-gad at the foot of Mount Hermon in the valley of
Lebanon. Joshua killed all the kings of those territories, 18waging
war for a long time to accomplish this. 19No one in this region made
peace with the Israelites except the Hivites of Gibeon. All the others
were defeated. 20For the LORD hardened their hearts and caused
them to fight the Israelites. So they were completely destroyed
without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21During this period Joshua destroyed all the descendants of Anak,
who lived in the hill country of Hebron, Debir, Anab, and the entire
hill country of Judah and Israel. He killed them all and completely
destroyed their towns. 22None of the descendants of Anak were left
in all the land of Israel, though some still remained in Gaza, Gath,
and Ashdod.

23So Joshua took control of the entire land, just as the LORD had
instructed Moses. He gave it to the people of Israel as their special
possession, dividing the land among the tribes. So the land finally
had rest from war.

Joshua 12

KINGS DEFEATED EAST OF THE JORDAN

1These are the kings east of the Jordan River who had been killed
by the Israelites and whose land was taken. Their territory extended
from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon and included all the land
east of the Jordan Valley.*

2King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, was defeated.
His kingdom included Aroer, on the edge of the Arnon Gorge, and
extended from the middle of the Arnon Gorge to the Jabbok River,
which serves as a border for the Ammonites. This territory included
the southern half of the territory of Gilead. 3Sihon also controlled
the Jordan Valley and regions to the east—from as far north as the
Sea of Galilee to as far south as the Dead Sea,* including the road to
Beth-jeshimoth and southward to the slopes of Pisgah.

4King Og of Bashan, the last of the Rephaites, lived at Ashtaroth and
Edrei. 5He ruled a territory stretching from Mount Hermon to
Salecah in the north and to all of Bashan in the east, and westward
to the borders of the kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah. This territory
included the northern half of Gilead, as far as the boundary of King
Sihon of Heshbon.

6Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the Israelites had destroyed
the people of King Sihon and King Og. And Moses gave their land as
a possession to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of
Manasseh.

KINGS DEFEATED WEST OF THE JORDAN

7The following is a list of the kings that Joshua and the Israelite armies defeated on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which leads up to Seir. (Joshua gave this land to the tribes of Israel as their possession, 8including the hill country, the western foothills,* the Jordan Valley, the mountain slopes, the Judean wilderness, and the Negev. The people who lived in this region were the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.) These are the kings Israel defeated:

9The king of Jericho The king of Ai, near Bethel

10The king of Jerusalem The king of Hebron

11The king of Jarmuth The king of Lachish

12The king of Eglon The king of Gezer

13The king of Debir The king of Geder

14The king of Hormah The king of Arad

15The king of Libnah The king of Adullam

16The king of Makkedah The king of Bethel

17The king of Tappuah The king of Hepher

18The king of Aphek The king of Lasharon

19The king of Madon The king of Hazor

20The king of Shimron-meron The king of Acshaph

21The king of Taanach The king of Megiddo

22The king of Kedesh The king of Jokneam in Carmel

23 The king of Dor in the town of Naphoth-dor*
The king of Goyim in Gilgal*

24 The king of Tirzah.

In all, thirty-one kings were defeated.

MOUNT HERMON

A PIECE OF THE PROMISED LAND

Joshua 13

THE LAND YET TO BE CONQUERED

1When Joshua was an old man, the LORD said to him, “You are
growing old, and much land remains to be conquered. 2This is the
territory that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and the

Geshurites, 3and the larger territory of the Canaanites, extending from the stream of Shihor on the border of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron. It includes the territory of the five Philistine rulers of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The land of the Avvites 4in the south also remains to be conquered. In the north, the following area has not yet been conquered: all the land of the Canaanites, including Mearah (which belongs to the Sidonians), stretching northward to Aphek on the border of the Amorites; 5the land of the Gebalites and all of the Lebanon mountain area to the east, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath; 6and all the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, including all the land of the Sidonians.

"I myself will drive these people out of the land ahead of the Israelites. So be sure to give this land to Israel as a special possession, just as I have commanded you. 7Include all this territory as Israel's possession when you divide this land among the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh."

THE LAND DIVIDED EAST OF THE JORDAN

8Half the tribe of Manasseh and the tribes of Reuben and Gad had already received their grants of land on the east side of the Jordan, for Moses, the servant of the LORD, had previously assigned this land to them.

9Their territory extended from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Gorge (including the town in the middle of the gorge) to the plain beyond Medeba, as far as Dibon. 10It also included all the towns of King Sihon of the Amorites, who had reigned in Heshbon, and extended as far as the borders of Ammon. 11It included Gilead, the territory of the kingdoms of Geshur and Maacah, all of Mount Hermon, all of Bashan as far as Salecah, 12and all the territory of King Og of Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. King Og was the last of the Rephaites, for Moses had attacked them and driven them out. 13But the Israelites failed to drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day.

AN ALLOTMENT FOR THE TRIBE OF LEVI 14**MOSES DID NOT ASSIGN ANY ALLOTMENT OF LAND TO THE TRIBE OF LEVI. INSTEAD, AS THE LORD HAD PROMISED THEM, THEIR ALLOTMENT CAME FROM THE OFFERINGS BURNED ON THE ALTAR TO THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL.**

THE LAND GIVEN TO THE TRIBE OF REUBEN

15Moses had assigned the following area to the clans of the tribe of Reuben.

16Their territory extended from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Gorge (including the town in the middle of the gorge) to the plain beyond Medeba. 17It included Heshbon and the other towns on the plain—Dibon, Bamoth-baal, Beth-baal-meon, 18Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, 19Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth-shahar on the hill above the valley, 20Beth-peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth.

21The land of Reuben also included all the towns of the plain and the entire kingdom of Sihon. Sihon was the Amorite king who had reigned in Heshbon and was killed by Moses along with the leaders of Midian—Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—princes living in the region who were allied with Sihon. 22The Israelites had also killed Balaam son of Beor, who used magic to tell the future. 23The Jordan River marked the western boundary for the tribe of Reuben. The towns and their surrounding villages in this area were given as a homeland to the clans of the tribe of Reuben.

THE LAND GIVEN TO THE TRIBE OF GAD

24Moses had assigned the following area to the clans of the tribe of Gad.

25Their territory included Jazer, all the towns of Gilead, and half of the land of Ammon, as far as the town of Aroer just west of* Rabbah. 26It extended from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Lo-debar.*27In the valley were Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, Zaphon, and the

rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon. The western boundary ran along the Jordan River, extended as far north as the tip of the Sea of Galilee,* and then turned eastward. 28The towns and their surrounding villages in this area were given as a homeland to the clans of the tribe of Gad.

THE LAND GIVEN TO THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH

29Moses had assigned the following area to the clans of the half-tribe of Manasseh.

30Their territory extended from Mahanaim, including all of Bashan, all the former kingdom of King Og, and the sixty towns of Jair in Bashan. 31It also included half of Gilead and King Og's royal cities of Ashtaroth and Edrei. All this was given to the clans of the descendants of Makir, who was Manasseh's son.

32These are the allotments Moses had made while he was on the plains of Moab, across the Jordan River, east of Jericho. 33But Moses gave no allotment of land to the tribe of Levi, for the LORD, the God of Israel, had promised that he himself would be their allotment.

Joshua 14

THE LAND DIVIDED WEST OF THE JORDAN

1The remaining tribes of Israel received land in Canaan as allotted by Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the tribal leaders. 2These nine and a half tribes received their grants of land by means of sacred lots, in accordance with the LORD's command through Moses. 3Moses had already given a grant of land to the two and a half tribes on the east side of the Jordan River, but he had given the Levites no such allotment. 4The descendants of Joseph had become two separate tribes—Manasseh and Ephraim. And the Levites were given no land at all, only towns to live in with surrounding pasturelands for their livestock and all their possessions. 5So the land was distributed in strict accordance with the LORD's

commands to Moses.

CALEB REQUESTS HIS LAND

6A delegation from the tribe of Judah, led by Caleb son of
Jephunneh the Kenizzite, came to Joshua at Gilgal. Caleb said to
Joshua, “Remember what the LORD said to Moses, the man of God,
about you and me when we were at Kadesh-barnea. 7I was forty
years old when Moses, the servant of the LORD, sent me from
Kadesh-barnea to explore the land of Canaan. I returned and gave
an honest report, 8but my brothers who went with me frightened
the people from entering the Promised Land. For my part, I
wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God. 9So that day Moses
solemnly promised me, ‘The land of Canaan on which you were just
walking will be your grant of land and that of your descendants
forever, because you wholeheartedly followed the LORD my God.’

10“Now, as you can see, the LORD has kept me alive and well as he
promised for all these forty-five years since Moses made this
promise—even while Israel wandered in the wilderness. Today I am
eighty-five years old. 11I am as strong now as I was when Moses sent
me on that journey, and I can still travel and fight as well as I could
then. 12So give me the hill country that the LORD promised me. You
will remember that as scouts we found the descendants of Anak
living there in great, walled towns. But if the LORD is with me, I
will drive them out of the land, just as the LORD said.”

13So Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave Hebron to
him as his portion of land. 14Hebron still belongs to the descendants
of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite because he wholeheartedly
followed the LORD, the God of Israel. 15(Previously Hebron had
been called Kiriath-arba. It had been named after Arba, a great hero
of the descendants of Anak.) And the land had rest from war.

Joshua 15

THE LAND GIVEN TO THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

1The allotment for the clans of the tribe of Judah reached
southward to the border of Edom, as far south as the wilderness of
Zin.

2The southern boundary began at the south bay of the Dead
Sea,*3ran south of Scorpion Pass* into the wilderness of Zin, and
then went south of Kadesh-barnea to Hezron. Then it went up to
Addar, where it turned toward Karka. 4From there it passed to
Azmon until it finally reached the Brook of Egypt, which it followed
to the Mediterranean Sea.* This was their* southern boundary.

5The eastern boundary extended along the Dead Sea to the mouth of
the Jordan River.
The northern boundary began at the bay where the Jordan River
empties into the Dead Sea, 6went up from there to Beth-hoglah, then
proceeded north of Beth-arabah to the Stone of Bohan. (Bohan was
Reuben's son.) 7From that point it went through the valley of Achor
to Debir, turning north toward Gilgal, which is across from the
slopes of Adummim on the south side of the valley. From there the
boundary extended to the springs at En-shemesh and on to En-rogel.
8The boundary then passed through the valley of Ben-Hinnom,
along the southern slopes of the Jebusites, where the city of
Jerusalem is located. Then it went west to the top of the mountain
above the valley of Hinnom, and on up to the northern end of the
valley of Rephaim. 9From there the boundary extended from the top
of the mountain to the spring at the waters of Nephtoah,* and from
there to the towns on Mount Ephron. Then it turned toward Baalah
(that is, Kiriath-jearim). 10The boundary circled west of Baalah to
Mount Seir, passed along to the town of Kesalon on the northern
slope of Mount Jearim, and went down to Beth-shemesh and on to
Timnah. 11The boundary then proceeded to the slope of the hill
north of Ekron, where it turned toward Shikkeron and Mount
Baalah. It passed Jabneel and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

12The western boundary was the shoreline of the Mediterranean
Sea.*

These are the boundaries for the clans of the tribe of Judah.

THE LAND GIVEN TO CALEB

13The LORD commanded Joshua to assign some of Judah's territory
to Caleb son of Jephunneh. So Caleb was given the town of Kiriath-
arba (that is, Hebron), which had been named after Anak's ancestor.
14Caleb drove out the three groups of Anakites—the descendants of
Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the sons of Anak.

15From there he went to fight against the people living in the town
of Debir (formerly called Kiriath-sepher). 16Caleb said, "I will give
my daughter Acsah in marriage to the one who attacks and captures
Kiriath-sepher." 17Othniel, the son of Caleb's brother Kenaz, was the
one who conquered it, so Acsah became Othniel's wife.

18When Acsah married Othniel, she urged him* to ask her father for
a field. As she got down off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What's
the matter?"

19She said, "Give me another gift. You have already given me land
in the Negev; now please give me springs of water, too." So Caleb
gave her the upper and lower springs.

THE TOWNS ALLOTTED TO JUDAH

20This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of
Judah.

21The towns of Judah situated along the borders of Edom in the
extreme south were Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, 22Kinah, Dimonah,
Adadah, 23Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, 24Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25Hazor-
hadattah, Kerioth-hezron (that is, Hazor), 26Amam, Shema,
Moladah, 27Hazar-gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet, 28Hazar-shual,
Beersheba, Biziothiah, 29Baalah, Iim, Ezem, 30Eltolad, Kesil,
Hormah, 31Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, 32Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain,
and Rimmon—twenty-nine towns with their surrounding villages.

33The following towns situated in the western foothills* were also
given to Judah: Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, 34Zanoah, En-gannim,
Tappuah, Enam, 35Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, 36Shaaraim,
Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim—fourteen towns with their
surrounding villages.

37Also included were Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad, 38Dilean,
Mizpeh, Joktheel, 39Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, 40Cabbon, Lahmam,
Kitlish, 41Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah—sixteen
towns with their surrounding villages.

42Besides these, there were Libnah, Ether, Ashan, 43Iphtah, Ashnah,
Nezib, 44Keilah, Aczib, and Mareshah—nine towns with their
surrounding villages.

45The territory of the tribe of Judah also included Ekron and its
surrounding settlements and villages. 46From Ekron the boundary
extended west and included the towns near Ashdod with their
surrounding villages. 47It also included Ashdod with its surrounding
settlements and villages and Gaza with its settlements and villages,
as far as the Brook of Egypt and along the coast of the
Mediterranean Sea.

48Judah also received the following towns in the hill country:
Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, 49Dannah, Kiriath-sannah (that is, Debir),
50Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, 51Goshen, Holon, and Giloh—eleven
towns with their surrounding villages.

52Also included were the towns of Arab, Dumah, Eshan, 53Janim,
Beth-tappuah, Aphekah, 54Humtah, Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron),
and Zior—nine towns with their surrounding villages.

55Besides these, there were Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, 56Jezreel,
Jokdeam, Zanoah, 57Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah—ten towns with
their surrounding villages.

58In addition, there were Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, 59Maarath, Beth-
anoth, and Eltekon—six towns with their surrounding villages.

60There were also Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim) and Rabbah
—two towns with their surrounding villages.

61In the wilderness there were the towns of Beth-arabah, Middin,
Secacah, 62Nibshan, the City of Salt, and En-gedi—six towns with
their surrounding villages.

63But the tribe of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites, who lived
in the city of Jerusalem, so the Jebusites live there among the
people of Judah to this day.

Joshua 16

THE LAND GIVEN TO EPHRAIM AND WEST MANASSEH

1The allotment for the descendants of Joseph extended from the
Jordan River near Jericho, east of the springs of Jericho, through
the wilderness and into the hill country of Bethel. 2From Bethel
(that is, Luz)* it ran over to Ataroth in the territory of the Arkites.
3Then it descended westward to the territory of the Japhletites as
far as Lower Beth-horon, then to Gezer and over to the
Mediterranean Sea.*

4This was the homeland allocated to the families of Joseph's sons,
Manasseh and Ephraim.

THE LAND GIVEN TO EPHRAIM

5The following territory was given to the clans of the tribe of
Ephraim.

The boundary of their homeland began at Ataroth-addar in the east.
From there it ran to Upper Beth-horon, 6then on to the
Mediterranean Sea. From Micmethath on the north, the boundary
curved eastward past Taanath-shiloh to the east of Janoah. 7From
Janoah it turned southward to Ataroth and Naarah, touched
Jericho, and ended at the Jordan River. 8From Tappuah the
boundary extended westward, following the Kanah Ravine to the
Mediterranean Sea. This is the homeland allocated to the clans of

the tribe of Ephraim.

9In addition, some towns with their surrounding villages in the territory allocated to the half-tribe of Manasseh were set aside for the tribe of Ephraim. 10They did not drive the Canaanites out of Gezer, however, so the people of Gezer live as slaves among the people of Ephraim to this day.

Joshua 17

THE LAND GIVEN TO WEST MANASSEH

1The next allotment of land was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, the descendants of Joseph's older son. Makir, the firstborn son of Manasseh, was the father of Gilead. Because his descendants were experienced soldiers, the regions of Gilead and Bashan on the east side of the Jordan had already been given to them. 2So the allotment on the west side of the Jordan was for the remaining families within the clans of the tribe of Manasseh: Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher, and Shemida. These clans represent the male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph.

3However, Zelophehad, a descendant of Hepher son of Gilead, son of Makir, son of Manasseh, had no sons. He had only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4These women came to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the Israelite leaders and said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us a grant of land along with the men of our tribe."

So Joshua gave them a grant of land along with their uncles, as the LORD had commanded. 5As a result, Manasseh's total allocation came to ten parcels of land, in addition to the land of Gilead and Bashan across the Jordan River, 6because the female descendants of Manasseh received a grant of land along with the male descendants. (The land of Gilead was given to the rest of the male descendants of Manasseh.)

7The boundary of the tribe of Manasseh extended from the border

of Asher to Micmethath, near Shechem. Then the boundary went
south from Micmethath to the settlement near the spring of
Tappuah. 8The land surrounding Tappuah belonged to Manasseh,
but the town of Tappuah itself, on the border of Manasseh's
territory, belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. 9From the spring of
Tappuah, the boundary of Manasseh followed the Kanah Ravine to
the Mediterranean Sea.* Several towns south of the ravine were
inside Manasseh's territory, but they actually belonged to the tribe
of Ephraim. 10In general, however, the land south of the ravine
belonged to Ephraim, and the land north of the ravine belonged to
Manasseh. Manasseh's boundary ran along the northern side of the
ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. North of Manasseh was
the territory of Asher, and to the east was the territory of Issachar.

11The following towns within the territory of Issachar and Asher,
however, were given to Manasseh: Beth-shan,* Ibleam, Dor (that is,
Naphoth-dor),* Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo, each with their
surrounding settlements.

12But the descendants of Manasseh were unable to occupy these
towns because the Canaanites were determined to stay in that
region. 13Later, however, when the Israelites became strong enough,
they forced the Canaanites to work as slaves. But they did not drive
them out of the land.

14The descendants of Joseph came to Joshua and asked, "Why have
you given us only one portion of land as our homeland when the
LORD has blessed us with so many people?"

15Joshua replied, "If there are so many of you, and if the hill
country of Ephraim is not large enough for you, clear out land for
yourselves in the forest where the Perizzites and Rephaites live."

16The descendants of Joseph responded, "It's true that the hill
country is not large enough for us. But all the Canaanites in the
lowlands have iron chariots, both those in Beth-shan and its
surrounding settlements and those in the valley of Jezreel. They are

too strong for us.”

17Then Joshua said to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the descendants of Joseph, “Since you are so large and strong, you will be given more than one portion. 18The forests of the hill country will be yours as well. Clear as much of the land as you wish, and take possession of its farthest corners. And you will drive out the Canaanites from the valleys, too, even though they are strong and have iron chariots.”

Joshua 18

THE ALLOTMENTS OF THE REMAINING LAND

1Now that the land was under Israelite control, the entire community of Israel gathered at Shiloh and set up the Tabernacle.*2But there remained seven tribes who had not yet been allotted their grants of land.

3Then Joshua asked them, “How long are you going to wait before taking possession of the remaining land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given to you? 4Select three men from each tribe, and I will send them out to explore the land and map it out. They will then return to me with a written report of their proposed divisions of their new homeland. 5Let them divide the land into seven sections, excluding Judah’s territory in the south and Joseph’s territory in the north. 6And when you record the seven divisions of the land and bring them to me, I will cast sacred lots in the presence of the LORD our God to assign land to each tribe.

7“The Levites, however, will not receive any allotment of land. Their role as priests of the LORD is their allotment. And the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh won’t receive any more land, for they have already received their grant of land, which Moses, the servant of the LORD, gave them on the east side of the Jordan River.”

8As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua commanded them, “Go and explore the land and write a description of it. Then return to me, and I will assign the land to the tribes by casting sacred lots here in the presence of the LORD at Shiloh.” 9The men did as they were told and mapped the entire territory into seven sections, listing the towns in each section. They made a written record and then returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. 10And there at Shiloh, Joshua cast sacred lots in the presence of the LORD to determine which tribe should have each section.

THE LAND GIVEN TO BENJAMIN

11The first allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin. It lay between the territory assigned to the tribes of Judah and Joseph.

12The northern boundary of Benjamin’s land began at the Jordan River, went north of the slope of Jericho, then west through the hill country and the wilderness of Beth-aven. 13From there the boundary went south to Luz (that is, Bethel) and proceeded down to Ataroth-addar on the hill that lies south of Lower Beth-horon.

14The boundary then made a turn and swung south along the western edge of the hill facing Beth-horon, ending at the village of Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a town belonging to the tribe of Judah. This was the western boundary.

15The southern boundary began at the outskirts of Kiriath-jearim. From that western point it ran* to the spring at the waters of Nephtoah,*16and down to the base of the mountain beside the valley of Ben-Hinnom, at the northern end of the valley of Rephaim. From there it went down the valley of Hinnom, crossing south of the slope where the Jebusites lived, and continued down to En-rogel. 17From En-rogel the boundary proceeded in a northerly direction and came to En-shemesh and on to Geliloth (which is across from the slopes of Adummim). Then it went down to the Stone of Bohan. (Bohan was Reuben’s son.) 18From there it passed along the north side of the slope overlooking the Jordan Valley.* The border then

went down into the valley, 19ran past the north slope of Beth-hoglah, and ended at the north bay of the Dead Sea,* which is the southern end of the Jordan River. This was the southern boundary.

20The eastern boundary was the Jordan River.

These were the boundaries of the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin.

THE TOWNS GIVEN TO BENJAMIN

21These were the towns given to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin.

Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz, 22Beth-arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, 23Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, 24Kephar-ammoni, Ophni, and Geba—twelve towns with their surrounding villages. 25Also Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, 26Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah, 27Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 28Zela, Haeleph, the Jebusite town (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah, and Kiriath-jearim*—fourteen towns with their surrounding villages.

This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Benjamin.

Joshua 19

THE LAND GIVEN TO SIMEON

1The second allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Simeon. Their homeland was surrounded by Judah's territory.

2Simeon's homeland included Beersheba, Sheba, Moladah, 3Hazar-shual, Balah, Ezem, 4Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, 5Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah, 6Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen—thirteen towns with their surrounding villages. 7It also included Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan—four towns with their villages, 8including all the surrounding villages as far south as Baalath-beer (also known as Ramah of the Negev).

This was the homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Simeon.
9Their allocation of land came from part of what had been given to
Judah because Judah's territory was too large for them. So the tribe
of Simeon received an allocation within the territory of Judah.

THE LAND GIVEN TO ZEBULUN

10The third allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of
Zebulun.

The boundary of Zebulun's homeland started at Sarid. 11From there
it went west, going past Maralah, touching Dabbesheth, and
proceeding to the brook east of Jokneam. 12In the other direction,
the boundary went east from Sarid to the border of Kisloth-tabor,
and from there to Daberath and up to Japhia. 13Then it continued
east to Gath-hepher, Eth-kazin, and Rimmon and turned toward
Neah. 14The northern boundary of Zebulun passed Hannathon and
ended at the valley of Iphtah-el. 15The towns in these areas included
Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem—twelve towns
with their surrounding villages.

16The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Zebulun
included these towns and their surrounding villages.

THE LAND GIVEN TO ISSACHAR

17The fourth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of
Issachar.

18Its boundaries included the following towns: Jezreel, Kesulloth,
Shunem, 19Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, 20Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez,
21Remeth, En-gannim, En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez. 22The boundary
also touched Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh, ending at the
Jordan River—sixteen towns with their surrounding villages.

23The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Issachar
included these towns and their surrounding villages.

THE LAND GIVEN TO ASHER

24The fifth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of Asher.

25Its boundaries included these towns: Helkath, Hali, Beten,
Acshaph, 26Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal. The boundary on the
west touched Carmel and Shihor-libnath, 27then it turned east
toward Beth-dagon, and ran as far as Zebulun in the valley of
Iphtah-el, going north to Beth-emek and Neiel. It then continued
north to Cabul, 28Abdon,* Rehob, Hammon, Kanah, and as far as
Greater Sidon. 29Then the boundary turned toward Ramah and the
fortress of Tyre, where it turned toward Hosah and came to the
Mediterranean Sea.* The territory also included Mehebel, Aczib,
30Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob—twenty-two towns with their
surrounding villages.

31The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Asher included
these towns and their surrounding villages.

THE LAND GIVEN TO NAPHTALI

32The sixth allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of
Naphtali.

33Its boundary ran from Heleph, from the oak at Zaanannim, and
extended across to Adami-nekeb, Jabneel, and as far as Lakkum,
ending at the Jordan River. 34The western boundary ran past
Aznoth-tabor, then to Hukkok, and touched the border of Zebulun
in the south, the border of Asher on the west, and the Jordan River*
on the east. 35The fortified towns included in this territory were
Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth, 36Adamah, Ramah,
Hazor, 37Kedesh, Edrei, En-hazor, 38Yiron, Migdal-el, Horem, Beth-
anath, and Beth-shemesh—nineteen towns with their surrounding
villages.

39The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Naphtali
included these towns and their surrounding villages.

THE LAND GIVEN TO DAN

40The seventh allotment of land went to the clans of the tribe of
Dan.

41The land allocated as their homeland included the following
towns: Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir-shemesh, 42Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah,
43Elon, Timnah, Ekron, 44Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, 45Jehud,
Bene-berak, Gath-rimmon, 46Me-jarkon, Rakkon, and the territory
across from Joppa.

47But the tribe of Dan had trouble taking possession of their land,*
so they attacked the town of Laish.* They captured it, slaughtered
its people, and settled there. They renamed the town Dan after their
ancestor.

48The homeland allocated to the clans of the tribe of Dan included
these towns and their surrounding villages.

THE LAND GIVEN TO JOSHUA

49After all the land was divided among the tribes, the Israelites gave
a piece of land to Joshua as his allocation. 50For the LORD had said
he could have any town he wanted. He chose Timnath-serah in the
hill country of Ephraim. He rebuilt the town and lived there.

51These are the territories that Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of
Nun, and the tribal leaders allocated as grants of land to the tribes
of Israel by casting sacred lots in the presence of the LORD at the
entrance of the Tabernacle* at Shiloh. So the division of the land
was completed.

Joshua 20

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

1The LORD said to Joshua, 2“Now tell the Israelites to designate the
cities of refuge, as I instructed Moses. 3Anyone who kills another
person accidentally and unintentionally can run to one of these
cities; they will be places of refuge from relatives seeking revenge
for the person who was killed.

4“Upon reaching one of these cities, the one who caused the death
will appear before the elders at the city gate and present his case.
They must allow him to enter the city and give him a place to live
among them. 5If the relatives of the victim come to avenge the
killing, the leaders must not release the slayer to them, for he killed
the other person unintentionally and without previous hostility.
6But the slayer must stay in that city and be tried by the local
assembly, which will render a judgment. And he must continue to
live in that city until the death of the high priest who was in office
at the time of the accident. After that, he is free to return to his own
home in the town from which he fled.”

7The following cities were designated as cities of refuge: Kedesh of
Galilee, in the hill country of Naphtali; Shechem, in the hill country
of Ephraim; and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), in the hill country of
Judah. 8On the east side of the Jordan River, across from Jericho,
the following cities were designated: Bezer, in the wilderness plain
of the tribe of Reuben; Ramoth in Gilead, in the territory of the
tribe of Gad; and Golan in Bashan, in the land of the tribe of
Manasseh. 9These cities were set apart for all the Israelites as well as
the foreigners living among them. Anyone who accidentally killed
another person could take refuge in one of these cities. In this way,
they could escape being killed in revenge prior to standing trial
before the local assembly.

Joshua 21

THE TOWNS GIVEN TO THE LEVITES

1Then the leaders of the tribe of Levi came to consult with Eleazar
the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of the other tribes of
Israel. 2They came to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan and said,
“The LORD commanded Moses to give us towns to live in and
pasturelands for our livestock.” 3So by the command of the LORD
the people of Israel gave the Levites the following towns and
pasturelands out of their own grants of land.

4The descendants of Aaron, who were members of the Kohathite
clan within the tribe of Levi, were allotted thirteen towns that were
originally assigned to the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.
5The other families of the Kohathite clan were allotted ten towns
from the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

6The clan of Gershon was allotted thirteen towns from the tribes of
Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

7The clan of Merari was allotted twelve towns from the tribes of
Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

8So the Israelites obeyed the LORD’s command to Moses and
assigned these towns and pasturelands to the Levites by casting
sacred lots.

9The Israelites gave the following towns from the tribes of Judah
and Simeon 10to the descendants of Aaron, who were members of
the Kohathite clan within the tribe of Levi, since the sacred lot fell
to them first: 11Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), in the hill country of
Judah, along with its surrounding pasturelands. (Arba was an
ancestor of Anak.) 12But the open fields beyond the town and the
surrounding villages were given to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his
possession.

13The following towns with their pasturelands were given to the
descendants of Aaron the priest: Hebron (a city of refuge for those
who accidentally killed someone), Libnah, 14Jattir, Eshtemoa,
15Holon, Debir, 16Ain, Juttah, and Beth-shemesh—nine towns from
these two tribes.

17From the tribe of Benjamin the priests were given the following
towns with their pasturelands: Gibeon, Geba, 18Anathoth, and
Almon—four towns. 19So in all, thirteen towns with their
pasturelands were given to the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

20The rest of the Kohathite clan from the tribe of Levi was allotted
the following towns and pasturelands from the tribe of Ephraim:
21Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim (a city of refuge for those
who accidentally killed someone), Gezer, 22Kibzaim, and Beth-horon
—four towns.

23The following towns and pasturelands were allotted to the priests
from the tribe of Dan: Eltekeh, Gibbethon, 24Aijalon, and Gath-
rimmon—four towns.

25The half-tribe of Manasseh allotted the following towns with their
pasturelands to the priests: Taanach and Gath-rimmon—two towns.
26So in all, ten towns with their pasturelands were given to the rest
of the Kohathite clan.

27The descendants of Gershon, another clan within the tribe of Levi,

received the following towns with their pasturelands from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan (a city of refuge for those who accidentally killed someone) and Be-eshterah—two towns.

28From the tribe of Issachar they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Kishion, Daberath, 29Jarmuth, and En-gannim—four towns.

30From the tribe of Asher they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Mishal, Abdon, 31Helkath, and Rehob—four towns.

32From the tribe of Naphtali they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Kedesh in Galilee (a city of refuge for those who accidentally killed someone), Hammoth-dor, and Kartan—three towns. 33So in all, thirteen towns with their pasturelands were allotted to the clan of Gershon.

34The rest of the Levites—the Merari clan—were given the following towns with their pasturelands from the tribe of Zebulun: Jokneam, Kartah, 35Dimnah, and Nahalal—four towns.

36From the tribe of Reuben they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Bezer, Jahaz,*37Kedemoth, and Mephaath—four towns.

38From the tribe of Gad they received the following towns with their pasturelands: Ramoth in Gilead (a city of refuge for those who accidentally killed someone), Mahanaim, 39Heshbon, and Jazer—four towns. 40So in all, twelve towns were allotted to the clan of Merari.

41The total number of towns and pasturelands within Israelite territory given to the Levites came to forty-eight. 42Every one of

these towns had pasturelands surrounding it.

43So the LORD gave to Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. 44And the LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had solemnly promised their ancestors. None of their enemies could stand against them, for the LORD helped them conquer all their enemies. 45Not a single one of all the good promises the LORD had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true.

Joshua 22

THE EASTERN TRIBES RETURN HOME

1Then Joshua called together the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. 2He told them, “You have done as Moses, the servant of the LORD, commanded you, and you have obeyed every order I have given you. 3During all this time you have not deserted the other tribes. You have been careful to obey the commands of the LORD your God right up to the present day. 4And now the LORD your God has given the other tribes rest, as he promised them. So go back home to the land that Moses, the servant of the LORD, gave you as your possession on the east side of the Jordan River. 5But be very careful to obey all the commands and the instructions that Moses gave to you. Love the LORD your God, walk in all his ways, obey his commands, hold firmly to him, and serve him with all your heart and all your soul.” 6So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went home.

7Moses had given the land of Bashan, east of the Jordan River, to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (The other half of the tribe was given land west of the Jordan.) As Joshua sent them away and blessed them, 8he said to them, “Go back to your homes with the great wealth you have taken from your enemies—the vast herds of livestock, the silver, gold, bronze, and iron, and the large supply of clothing. Share the plunder with your relatives.”

9So the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh left the
rest of Israel at Shiloh in the land of Canaan. They started the
journey back to their own land of Gilead, the territory that
belonged to them according to the LORD's command through
Moses.

THE EASTERN TRIBES BUILD AN ALTAR

10But while they were still in Canaan, and when they came to a
place called Geliloth* near the Jordan River, the men of Reuben,
Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh stopped to build a large and
imposing altar.

11The rest of Israel heard that the people of Reuben, Gad, and the
half-tribe of Manasseh had built an altar at Geliloth at the edge of
the land of Canaan, on the west side of the Jordan River. 12So the
whole community of Israel gathered at Shiloh and prepared to go to
war against them. 13First, however, they sent a delegation led by
Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to talk with the tribes of
Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. 14In this delegation
were ten leaders of Israel, one from each of the ten tribes, and each
the head of his family within the clans of Israel.

15When they arrived in the land of Gilead, they said to the tribes of
Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, 16"The whole
community of the LORD demands to know why you are betraying
the God of Israel. How could you turn away from the LORD and
build an altar for yourselves in rebellion against him? 17Was our sin
at Peor not enough? To this day we are not fully cleansed of it, even
after the plague that struck the entire community of the LORD.
18And yet today you are turning away from following the LORD. If
you rebel against the LORD today, he will be angry with all of us
tomorrow.

19"If you need the altar because the land you possess is defiled, then
join us in the LORD's land, where the Tabernacle of the LORD is

situated, and share our land with us. But do not rebel against the LORD or against us by building an altar other than the one true altar of the LORD our God. 20Didn't divine anger fall on the entire community of Israel when Achan, a member of the clan of Zerah, sinned by stealing the things set apart for the LORD*? He was not the only one who died because of his sin."

21Then the people of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh answered the heads of the clans of Israel: 22"The LORD, the Mighty One, is God! The LORD, the Mighty One, is God! He knows the truth, and may Israel know it, too! We have not built the altar in treacherous rebellion against the LORD. If we have done so, do not spare our lives this day. 23If we have built an altar for ourselves to turn away from the LORD or to offer burnt offerings or grain offerings or peace offerings, may the LORD himself punish us.

24"The truth is, we have built this altar because we fear that in the future your descendants will say to ours, 'What right do you have to worship the LORD, the God of Israel? 25The LORD has placed the Jordan River as a barrier between our people and you people of Reuben and Gad. You have no claim to the LORD.' So your descendants may prevent our descendants from worshiping the LORD.

26"So we decided to build the altar, not for burnt offerings or sacrifices, 27but as a memorial. It will remind our descendants and your descendants that we, too, have the right to worship the LORD at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and peace offerings. Then your descendants will not be able to say to ours, 'You have no claim to the LORD.'

28"If they say this, our descendants can reply, 'Look at this copy of the LORD's altar that our ancestors made. It is not for burnt offerings or sacrifices; it is a reminder of the relationship both of us have with the LORD.' 29Far be it from us to rebel against the LORD or turn away from him by building our own altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings, or sacrifices. Only the altar of the LORD

our God that stands in front of the Tabernacle may be used for that purpose."

30When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the community—the heads of the clans of Israel—heard this from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, they were satisfied. 31Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, replied to them, "Today we know the LORD is among us because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD as we thought. Instead, you have rescued Israel from being destroyed by the hand of the LORD."

32Then Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, and the other leaders left the tribes of Reuben and Gad in Gilead and returned to the land of Canaan to tell the Israelites what had happened. 33And all the Israelites were satisfied and praised God and spoke no more of war against Reuben and Gad.

34The people of Reuben and Gad named the altar "Witness,"* for they said, "It is a witness between us and them that the LORD is our God, too."

Joshua 23

JOSHUA'S FINAL WORDS TO ISRAEL

1The years passed, and the LORD had given the people of Israel rest
from all their enemies. Joshua, who was now very old, 2called
together all the elders, leaders, judges, and officers of Israel. He said
to them, "I am now a very old man. 3You have seen everything the
LORD your God has done for you during my lifetime. The LORD
your God has fought for you against your enemies. 4I have allotted
to you as your homeland all the land of the nations yet
unconquered, as well as the land of those we have already
conquered—from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea* in the
west. 5This land will be yours, for the LORD your God will himself
drive out all the people living there now. You will take possession
of their land, just as the LORD your God promised you.

6"So be very careful to follow everything Moses wrote in the Book
of Instruction. Do not deviate from it, turning either to the right or
to the left. 7Make sure you do not associate with the other people
still remaining in the land. Do not even mention the names of their
gods, much less swear by them or serve them or worship them.
8Rather, cling tightly to the LORD your God as you have done until
now.

9"For the LORD has driven out great and powerful nations for you,
and no one has yet been able to defeat you. 10Each one of you will
put to flight a thousand of the enemy, for the LORD your God fights
for you, just as he has promised. 11So be very careful to love the
LORD your God.

12"But if you turn away from him and cling to the customs of the
survivors of these nations remaining among you, and if you
intermarry with them, 13then know for certain that the LORD your
God will no longer drive them out of your land. Instead, they will
be a snare and a trap to you, a whip for your backs and thorny
brambles in your eyes, and you will vanish from this good land the
LORD your God has given you.

14“Soon I will die, going the way of everything on earth. Deep in
your hearts you know that every promise of the LORD your God has
come true. Not a single one has failed! 15But as surely as the LORD
your God has given you the good things he promised, he will also
bring disaster on you if you disobey him. He will completely
destroy you from this good land he has given you. 16If you break the
covenant of the LORD your God by worshiping and serving other
gods, his anger will burn against you, and you will quickly vanish
from the good land he has given you.”

SKIP TO 24:25

Joshua 24

THE LORD’S COVENANT RENEWED

1Then Joshua summoned all the tribes of Israel to Shechem,
including their elders, leaders, judges, and officers. So they came
and presented themselves to God.

2Joshua said to the people, “This is what the LORD, the God of
Israel, says: Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, the father of
Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River,* and they
worshiped other gods. 3But I took your ancestor Abraham from the
land beyond the Euphrates and led him into the land of Canaan. I
gave him many descendants through his son Isaac. 4To Isaac I gave
Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir, while Jacob
and his children went down into Egypt.

5“Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I brought terrible plagues on
Egypt; and afterward I brought you out as a free people. 6But when
your ancestors arrived at the Red Sea,* the Egyptians chased after
you with chariots and charioteers. 7When your ancestors cried out
to the LORD, I put darkness between you and the Egyptians. I
brought the sea crashing down on the Egyptians, drowning them.

With your very own eyes you saw what I did. Then you lived in the wilderness for many years.

8“Finally, I brought you into the land of the Amorites on the east side of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I destroyed them before you. I gave you victory over them, and you took possession of their land. 9Then Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, started a war against Israel. He summoned Balaam son of Beor to curse you, 10but I would not listen to him. Instead, I made Balaam bless you, and so I rescued you from Balak.

11“When you crossed the Jordan River and came to Jericho, the men of Jericho fought against you, as did the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I gave you victory over them. 12And I sent terror* ahead of you to drive out the two kings of the Amorites. It was not your swords or bows that brought you victory. 13I gave you land you had not worked on, and I gave you towns you did not build—the towns where you are now living. I gave you vineyards and olive groves for food, though you did not plant them.

14“So fear the LORD and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD alone. 15But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”

16The people replied, “We would never abandon the LORD and serve other gods. 17For the LORD our God is the one who rescued us and our ancestors from slavery in the land of Egypt. He performed mighty miracles before our very eyes. As we traveled through the wilderness among our enemies, he preserved us. 18It was the LORD who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. So we, too, will serve the LORD, for he alone is our God.”

19Then Joshua warned the people, “You are not able to serve the
LORD, for he is a holy and jealous God. He will not forgive your
rebellion and your sins. 20If you abandon the LORD and serve other
gods, he will turn against you and destroy you, even though he has
been so good to you.”

21But the people answered Joshua, “No, we will serve the LORD!”

22“You are a witness to your own decision,” Joshua said. “You have
chosen to serve the LORD.”

“Yes,” they replied, “we are witnesses to what we have said.”

23“All right then,” Joshua said, “destroy the idols among you, and
turn your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

24The people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God. We
will obey him alone.”

25So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day at Shechem,
committing them to follow the decrees and regulations of the
LORD. 26Joshua recorded these things in the Book of God’s
Instructions. As a reminder of their agreement, he took a huge stone
and rolled it beneath the terebinth tree beside the Tabernacle of the
LORD.

27Joshua said to all the people, “This stone has heard everything the
LORD said to us. It will be a witness to testify against you if you go
back on your word to God.”

28Then Joshua sent all the people away to their own homelands.

LEADERS BURIED IN THE PROMISED LAND

29After this, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110. 30They buried him in the land he had been allocated, at Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

31The people of Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him—those who had personally experienced all that the LORD had done for Israel.

Excavation at Shechem in modern-day Nablus

THE CITY OF SHECHEM

32The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought along with them when they left Egypt, were buried at Shechem, in the parcel of ground Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor for 100 pieces of silver.* This land was located in the territory allotted to the

descendants of Joseph.

33Eleazar son of Aaron also died. He was buried in the hill country
of Ephraim, in the town of Gibeah, which had been given to his son
Phinehas.

Judges

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

WELCOME TO

JUDGES

The book of Judges covers a dark period in Israel's history. After Joshua dies, the twelve tribes are supposed to remain united under God's leadership. However, the people consistently reject him by worshiping Canaanite idols instead. Even though God clearly has laid out in his laws how his beloved people should behave, Israel turns away from him and his instructions. As a result their moral and social structure deteriorates, and chaos abounds. Each time the people break their covenant with God, they become subject to war and oppression that cause poverty and distress. As they cry out to God, he provides a leader—a judge—to call the people back to himself. When the people respond with repentance, God forgives, saves, and blesses them. Unfortunately, the people never seem to learn from their mistakes, and this cycle of behavior lasts for more than three hundred years.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Samson is the most well-known judge of Israel. You'll stop to read about this strongman who guides Israel in spite of his selfish personality. Your first stop is at Judges 16:4.

4 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: On this route you'll read about the leadership of three of Israel's judges: Deborah, Gideon, and Samson, whom God selects to do extraordinary things for their people. Your first stop is at Judges 4:1.

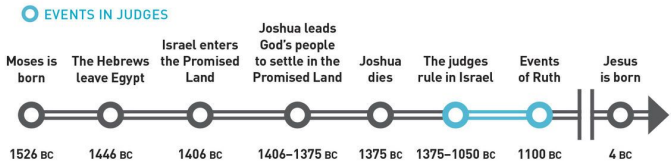
8 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Reading through these stops will give you a good understanding of the judges who guide Israel and the circumstances under which they come to power. These leaders, though flawed, are heroes of Israel's history. Your first stop is at Judges 2:6.

FINDING JESUS IN JUDGES

In the book of Judges, the judges brought freedom when the people were oppressed by their enemies. In the same way, for a fallen world oppressed by sin, Jesus brings freedom to those who repent and turn to him in faith.

The judges themselves were mired by their own sins and foolish choices. By contrast, Jesus was in every respect like us, yet he was without sin. He has made freedom available to the whole world forever, not simply to a small ethnic group for a few years as the judges did.



Judges 1

JUDAH AND SIMEON CONQUER THE LAND

1After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, “Which
tribe should go first to attack the Canaanites?”

2The LORD answered, “Judah, for I have given them victory over
the land.”

3The men of Judah said to their relatives from the tribe of Simeon,
“Join with us to fight against the Canaanites living in the territory
allotted to us. Then we will help you conquer your territory.” So the
men of Simeon went with Judah.

4When the men of Judah attacked, the LORD gave them victory
over the Canaanites and Perizzites, and they killed 10,000 enemy
warriors at the town of Bezek. 5While at Bezek they encountered
King Adoni-bezek and fought against him, and the Canaanites and
Perizzites were defeated. 6Adoni-bezek escaped, but the Israelites
soon captured him and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

7Adoni-bezek said, “I once had seventy kings with their thumbs and
big toes cut off, eating scraps from under my table. Now God has
paid me back for what I did to them.” They took him to Jerusalem,
and he died there.

8The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem and captured it, killing all
its people and setting the city on fire. 9Then they went down to
fight the Canaanites living in the hill country, the Negev, and the
western foothills.*10Judah marched against the Canaanites in
Hebron (formerly called Kiriath-arba), defeating the forces of
Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

11From there they went to fight against the people living in the
town of Debir (formerly called Kiriath-sepher). 12Caleb said, “I will

give my daughter Acsah in marriage to the one who attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher." 13Othniel, the son of Caleb's younger brother, Kenaz, was the one who conquered it, so Acsah became Othniel's wife.

14When Acsah married Othniel, she urged him* to ask her father for a field. As she got down off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What's the matter?"

15She said, "Let me have another gift. You have already given me land in the Negev; now please give me springs of water, too." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

16When the tribe of Judah left Jericho—the city of palms—the Kenites, who were descendants of Moses' father-in-law, traveled with them into the wilderness of Judah. They settled among the people there, near the town of Arad in the Negev.

17Then Judah joined with Simeon to fight against the Canaanites living in Zephath, and they completely destroyed* the town. So the town was named Hormah.*18In addition, Judah captured the towns of Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, along with their surrounding territories.

ISRAEL FAILS TO CONQUER THE LAND

19The LORD was with the people of Judah, and they took possession of the hill country. But they failed to drive out the people living in the plains, who had iron chariots. 20The town of Hebron was given to Caleb as Moses had promised. And Caleb drove out the people living there, who were descendants of the three sons of Anak.

21The tribe of Benjamin, however, failed to drive out the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem. So to this day the Jebusites live in

Jerusalem among the people of Benjamin.

22The descendants of Joseph attacked the town of Bethel, and the
LORD was with them. 23They sent men to scout out Bethel (formerly
known as Luz). 24They confronted a man coming out of the town
and said to him, “Show us a way into the town, and we will have
mercy on you.” 25So he showed them a way in, and they killed
everyone in the town except that man and his family. 26Later the
man moved to the land of the Hittites, where he built a town. He
named it Luz, which is its name to this day.

27The tribe of Manasseh failed to drive out the people living in
Beth-shan,* Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo, and all their
surrounding settlements, because the Canaanites were determined
to stay in that region. 28When the Israelites grew stronger, they
forced the Canaanites to work as slaves, but they never did drive
them completely out of the land.

29The tribe of Ephraim failed to drive out the Canaanites living in
Gezer, so the Canaanites continued to live there among them.

30The tribe of Zebulun failed to drive out the residents of Kitron and
Nahalol, so the Canaanites continued to live among them. But the
Canaanites were forced to work as slaves for the people of Zebulun.

31The tribe of Asher failed to drive out the residents of Acco, Sidon,
Ahlab, Aczib, Helbah, Aphik, and Rehob. 32Instead, the people of
Asher moved in among the Canaanites, who controlled the land, for
they failed to drive them out.

33Likewise, the tribe of Naphtali failed to drive out the residents of
Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath. Instead, they moved in among the
Canaanites, who controlled the land. Nevertheless, the people of
Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath were forced to work as slaves for the
people of Naphtali.

34As for the tribe of Dan, the Amorites forced them back into the
hill country and would not let them come down into the plains.
35The Amorites were determined to stay in Mount Heres, Aijalon,
and Shaalbim, but when the descendants of Joseph became
stronger, they forced the Amorites to work as slaves. 36The
boundary of the Amorites ran from Scorpion Pass* to Sela and
continued upward from there.

Judges 2

THE LORD'S MESSENGER COMES TO BOKIM

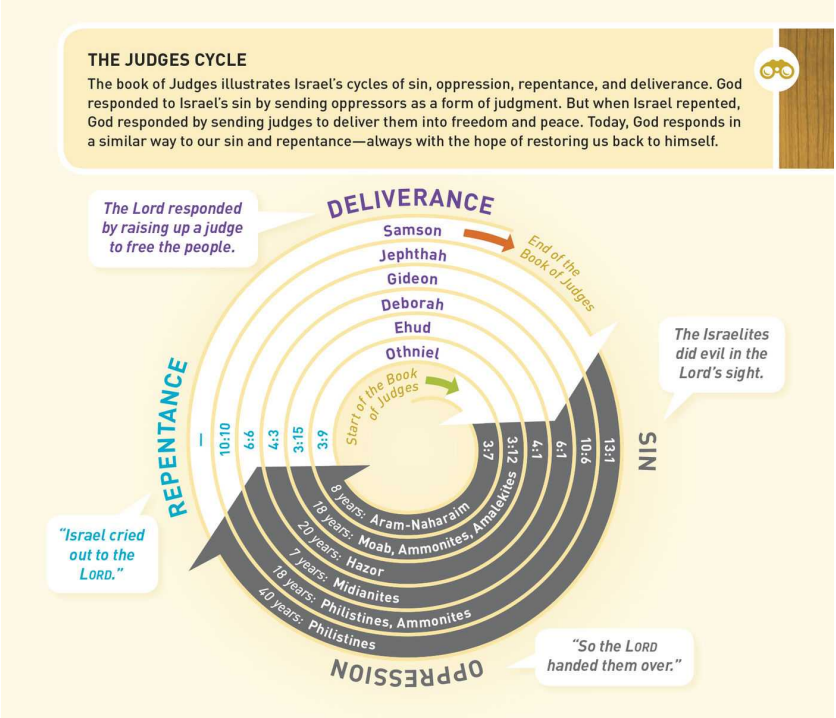
1The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said to
the Israelites, "I brought you out of Egypt into this land that I swore
to give your ancestors, and I said I would never break my covenant
with you. 2For your part, you were not to make any covenants with
the people living in this land; instead, you were to destroy their
altars. But you disobeyed my command. Why did you do this? 3So
now I declare that I will no longer drive out the people living in
your land. They will be thorns in your sides,* and their gods will be
a constant temptation to you."

4When the angel of the LORD finished speaking to all the Israelites,
the people wept loudly. 5So they called the place Bokim (which
means "weeping"), and they offered sacrifices there to the LORD.

THE DEATH OF JOSHUA

6After Joshua sent the people away, each of the tribes left to take
possession of the land allotted to them. 7And the Israelites served
the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and the leaders who
outlived him—those who had seen all the great things the LORD
had done for Israel.

8Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of
110. 9They buried him in the land he had been allocated, at
Timnath-serah* in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount
Gaash.



THE JUDGES CYCLE

ISRAEL DISOBEYS THE LORD

10After that generation died, another generation grew up who did
not acknowledge the LORD or remember the mighty things he had
done for Israel.

11The Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight and served the images
of Baal. 12They abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors,
who had brought them out of Egypt. They went after other gods,
worshiping the gods of the people around them. And they angered
the LORD. 13They abandoned the LORD to serve Baal and the
images of Ashtoreth. 14This made the LORD burn with anger against
Israel, so he handed them over to raiders who stole their
possessions. He turned them over to their enemies all around, and
they were no longer able to resist them. 15Every time Israel went out

to battle, the LORD fought against them, causing them to be defeated, just as he had warned. And the people were in great distress.

THE LORD RESCUES HIS PEOPLE

16Then the LORD raised up judges to rescue the Israelites from their attackers. 17Yet Israel did not listen to the judges but prostituted themselves by worshiping other gods. How quickly they turned away from the path of their ancestors, who had walked in obedience to the LORD's commands.

18Whenever the LORD raised up a judge over Israel, he was with that judge and rescued the people from their enemies throughout the judge's lifetime. For the LORD took pity on his people, who were burdened by oppression and suffering. 19But when the judge died, the people returned to their corrupt ways, behaving worse than those who had lived before them. They went after other gods, serving and worshiping them. And they refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

20So the LORD burned with anger against Israel. He said, "Because these people have violated my covenant, which I made with their ancestors, and have ignored my commands, 21I will no longer drive out the nations that Joshua left unconquered when he died. 22I did this to test Israel—to see whether or not they would follow the ways of the LORD as their ancestors did." 23That is why the LORD left those nations in place. He did not quickly drive them out or allow Joshua to conquer them all.

Judges 3

THE NATIONS LEFT IN CANAAN

1These are the nations that the LORD left in the land to test those Israelites who had not experienced the wars of Canaan. 2He did this to teach warfare to generations of Israelites who had no experience

in battle. 3These are the nations: the Philistines (those living under the five Philistine rulers), all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the mountains of Lebanon from Mount Baal-hermon to Lebo-hamath. 4These people were left to test the Israelites—to see whether they would obey the commands the LORD had given to their ancestors through Moses.

5So the people of Israel lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, 6and they intermarried with them. Israelite sons married their daughters, and Israelite daughters were given in marriage to their sons. And the Israelites served their gods.

BETWEEN THE TWO RIVERS

OTHNIEL BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

7The Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. They forgot about the LORD their God, and they served the images of Baal and the Asherah poles. 8Then the LORD burned with anger against Israel, and he turned them over to King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim.* And the Israelites served Cushan-rishathaim for eight years.

9But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, the LORD raised up a rescuer to save them. His name was Othniel, the son of Caleb's younger brother, Kenaz. 10The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he became Israel's judge. He went to war against King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram, and the LORD gave Othniel victory over him. 11So there was peace in the land for forty years. Then Othniel son of Kenaz died.

EHUD BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

12Once again the Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight, and the
LORD gave King Eglon of Moab control over Israel because of their
evil. 13Eglon enlisted the Ammonites and Amalekites as allies, and
then he went out and defeated Israel, taking possession of Jericho,
the city of palms. 14And the Israelites served Eglon of Moab for
eighteen years.

15But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD for help, the
LORD again raised up a rescuer to save them. His name was Ehud
son of Gera, a left-handed man of the tribe of Benjamin. The
Israelites sent Ehud to deliver their tribute money to King Eglon of
Moab. 16So Ehud made a double-edged dagger that was about a
foot* long, and he strapped it to his right thigh, keeping it hidden
under his clothing. 17He brought the tribute money to Eglon, who
was very fat.

18After delivering the payment, Ehud started home with those who
had helped carry the tribute. 19But when Ehud reached the stone
idols near Gilgal, he turned back. He came to Eglon and said, "I
have a secret message for you."

So the king commanded his servants, "Be quiet!" and he sent them
all out of the room.

20Ehud walked over to Eglon, who was sitting alone in a cool
upstairs room. And Ehud said, "I have a message from God for
you!" As King Eglon rose from his seat, 21Ehud reached with his left
hand, pulled out the dagger strapped to his right thigh, and plunged
it into the king's belly. 22The dagger went so deep that the handle
disappeared beneath the king's fat. So Ehud did not pull out the
dagger, and the king's bowels emptied.*23Then Ehud closed and
locked the doors of the room and escaped down the latrine.*

24After Ehud was gone, the king's servants returned and found the
doors to the upstairs room locked. They thought he might be using
the latrine in the room, 25so they waited. But when the king didn't
come out after a long delay, they became concerned and got a key.
And when they opened the doors, they found their master dead on
the floor.

26While the servants were waiting, Ehud escaped, passing the stone
idols on his way to Seirah. 27When he arrived in the hill country of
Ephraim, Ehud sounded a call to arms. Then he led a band of
Israelites down from the hills.

28"Follow me," he said, "for the LORD has given you victory over
Moab your enemy." So they followed him. And the Israelites took
control of the shallow crossings of the Jordan River across from
Moab, preventing anyone from crossing.

29They attacked the Moabites and killed about 10,000 of their
strongest and most able-bodied warriors. Not one of them escaped.
30So Moab was conquered by Israel that day, and there was peace in
the land for eighty years.

SHAMGAR BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

31After Ehud, Shamgar son of Anath rescued Israel. He once killed
600 Philistines with an ox goad.

Judges 4

DEBORAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

1After Ehud's death, the Israelites again did evil in the LORD's sight.
2So the LORD turned them over to King Jabin of Hazor, a Canaanite
king. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in
Harosheth-haggoyim. 3Sisera, who had 900 iron chariots, ruthlessly
oppressed the Israelites for twenty years. Then the people of Israel
cried out to the LORD for help.

4Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophet who was judging
Israel at that time. 5She would sit under the Palm of Deborah,
between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the
Israelites would go to her for judgment. 6One day she sent for Barak
son of Abinoam, who lived in Kedesh in the land of Naphtali. She
said to him, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, commands
you: Call out 10,000 warriors from the tribes of Naphtali and
Zebulun at Mount Tabor. 7And I will call out Sisera, commander of
Jabin's army, along with his chariots and warriors, to the Kishon
River. There I will give you victory over him."

8Barak told her, “I will go, but only if you go with me.”

9“Very well,” she replied, “I will go with you. But you will receive
no honor in this venture, for the LORD’s victory over Sisera will be
at the hands of a woman.” So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh.
10At Kedesh, Barak called together the tribes of Zebulun and
Naphtali, and 10,000 warriors went up with him. Deborah also
went with him.

11Now Heber the Kenite, a descendant of Moses’ brother-in-law*
Hobab, had moved away from the other members of his tribe and
pitched his tent by the oak of Zaanannim near Kedesh.

12When Sisera was told that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to
Mount Tabor, 13he called for all 900 of his iron chariots and all of
his warriors, and they marched from Harosheth-haggoyim to the
Kishon River.

MOUNT TABOR

14Then Deborah said to Barak, “Get ready! This is the day the LORD
will give you victory over Sisera, for the LORD is marching ahead of
you.” So Barak led his 10,000 warriors down the slopes of Mount
Tabor into battle. 15When Barak attacked, the LORD threw Sisera
and all his chariots and warriors into a panic. Sisera leaped down
from his chariot and escaped on foot. 16Then Barak chased the
chariots and the enemy army all the way to Harosheth-haggoyim,
killing all of Sisera’s warriors. Not a single one was left alive.

17Meanwhile, Sisera ran to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the
Kenite, because Heber’s family was on friendly terms with King

Jabin of Hazor. 18Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him,
“Come into my tent, sir. Come in. Don’t be afraid.” So he went into
her tent, and she covered him with a blanket.

19“Please give me some water,” he said. “I’m thirsty.” So she gave
him some milk from a leather bag and covered him again.

20“Stand at the door of the tent,” he told her. “If anybody comes
and asks you if there is anyone here, say no.”

21But when Sisera fell asleep from exhaustion, Jael quietly crept up
to him with a hammer and tent peg in her hand. Then she drove the
tent peg through his temple and into the ground, and so he died.

22When Barak came looking for Sisera, Jael went out to meet him.
She said, “Come, and I will show you the man you are looking for.”
So he followed her into the tent and found Sisera lying there dead,
with the tent peg through his temple.

23So on that day Israel saw God defeat Jabin, the Canaanite king.
24And from that time on Israel became stronger and stronger against
King Jabin until they finally destroyed him.

SONGS JUDGES 5:1-31

Judges 5

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

1On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song:

2"Israel's leaders took charge, and the people gladly followed.
Praise the LORD!

3"Listen, you kings!
Pay attention, you mighty rulers!
For I will sing to the LORD.
I will make music to the LORD, the God of Israel.

4"LORD, when you set out from Seir and marched across the fields of Edom, the earth trembled, and the cloudy skies poured down rain.

5The mountains quaked in the presence of the LORD, the God of Mount Sinai— in the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel.

6"In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, and in the days of Jael, people avoided the main roads, and travelers stayed on winding pathways.

7There were few people left in the villages of Israel*— until Deborah arose as a mother for Israel.

8When Israel chose new gods, war erupted at the city gates.

Yet not a shield or spear could be seen among forty thousand warriors in Israel!

9My heart is with the commanders of Israel, with those who volunteered for war.
Praise the LORD!

10“Consider this, you who ride on fine donkeys, you who sit on fancy saddle blankets, and you who walk along the road.

11Listen to the village musicians*
gathered at the watering holes.
They recount the righteous victories of the LORD
and the victories of his villagers in Israel.
Then the people of the LORD
marched down to the city gates.

12“Wake up, Deborah, wake up!
Wake up, wake up, and sing a song!
Arise, Barak!
Lead your captives away, son of Abinoam!

13“Down from Tabor marched the few against the nobles.
The people of the LORD marched down against mighty warriors.

14They came down from Ephraim— a land that once belonged to the Amalekites; they followed you, Benjamin, with your troops.
From Makir the commanders marched down; from Zebulun came those who carry a commander’s staff.

15The princes of Issachar were with Deborah and Barak.
They followed Barak, rushing into the valley.
But in the tribe of Reuben there was great indecision.*

16Why did you sit at home among the sheepfolds— to hear the shepherds whistle for their flocks?
Yes, in the tribe of Reuben there was great indecision.

17Gilead remained east of the Jordan.

And why did Dan stay home?
Asher sat unmoved at the seashore, remaining in his harbors.

18But Zebulun risked his life, as did Naphtali, on the heights of the battlefield.

19"The kings of Canaan came and fought, at Taanach near
Megiddo's springs, but they carried off no silver treasures.

20The stars fought from heaven.
The stars in their orbits fought against Sisera.

21The Kishon River swept them away— that ancient torrent, the Kishon.
March on with courage, my soul!

22Then the horses' hooves hammered the ground, the galloping, galloping of Sisera's mighty steeds.

23'Let the people of Meroz be cursed,' said the angel of the LORD.
'Let them be utterly cursed, because they did not come to help the LORD— to help the LORD against the mighty warriors.'

24"Most blessed among women is Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite.
May she be blessed above all women who live in tents.

25Sisera asked for water, and she gave him milk.
In a bowl fit for nobles, she brought him yogurt.

26Then with her left hand she reached for a tent peg, and with her right hand for the workman's hammer.
She struck Sisera with the hammer, crushing his head.
With a shattering blow, she pierced his temples.

27He sank, he fell, he lay still at her feet.
And where he sank, there he died.

28"From the window Sisera's mother looked out.
Through the window she watched for his return, saying, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why don't we hear the sound of chariot wheels?'

29“Her wise women answer, and she repeats these words to herself:

30‘They must be dividing the captured plunder— with a woman or
two for every man.
There will be colorful robes for Sisera, and colorful, embroidered
robes for me.
Yes, the plunder will include colorful robes embroidered on both
sides.’

31“LORD, may all your enemies die like Sisera!
But may those who love you rise like the sun in all its power!”

Then there was peace in the land for forty years.

WHO, ME? JUDGES 6:1-40

THE LAND OF MIDIAN

Judges 6

GIDEON BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

1The Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight. So the LORD handed

them over to the Midianites for seven years. 2The Midianites were
so cruel that the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the
mountains, caves, and strongholds. 3Whenever the Israelites planted
their crops, marauders from Midian, Amalek, and the people of the
east would attack Israel, 4camping in the land and destroying crops
as far away as Gaza. They left the Israelites with nothing to eat,
taking all the sheep, goats, cattle, and donkeys. 5These enemy
hordes, coming with their livestock and tents, were as thick as
locusts; they arrived on droves of camels too numerous to count.
And they stayed until the land was stripped bare. 6So Israel was
reduced to starvation by the Midianites. Then the Israelites cried
out to the LORD for help.

7When they cried out to the LORD because of Midian, 8the LORD
sent a prophet to the Israelites. He said, “This is what the LORD, the
God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of slavery in Egypt. 9I
rescued you from the Egyptians and from all who oppressed you. I
drove out your enemies and gave you their land. 10I told you, ‘I am
the LORD your God. You must not worship the gods of the
Amorites, in whose land you now live.’ But you have not listened to
me.”

11Then the angel of the LORD came and sat beneath the great tree
at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash of the clan of Abiezer. Gideon
son of Joash was threshing wheat at the bottom of a winepress to
hide the grain from the Midianites. 12The angel of the LORD
appeared to him and said, “Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!”

13“Sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this
happened to us? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told
us about? Didn’t they say, ‘The LORD brought us up out of Egypt’?
But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to the
Midianites.”

14Then the LORD turned to him and said, “Go with the strength you
have, and rescue Israel from the Midianites. I am sending you!”

15“But Lord,” Gideon replied, “how can I rescue Israel? My clan is
the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in
my entire family!”

16The LORD said to him, “I will be with you. And you will destroy
the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man.”

17Gideon replied, “If you are truly going to help me, show me a sign
to prove that it is really the LORD speaking to me. 18Don’t go away
until I come back and bring my offering to you.”

He answered, “I will stay here until you return.”

19Gideon hurried home. He cooked a young goat, and with a basket*
of flour he baked some bread without yeast. Then, carrying the
meat in a basket and the broth in a pot, he brought them out and
presented them to the angel, who was under the great tree.

20The angel of God said to him, “Place the meat and the unleavened
bread on this rock, and pour the broth over it.” And Gideon did as
he was told. 21Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and
bread with the tip of the staff in his hand, and fire flamed up from
the rock and consumed all he had brought. And the angel of the
LORD disappeared.

22When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he cried
out, “Oh, Sovereign LORD, I’m doomed! I have seen the angel of the
LORD face to face!”

23“It is all right,” the LORD replied. “Do not be afraid. You will not
die.” 24And Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and named it
Yahweh-Shalom (which means “the LORD is peace”). The altar
remains in Ophrah in the land of the clan of Abiezer to this day.

SKIP TO 6:33

25That night the LORD said to Gideon, “Take the second bull from
your father’s herd, the one that is seven years old. Pull down your
father’s altar to Baal, and cut down the Asherah pole standing
beside it. 26Then build an altar to the LORD your God here on this
hilltop sanctuary, laying the stones carefully. Sacrifice the bull as a
burnt offering on the altar, using as fuel the wood of the Asherah
pole you cut down.”

27So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD had
commanded. But he did it at night because he was afraid of the
other members of his father’s household and the people of the town.

28Early the next morning, as the people of the town began to stir,
someone discovered that the altar of Baal had been broken down
and that the Asherah pole beside it had been cut down. In their
place a new altar had been built, and on it were the remains of the
bull that had been sacrificed. 29The people said to each other, “Who
did this?” And after asking around and making a careful search,
they learned that it was Gideon, the son of Joash.

30“Bring out your son,” the men of the town demanded of Joash.
“He must die for destroying the altar of Baal and for cutting down
the Asherah pole.”

31But Joash shouted to the mob that confronted him, “Why are you
defending Baal? Will you argue his case? Whoever pleads his case
will be put to death by morning! If Baal truly is a god, let him
defend himself and destroy the one who broke down his altar!”
32From then on Gideon was called Jerub-baal, which means “Let
Baal defend himself,” because he broke down Baal’s altar.

THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL

GIDEON ASKS FOR A SIGN

33Soon afterward the armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of
the east formed an alliance against Israel and crossed the Jordan,
camping in the valley of Jezreel. 34Then the Spirit of the LORD
clothed Gideon with power. He blew a ram's horn as a call to arms,
and the men of the clan of Abiezer came to him. 35He also sent
messengers throughout Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali,
summoning their warriors, and all of them responded.

36Then Gideon said to God, "If you are truly going to use me to
rescue Israel as you promised, 37prove it to me in this way. I will
put a wool fleece on the threshing floor tonight. If the fleece is wet
with dew in the morning but the ground is dry, then I will know
that you are going to help me rescue Israel as you promised." 38And
that is just what happened. When Gideon got up early the next
morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung out a whole bowlful of
water.

39Then Gideon said to God, "Please don't be angry with me, but let
me make one more request. Let me use the fleece for one more test.
This time let the fleece remain dry while the ground around it is

wet with dew.” 40So that night God did as Gideon asked. The fleece was dry in the morning, but the ground was covered with dew.

Judges 7

GIDEON DEFEATS THE MIDIANITES

1So Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon) and his army got up early and went
as far as the spring of Harod. The armies of Midian were camped
north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. 2The LORD said
to Gideon, “You have too many warriors with you. If I let all of you
fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved
themselves by their own strength. 3Therefore, tell the people,
‘Whoever is timid or afraid may leave this mountain* and go
home.’” So 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who
were willing to fight.

4But the LORD told Gideon, “There are still too many! Bring them
down to the spring, and I will test them to determine who will go
with you and who will not.” 5When Gideon took his warriors down
to the water, the LORD told him, “Divide the men into two groups.
In one group put all those who cup water in their hands and lap it
up with their tongues like dogs. In the other group put all those
who kneel down and drink with their mouths in the stream.” 6Only
300 of the men drank from their hands. All the others got down on
their knees and drank with their mouths in the stream.

7The LORD told Gideon, “With these 300 men I will rescue you and
give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home.” 8So
Gideon collected the provisions and rams’ horns of the other
warriors and sent them home. But he kept the 300 men with him.

The Midianite camp was in the valley just below Gideon. 9That
night the LORD said, “Get up! Go down into the Midianite camp,
for I have given you victory over them! 10But if you are afraid to
attack, go down to the camp with your servant Purah. 11Listen to
what the Midianites are saying, and you will be greatly encouraged.
Then you will be eager to attack.”

So Gideon took Purah and went down to the edge of the enemy

camp. 12The armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east
had settled in the valley like a swarm of locusts. Their camels were
like grains of sand on the seashore—too many to count! 13Gideon
crept up just as a man was telling his companion about a dream.
The man said, “I had this dream, and in my dream a loaf of barley
bread came tumbling down into the Midianite camp. It hit a tent,
turned it over, and knocked it flat!”

14His companion answered, “Your dream can mean only one thing
—God has given Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite, victory over
Midian and all its allies!”

15When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in
worship before the LORD.* Then he returned to the Israelite camp
and shouted, “Get up! For the LORD has given you victory over the
Midianite hordes!” 16He divided the 300 men into three groups and
gave each man a ram’s horn and a clay jar with a torch in it.

17Then he said to them, “Keep your eyes on me. When I come to the
edge of the camp, do just as I do. 18As soon as I and those with me
blow the rams’ horns, blow your horns, too, all around the entire
camp, and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon!’”

19It was just after midnight,* after the changing of the guard, when
Gideon and the 100 men with him reached the edge of the
Midianite camp. Suddenly, they blew the rams’ horns and broke
their clay jars. 20Then all three groups blew their horns and broke
their jars. They held the blazing torches in their left hands and the
horns in their right hands, and they all shouted, “A sword for the
LORD and for Gideon!”

21Each man stood at his position around the camp and watched as
all the Midianites rushed around in a panic, shouting as they ran to
escape. 22When the 300 Israelites blew their rams’ horns, the LORD
caused the warriors in the camp to fight against each other with

their swords. Those who were not killed fled to places as far away as Beth-shittah near Zererah and to the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath.

23Then Gideon sent for the warriors of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, who joined in chasing the army of Midian. 24Gideon also sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, “Come down to attack the Midianites. Cut them off at the shallow crossings of the Jordan River at Beth-barah.”

So all the men of Ephraim did as they were told. 25They captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two Midianite commanders, killing Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. And they continued to chase the Midianites. Afterward the Israelites brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan River.

Judges 8

GIDEON KILLS ZEBAH AND ZALMUNNA

1Then the people of Ephraim asked Gideon, “Why have you treated us this way? Why didn’t you send for us when you first went out to fight the Midianites?” And they argued heatedly with Gideon.

2But Gideon replied, “What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren’t even the leftover grapes of Ephraim’s harvest better than the entire crop of my little clan of Abiezer? 3God gave you victory over Oreb and Zeeb, the commanders of the Midianite army. What have I accomplished compared to that?” When the men of Ephraim heard

Gideon's answer, their anger subsided.

4Gideon then crossed the Jordan River with his 300 men, and
though exhausted, they continued to chase the enemy. 5When they
reached Succoth, Gideon asked the leaders of the town, "Please give
my warriors some food. They are very tired. I am chasing Zebah
and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

6But the officials of Succoth replied, "Catch Zebah and Zalmunna
first, and then we will feed your army."

7So Gideon said, "After the LORD gives me victory over Zebah and
Zalmunna, I will return and tear your flesh with the thorns and
briers from the wilderness."

8From there Gideon went up to Peniel* and again asked for food,
but he got the same answer. 9So he said to the people of Peniel,
"After I return in victory, I will tear down this tower."

10By this time Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with about
15,000 warriors—all that remained of the allied armies of the east,
for 120,000 had already been killed. 11Gideon circled around by the
caravan route east of Nobah and Jogbehah, taking the Midianite
army by surprise. 12Zebah and Zalmunna, the two Midianite kings,
fled, but Gideon chased them down and captured all their warriors.

13After this, Gideon returned from the battle by way of Heres Pass.
14There he captured a young man from Succoth and demanded that
he write down the names of all the seventy-seven officials and
elders in the town. 15Gideon then returned to Succoth and said to
the leaders, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna. When we were here
before, you taunted me, saying, 'Catch Zebah and Zalmunna first,
and then we will feed your exhausted army.'" 16Then Gideon took
the elders of the town and taught them a lesson, punishing them
with thorns and briers from the wilderness. 17He also tore down the

tower of Peniel and killed all the men in the town.

18Then Gideon asked Zebah and Zalmunna, “The men you killed at Tabor—what were they like?”

“Like you,” they replied. “They all had the look of a king’s son.”

19“They were my brothers, the sons of my own mother!” Gideon exclaimed. “As surely as the LORD lives, I wouldn’t kill you if you hadn’t killed them.”

20Turning to Jether, his oldest son, he said, “Kill them!” But Jether did not draw his sword, for he was only a boy and was afraid.

21Then Zebah and Zalmunna said to Gideon, “Be a man! Kill us yourself!” So Gideon killed them both and took the royal ornaments from the necks of their camels.

GIDEON’S SACRED EPHOD

22Then the Israelites said to Gideon, “Be our ruler! You and your son and your grandson will be our rulers, for you have rescued us from Midian.”

23But Gideon replied, “I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you! 24However, I do have one request—that each of you give me an earring from the plunder you collected from your fallen enemies.” (The enemies, being Ishmaelites, all wore gold earrings.)

25“Gladly!” they replied. They spread out a cloak, and each one threw in a gold earring he had gathered from the plunder. 26The weight of the gold earrings was forty-three pounds,* not including the royal ornaments and pendants, the purple clothing worn by the kings of Midian, or the chains around the necks of their camels.

27Gideon made a sacred ephod from the gold and put it in Ophrah,
his hometown. But soon all the Israelites prostituted themselves by
worshiping it, and it became a trap for Gideon and his family.

28That is the story of how the people of Israel defeated Midian,
which never recovered. Throughout the rest of Gideon's lifetime—
about forty years—there was peace in the land.

29Then Gideon* son of Joash returned home. 30He had seventy sons
born to him, for he had many wives. 31He also had a concubine in
Shechem, who gave birth to a son, whom he named Abimelech.
32Gideon died when he was very old, and he was buried in the
grave of his father, Joash, at Ophrah in the land of the clan of
Abiezer.

33As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites prostituted themselves by
worshiping the images of Baal, making Baal-berith their god. 34They
forgot the LORD their God, who had rescued them from all their
enemies surrounding them. 35Nor did they show any loyalty to the
family of Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon), despite all the good he had
done for Israel.

Judges 9

ABIMELECH RULES OVER SHECHEM

1One day Gideon's* son Abimelech went to Shechem to visit his
uncles—his mother's brothers. He said to them and to the rest of his
mother's family, 2"Ask the leading citizens of Shechem whether they
want to be ruled by all seventy of Gideon's sons or by one man. And
remember that I am your own flesh and blood!"

3So Abimelech's uncles gave his message to all the citizens of
Shechem on his behalf. And after listening to this proposal, the
people of Shechem decided in favor of Abimelech because he was

their relative. 4They gave him seventy silver coins from the temple
of Baal-berith, which he used to hire some reckless troublemakers
who agreed to follow him. 5He went to his father's home at Ophrah,
and there, on one stone, they killed all seventy of his half brothers,
the sons of Gideon.* But the youngest brother, Jotham, escaped and
hid.

6Then all the leading citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo called a
meeting under the oak beside the pillar* at Shechem and made
Abimelech their king.

JOTHAM'S PARABLE

7When Jotham heard about this, he climbed to the top of Mount
Gerizim and shouted, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem!

Listen to me if you want God to listen to you!

8Once upon a time the trees decided to choose a king.
First they said to the olive tree, 'Be our king!'

9But the olive tree refused, saying, 'Should I quit producing the
olive oil that blesses both God and people, just to wave back and
forth over the trees?'

10"Then they said to the fig tree, 'You be our king!'

11But the fig tree also refused, saying, 'Should I quit producing my
sweet fruit just to wave back and forth over the trees?'

12"Then they said to the grapevine, 'You be our king!'

13But the grapevine also refused, saying, 'Should I quit producing
the wine that cheers both God and people, just to wave back and
forth over the trees?'

14"Then all the trees finally turned to the thornbush and said,
'Come, you be our king!'

15And the thornbush replied to the trees, ‘If you truly want to make
me your king, come and take shelter in my shade.
If not, let fire come out from me and devour the cedars of
Lebanon.’”

16Jotham continued, “Now make sure you have acted honorably
and in good faith by making Abimelech your king, and that you
have done right by Gideon and all of his descendants. Have you
treated him with the honor he deserves for all he accomplished?
17For he fought for you and risked his life when he rescued you
from the Midianites. 18But today you have revolted against my
father and his descendants, killing his seventy sons on one stone.
And you have chosen his slave woman’s son, Abimelech, to be your
king just because he is your relative.

19“If you have acted honorably and in good faith toward Gideon
and his descendants today, then may you find joy in Abimelech,
and may he find joy in you. 20But if you have not acted in good
faith, then may fire come out from Abimelech and devour the
leading citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo; and may fire come out
from the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo and devour
Abimelech!”

21Then Jotham escaped and lived in Beer because he was afraid of
his brother Abimelech.

SHECHEM REBELS AGAINST ABIMELECH

22After Abimelech had ruled over Israel for three years, 23God sent a
spirit that stirred up trouble between Abimelech and the leading
citizens of Shechem, and they revolted. 24God was punishing
Abimelech for murdering Gideon’s seventy sons, and the citizens of
Shechem for supporting him in this treachery of murdering his
brothers. 25The citizens of Shechem set an ambush for Abimelech on
the hilltops and robbed everyone who passed that way. But
someone warned Abimelech about their plot.

26One day Gaal son of Ebed moved to Shechem with his brothers

and gained the confidence of the leading citizens of Shechem.
27During the annual harvest festival at Shechem, held in the temple
of the local god, the wine flowed freely, and everyone began
cursing Abimelech. 28"Who is Abimelech?" Gaal shouted. "He's not
a true son of Shechem,* so why should we be his servants? He's
merely the son of Gideon, and this Zebul is merely his deputy. Serve
the true sons of Hamor, the founder of Shechem. Why should we
serve Abimelech? 29If I were in charge here, I would get rid of
Abimelech. I would say* to him, 'Get some soldiers, and come out
and fight!'"

30But when Zebul, the leader of the city, heard what Gaal was
saying, he was furious. 31He sent messengers to Abimelech in
Arumah,* telling him, "Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers have come
to live in Shechem, and now they are inciting the city to rebel
against you. 32Come by night with an army and hide out in the
fields. 33In the morning, as soon as it is daylight, attack the city.
When Gaal and those who are with him come out against you, you
can do with them as you wish."

34So Abimelech and all his men went by night and split into four
groups, stationing themselves around Shechem. 35Gaal was standing
at the city gates when Abimelech and his army came out of hiding.
36When Gaal saw them, he said to Zebul, "Look, there are people
coming down from the hilltops!"

Zebul replied, "It's just the shadows on the hills that look like men."

37But again Gaal said, "No, people are coming down from the hills.*
And another group is coming down the road past the Diviners'
Oak.*"

38Then Zebul turned on him and asked, "Now where is that big
mouth of yours? Wasn't it you that said, 'Who is Abimelech, and
why should we be his servants?' The men you mocked are right
outside the city! Go out and fight them!"

39So Gaal led the leading citizens of Shechem into battle against
Abimelech. 40But Abimelech chased him, and many of Shechem's
men were wounded and fell along the road as they retreated to the
city gate. 41Abimelech returned to Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal
and his brothers out of Shechem.

42The next day the people of Shechem went out into the fields to
battle. When Abimelech heard about it, 43he divided his men into
three groups and set an ambush in the fields. When Abimelech saw
the people coming out of the city, he and his men jumped up from
their hiding places and attacked them. 44Abimelech and his group
stormed the city gate to keep the men of Shechem from getting
back in, while Abimelech's other two groups cut them down in the
fields. 45The battle went on all day before Abimelech finally
captured the city. He killed the people, leveled the city, and
scattered salt all over the ground.

46When the leading citizens who lived in the tower of Shechem
heard what had happened, they ran and hid in the temple of Baal-
berith.*47Someone reported to Abimelech that the citizens had
gathered in the temple, 48so he led his forces to Mount Zalmon. He
took an ax and chopped some branches from a tree, then put them
on his shoulder. "Quick, do as I have done!" he told his men. 49So
each of them cut down some branches, following Abimelech's
example. They piled the branches against the walls of the temple
and set them on fire. So all the people who had lived in the tower of
Shechem died—about 1,000 men and women.

50Then Abimelech attacked the town of Thebez and captured it.
51But there was a strong tower inside the town, and all the men and
women—the entire population—fled to it. They barricaded
themselves in and climbed up to the roof of the tower. 52Abimelech
followed them to attack the tower. But as he prepared to set fire to
the entrance, 53a woman on the roof dropped a millstone that
landed on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull.

54He quickly said to his young armor bearer, “Draw your sword and
kill me! Don’t let it be said that a woman killed Abimelech!” So the
young man ran him through with his sword, and he died. 55When
Abimelech’s men saw that he was dead, they disbanded and
returned to their homes.

56In this way, God punished Abimelech for the evil he had done
against his father by murdering his seventy brothers. 57God also
punished the men of Shechem for all their evil. So the curse of
Jotham son of Gideon was fulfilled.

Judges 10

TOLA BECOMES ISRAEL’S JUDGE

1After Abimelech died, Tola son of Puah, son of Dodo, was the next
person to rescue Israel. He was from the tribe of Issachar but lived
in the town of Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. 2He judged
Israel for twenty-three years. When he died, he was buried in
Shamir.

JAIR BECOMES ISRAEL’S JUDGE

3After Tola died, Jair from Gilead judged Israel for twenty-two
years. 4His thirty sons rode around on thirty donkeys, and they
owned thirty towns in the land of Gilead, which are still called the
Towns of Jair.* 5When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

THE AMMONITES OPPRESS ISRAEL

6Again the Israelites did evil in the LORD’s sight. They served the
images of Baal and Ashtoreth, and the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab,
Ammon, and Philistia. They abandoned the LORD and no longer
served him at all. 7So the LORD burned with anger against Israel,
and he turned them over to the Philistines and the Ammonites,
8who began to oppress them that year. For eighteen years they
oppressed all the Israelites east of the Jordan River in the land of

the Amorites (that is, in Gilead). 9The Ammonites also crossed to
the west side of the Jordan and attacked Judah, Benjamin, and
Ephraim.

The Israelites were in great distress. 10Finally, they cried out to the
LORD for help, saying, “We have sinned against you because we
have abandoned you as our God and have served the images of
Baal.”

11The LORD replied, “Did I not rescue you from the Egyptians, the
Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, 12the Sidonians, the
Amalekites, and the Maonites? When they oppressed you, you cried
out to me for help, and I rescued you. 13Yet you have abandoned me
and served other gods. So I will not rescue you anymore. 14Go and
cry out to the gods you have chosen! Let them rescue you in your
hour of distress!”

15But the Israelites pleaded with the LORD and said, “We have
sinned. Punish us as you see fit, only rescue us today from our
enemies.” 16Then the Israelites put aside their foreign gods and
served the LORD. And he was grieved by their misery.

17At that time the armies of Ammon had gathered for war and were
camped in Gilead, and the people of Israel assembled and camped
at Mizpah. 18The leaders of Gilead said to each other, “Whoever
attacks the Ammonites first will become ruler over all the people of
Gilead.”

Judges 11

JEPHTHAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

1Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of
Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute. 2Gilead's wife also had
several sons, and when these half brothers grew up, they chased
Jephthah off the land. "You will not get any of our father's
inheritance," they said, "for you are the son of a prostitute." 3So
Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Soon
he had a band of worthless rebels following him.

AMMON

4At about this time, the Ammonites began their war against Israel.
5When the Ammonites attacked, the elders of Gilead sent for
Jephthah in the land of Tob. 6The elders said, "Come and be our
commander! Help us fight the Ammonites!"

7But Jephthah said to them, “Aren’t you the ones who hated me and
drove me from my father’s house? Why do you come to me now
when you’re in trouble?”

8“Because we need you,” the elders replied. “If you lead us in battle
against the Ammonites, we will make you ruler over all the people
of Gilead.”

9Jephthah said to the elders, “Let me get this straight. If I come
with you and if the LORD gives me victory over the Ammonites,
will you really make me ruler over all the people?”

10“The LORD is our witness,” the elders replied. “We promise to do
whatever you say.”

11So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made
him their ruler and commander of the army. At Mizpah, in the
presence of the LORD, Jephthah repeated what he had said to the
elders.

12Then Jephthah sent messengers to the king of Ammon, asking,
“Why have you come out to fight against my land?”

13The king of Ammon answered Jephthah’s messengers, “When the
Israelites came out of Egypt, they stole my land from the Arnon
River to the Jabbok River and all the way to the Jordan. Now then,
give back the land peaceably.”

14Jephthah sent this message back to the Ammonite king:

15“This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not steal any land from
Moab or Ammon. 16When the people of Israel arrived at Kadesh on
their journey from Egypt after crossing the Red Sea,*17they sent
messengers to the king of Edom asking for permission to pass

through his land. But their request was denied. Then they asked the king of Moab for similar permission, but he wouldn't let them pass through either. So the people of Israel stayed in Kadesh.

18"Finally, they went around Edom and Moab through the wilderness. They traveled along Moab's eastern border and camped on the other side of the Arnon River. But they never once crossed the Arnon River into Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab.

19"Then Israel sent messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites, who ruled from Heshbon, asking for permission to cross through his land to get to their destination. 20But King Sihon didn't trust Israel to pass through his land. Instead, he mobilized his army at Jahaz and attacked them. 21But the LORD, the God of Israel, gave his people victory over King Sihon. So Israel took control of all the land of the Amorites, who lived in that region, 22from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River, and from the eastern wilderness to the Jordan.

23"So you see, it was the LORD, the God of Israel, who took away the land from the Amorites and gave it to Israel. Why, then, should we give it back to you? 24You keep whatever your god Chemosh gives you, and we will keep whatever the LORD our God gives us. 25Are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he try to make a case against Israel for disputed land? Did he go to war against them?

26"Israel has been living here for 300 years, inhabiting Heshbon and its surrounding settlements, all the way to Aroer and its settlements, and in all the towns along the Arnon River. Why have you made no effort to recover it before now? 27Therefore, I have not sinned against you. Rather, you have wronged me by attacking me. Let the LORD, who is judge, decide today which of us is right—Israel or Ammon."

28But the king of Ammon paid no attention to Jephthah's message.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW

29At that time the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he

went throughout the land of Gilead and Manasseh, including
Mizpah in Gilead, and from there he led an army against the
Ammonites. 30And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD. He said, “If
you give me victory over the Ammonites, 31I will give to the LORD
whatever comes out of my house to meet me when I return in
triumph. I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”

32So Jephthah led his army against the Ammonites, and the LORD
gave him victory. 33He crushed the Ammonites, devastating about
twenty towns from Aroer to an area near Minnith and as far away
as Abel-keramim. In this way Israel defeated the Ammonites.

34When Jephthah returned home to Mizpah, his daughter came out
to meet him, playing on a tambourine and dancing for joy. She was
his one and only child; he had no other sons or daughters. 35When
he saw her, he tore his clothes in anguish. “Oh, my daughter!” he
cried out. “You have completely destroyed me! You’ve brought
disaster on me! For I have made a vow to the LORD, and I cannot
take it back.”

36And she said, “Father, if you have made a vow to the LORD, you
must do to me what you have vowed, for the LORD has given you a
great victory over your enemies, the Ammonites. 37But first let me
do this one thing: Let me go up and roam in the hills and weep with
my friends for two months, because I will die a virgin.”

38“You may go,” Jephthah said. And he sent her away for two
months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because
she would never have children. 39When she returned home, her
father kept the vow he had made, and she died a virgin.

So it has become a custom in Israel 40for young Israelite women to
go away for four days each year to lament the fate of Jephthah’s
daughter.

Judges 12

EPHRAIM FIGHTS WITH JEPHTHAH

1Then the people of Ephraim mobilized an army and crossed over
the Jordan River to Zaphon. They sent this message to Jephthah:
"Why didn't you call for us to help you fight against the
Ammonites? We are going to burn down your house with you in it!"

2Jephthah replied, "I summoned you at the beginning of the
dispute, but you refused to come! You failed to help us in our
struggle against Ammon. 3So when I realized you weren't coming, I
risked my life and went to battle without you, and the LORD gave
me victory over the Ammonites. So why have you now come to
fight me?"

4The people of Ephraim responded, "You men of Gilead are nothing
more than fugitives from Ephraim and Manasseh." So Jephthah
gathered all the men of Gilead and attacked the men of Ephraim
and defeated them.

5Jephthah captured the shallow crossings of the Jordan River, and
whenever a fugitive from Ephraim tried to go back across, the men
of Gilead would challenge him. "Are you a member of the tribe of
Ephraim?" they would ask. If the man said, "No, I'm not," 6they
would tell him to say "Shibboleth." If he was from Ephraim, he
would say "Sibboleth," because people from Ephraim cannot
pronounce the word correctly. Then they would take him and kill
him at the shallow crossings of the Jordan. In all, 42,000

Ephraimites were killed at that time.

7Jephthah judged Israel for six years. When he died, he was buried
in one of the towns of Gilead.

IBZAN BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

8After Jephthah died, Ibzan from Bethlehem judged Israel. 9He had
thirty sons and thirty daughters. He sent his daughters to marry
men outside his clan, and he brought in thirty young women from
outside his clan to marry his sons. Ibzan judged Israel for seven
years. 10When he died, he was buried at Bethlehem.

ELON BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

11After Ibzan died, Elon from the tribe of Zebulun judged Israel for
ten years. 12When he died, he was buried at Aijalon in Zebulun.

ABDON BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

13After Elon died, Abdon son of Hillel, from Pirathon, judged Israel.
14He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy
donkeys. He judged Israel for eight years. 15When he died, he was
buried at Pirathon in Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

FACING GOD JUDGES 13:1-25

Judges 13

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON

1Again the Israelites did evil in the LORD's sight, so the LORD handed them over to the Philistines, who oppressed them for forty years.

2In those days a man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan lived in the town of Zorah. His wife was unable to become pregnant, and

they had no children. 3The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife and said, "Even though you have been unable to have children, you will soon become pregnant and give birth to a son. 4So be careful; you must not drink wine or any other alcoholic drink nor eat any forbidden food.*5You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and his hair must never be cut. For he will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from birth. He will begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines."

6The woman ran and told her husband, "A man of God appeared to me! He looked like one of God's angels, terrifying to see. I didn't ask where he was from, and he didn't tell me his name. 7But he told me, 'You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must not drink wine or any other alcoholic drink nor eat any forbidden food. For your son will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from the moment of his birth until the day of his death.'"

8Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, saying, "Lord, please let the man of God come back to us again and give us more instructions about this son who is to be born."

9God answered Manoah's prayer, and the angel of God appeared once again to his wife as she was sitting in the field. But her husband, Manoah, was not with her. 10So she quickly ran and told her husband, "The man who appeared to me the other day is here again!"

11Manoah ran back with his wife and asked, "Are you the man who spoke to my wife the other day?"

"Yes," he replied, "I am."

12So Manoah asked him, "When your words come true, what kind of rules should govern the boy's life and work?"

13The angel of the LORD replied, "Be sure your wife follows the

instructions I gave her. 14She must not eat grapes or raisins, drink wine or any other alcoholic drink, or eat any forbidden food.”

15Then Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, “Please stay here until we can prepare a young goat for you to eat.”

16“I will stay,” the angel of the LORD replied, “but I will not eat anything. However, you may prepare a burnt offering as a sacrifice to the LORD.” (Manoah didn’t realize it was the angel of the LORD.)

17Then Manoah asked the angel of the LORD, “What is your name? For when all this comes true, we want to honor you.”

18“Why do you ask my name?” the angel of the LORD replied. “It is too wonderful for you to understand.”

19Then Manoah took a young goat and a grain offering and offered it on a rock as a sacrifice to the LORD. And as Manoah and his wife watched, the LORD did an amazing thing. 20As the flames from the altar shot up toward the sky, the angel of the LORD ascended in the fire. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell with their faces to the ground.

21The angel did not appear again to Manoah and his wife. Manoah finally realized it was the angel of the LORD, 22and he said to his wife, “We will certainly die, for we have seen God!”

23But his wife said, “If the LORD were going to kill us, he wouldn’t have accepted our burnt offering and grain offering. He wouldn’t have appeared to us and told us this wonderful thing and done these miracles.”

MAHANEH-DAN

24When her son was born, she named him Samson. And the LORD
blessed him as he grew up. 25And the Spirit of the LORD began to
stir him while he lived in Mahaneh-dan, which is located between
the towns of Zorah and Eshtaol.

WEDDINGS JUDGES 14:1-20

Judges 14

SAMSON'S RIDDLE

1One day when Samson was in Timnah, one of the Philistine women
caught his eye. 2When he returned home, he told his father and
mother, "A young Philistine woman in Timnah caught my eye. I
want to marry her. Get her for me."

3His father and mother objected. “Isn’t there even one woman in
our tribe or among all the Israelites you could marry?” they asked.
“Why must you go to the pagan Philistines to find a wife?”

But Samson told his father, “Get her for me! She looks good to me.”
4His father and mother didn’t realize the LORD was at work in this,
creating an opportunity to work against the Philistines, who ruled
over Israel at that time.

5As Samson and his parents were going down to Timnah, a young
lion suddenly attacked Samson near the vineyards of Timnah. 6At
that moment the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him, and
he ripped the lion’s jaws apart with his bare hands. He did it as
easily as if it were a young goat. But he didn’t tell his father or
mother about it. 7When Samson arrived in Timnah, he talked with
the woman and was very pleased with her.

8Later, when he returned to Timnah for the wedding, he turned off
the path to look at the carcass of the lion. And he found that a
swarm of bees had made some honey in the carcass. 9He scooped
some of the honey into his hands and ate it along the way. He also
gave some to his father and mother, and they ate it. But he didn’t
tell them he had taken the honey from the carcass of the lion.

10As his father was making final arrangements for the marriage,
Samson threw a party at Timnah, as was the custom for elite young
men. 11When the bride’s parents* saw him, they selected thirty
young men from the town to be his companions.

12Samson said to them, “Let me tell you a riddle. If you solve my
riddle during these seven days of the celebration, I will give you
thirty fine linen robes and thirty sets of festive clothing. 13But if you
can’t solve it, then you must give me thirty fine linen robes and
thirty sets of festive clothing.”

“All right,” they agreed, “let’s hear your riddle.”

14So he said: “Out of the one who eats came something to eat; out
of the strong came something sweet.”

Three days later they were still trying to figure it out. 15On the
fourth* day they said to Samson’s wife, “Entice your husband to
explain the riddle for us, or we will burn down your father’s house
with you in it. Did you invite us to this party just to make us poor?”

16So Samson’s wife came to him in tears and said, “You don’t love
me; you hate me! You have given my people a riddle, but you
haven’t told me the answer.”

“I haven’t even given the answer to my father or mother,” he
replied. “Why should I tell you?” 17So she cried whenever she was
with him and kept it up for the rest of the celebration. At last, on
the seventh day he told her the answer because she was tormenting
him with her nagging. Then she explained the riddle to the young
men.

18So before sunset of the seventh day, the men of the town came to
Samson with their answer: “What is sweeter than honey?

What is stronger than a lion?”

Samson replied, “If you hadn’t plowed with my heifer, you wouldn’t
have solved my riddle!”

19Then the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. He went
down to the town of Ashkelon, killed thirty men, took their
belongings, and gave their clothing to the men who had solved his
riddle. But Samson was furious about what had happened, and he
went back home to live with his father and mother. 20So his wife
was given in marriage to the man who had been Samson’s best man
at the wedding.

Judges 15

SAMSON'S VENGEANCE ON THE PHILISTINES

1Later on, during the wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat as a
present to his wife. He said, "I'm going into my wife's room to sleep
with her," but her father wouldn't let him in.

2"I truly thought you must hate her," her father explained, "so I
gave her in marriage to your best man. But look, her younger sister
is even more beautiful than she is. Marry her instead."

3Samson said, "This time I cannot be blamed for everything I am
going to do to you Philistines." 4Then he went out and caught 300
foxes. He tied their tails together in pairs, and he fastened a torch to
each pair of tails. 5Then he lit the torches and let the foxes run
through the grain fields of the Philistines. He burned all their grain
to the ground, including the sheaves and the uncut grain. He also
destroyed their vineyards and olive groves.

6"Who did this?" the Philistines demanded.

“Samson,” was the reply, “because his father-in-law from Timnah gave Samson’s wife to be married to his best man.” So the Philistines went and got the woman and her father and burned them to death.

7“Because you did this,” Samson vowed, “I won’t rest until I take my revenge on you!” 8So he attacked the Philistines with great fury and killed many of them. Then he went to live in a cave in the rock of Etam.

9The Philistines retaliated by setting up camp in Judah and spreading out near the town of Lehi. 10The men of Judah asked the Philistines, “Why are you attacking us?”

The Philistines replied, “We’ve come to capture Samson. We’ve come to pay him back for what he did to us.”

11So 3,000 men of Judah went down to get Samson at the cave in the rock of Etam. They said to Samson, “Don’t you realize the Philistines rule over us? What are you doing to us?”

But Samson replied, “I only did to them what they did to me.”

12But the men of Judah told him, “We have come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines.”

“All right,” Samson said. “But promise that you won’t kill me yourselves.”

13“We will only tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines,” they replied. “We won’t kill you.” So they tied him up with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

14As Samson arrived at Lehi, the Philistines came shouting in triumph. But the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon Samson, and he snapped the ropes on his arms as if they were burnt strands

of flax, and they fell from his wrists. 15Then he found the jawbone
of a recently killed donkey. He picked it up and killed 1,000
Philistines with it. 16Then Samson said, “With the jawbone of a
donkey, I’ve piled them in heaps!

With the jawbone of a donkey, I’ve killed a thousand men!”

17When he finished his boasting, he threw away the jawbone; and
the place was named Jawbone Hill.*

18Samson was now very thirsty, and he cried out to the LORD, “You
have accomplished this great victory by the strength of your
servant. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of these
pagans?” 19So God caused water to gush out of a hollow in the
ground at Lehi, and Samson was revived as he drank. Then he
named that place “The Spring of the One Who Cried Out,”* and it is
still in Lehi to this day.

20Samson judged Israel for twenty years during the period when the
Philistines dominated the land.

Judges 16

SAMSON CARRIES AWAY GAZA'S GATES

1One day Samson went to the Philistine town of Gaza and spent the
night with a prostitute. 2Word soon spread* that Samson was there,
so the men of Gaza gathered together and waited all night at the
town gates. They kept quiet during the night, saying to themselves,
"When the light of morning comes, we will kill him."

3But Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up,
took hold of the doors of the town gate, including the two posts,
and lifted them up, bar and all. He put them on his shoulders and
carried them all the way to the top of the hill across from Hebron.

SAMSON AND DELILAH

4Some time later Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah,
who lived in the valley of Sorek. 5The rulers of the Philistines went
to her and said, “Entice Samson to tell you what makes him so
strong and how he can be overpowered and tied up securely. Then
each of us will give you 1,100 pieces* of silver.”

6So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me what makes you so
strong and what it would take to tie you up securely.”

7Samson replied, “If I were tied up with seven new bowstrings that
have not yet been dried, I would become as weak as anyone else.”

8So the Philistine rulers brought Delilah seven new bowstrings, and
she tied Samson up with them. 9She had hidden some men in one of
the inner rooms of her house, and she cried out, “Samson! The
Philistines have come to capture you!” But Samson snapped the
bowstrings as a piece of string snaps when it is burned by a fire. So
the secret of his strength was not discovered.

10 Afterward Delilah said to him, “You’ve been making fun of me
and telling me lies! Now please tell me how you can be tied up
securely.”

11 Samson replied, “If I were tied up with brand-new ropes that had
never been used, I would become as weak as anyone else.”

12 So Delilah took new ropes and tied him up with them. The men
were hiding in the inner room as before, and again Delilah cried
out, “Samson! The Philistines have come to capture you!” But again
Samson snapped the ropes from his arms as if they were thread.

13 Then Delilah said, “You’ve been making fun of me and telling me
lies! Now tell me how you can be tied up securely.”

Samson replied, “If you were to weave the seven braids of my hair
into the fabric on your loom and tighten it with the loom shuttle, I
would become as weak as anyone else.”

So while he slept, Delilah wove the seven braids of his hair into the
fabric. 14 Then she tightened it with the loom shuttle.* Again she
cried out, “Samson! The Philistines have come to capture you!” But
Samson woke up, pulled back the loom shuttle, and yanked his hair
away from the loom and the fabric.

15 Then Delilah pouted, “How can you tell me, ‘I love you,’ when
you don’t share your secrets with me? You’ve made fun of me three
times now, and you still haven’t told me what makes you so
strong!” 16 She tormented him with her nagging day after day until
he was sick to death of it.

17 Finally, Samson shared his secret with her. “My hair has never
been cut,” he confessed, “for I was dedicated to God as a Nazirite
from birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me,
and I would become as weak as anyone else.”

18Delilah realized he had finally told her the truth, so she sent for
the Philistine rulers. “Come back one more time,” she said, “for he
has finally told me his secret.” So the Philistine rulers returned with
the money in their hands. 19Delilah lulled Samson to sleep with his
head in her lap, and then she called in a man to shave off the seven
locks of his hair. In this way she began to bring him down,* and his
strength left him.

20Then she cried out, “Samson! The Philistines have come to
capture you!”

When he woke up, he thought, “I will do as before and shake myself
free.” But he didn’t realize the LORD had left him.

21So the Philistines captured him and gouged out his eyes. They
took him to Gaza, where he was bound with bronze chains and
forced to grind grain in the prison.

22But before long, his hair began to grow back.

SAMSON’S FINAL VICTORY

23The Philistine rulers held a great festival, offering sacrifices and
praising their god, Dagon. They said, “Our god has given us victory
over our enemy Samson!”

24When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, “Our
god has delivered our enemy to us! The one who killed so many of
us is now in our power!”

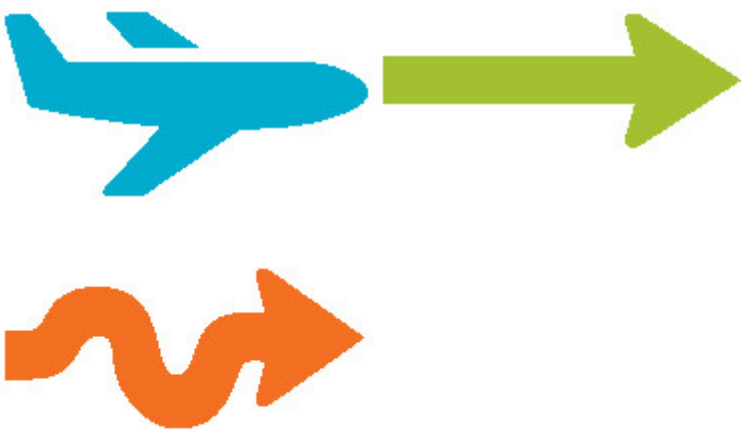
25Half drunk by now, the people demanded, “Bring out Samson so
he can amuse us!” So he was brought from the prison to amuse
them, and they had him stand between the pillars supporting the
roof.

26Samson said to the young servant who was leading him by the

hand, “Place my hands against the pillars that hold up the temple. I want to rest against them.” 27Now the temple was completely filled with people. All the Philistine rulers were there, and there were about 3,000 men and women on the roof who were watching as Samson amused them.

28Then Samson prayed to the LORD, “Sovereign LORD, remember me again. O God, please strengthen me just one more time. With one blow let me pay back the Philistines for the loss of my two eyes.” 29Then Samson put his hands on the two center pillars that held up the temple. Pushing against them with both hands, 30he prayed, “Let me die with the Philistines.” And the temple crashed down on the Philistine rulers and all the people. So he killed more people when he died than he had during his entire lifetime.

31Later his brothers and other relatives went down to get his body. They took him back home and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, where his father, Manoah, was buried. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.



Judges 17

MICAH'S IDOLS

1There was a man named Micah, who lived in the hill country of
Ephraim. 2One day he said to his mother, "I heard you place a curse
on the person who stole 1,100 pieces* of silver from you. Well, I
have the money. I was the one who took it."

"The LORD bless you for admitting it," his mother replied. 3He
returned the money to her, and she said, "I now dedicate these
silver coins to the LORD. In honor of my son, I will have an image
carved and an idol cast."

4So when he returned the money to his mother, she took 200 silver
coins and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into an image
and an idol. And these were placed in Micah's house. 5Micah set up
a shrine for the idol, and he made a sacred ephod and some
household idols. Then he installed one of his sons as his personal
priest.

6In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever
seemed right in their own eyes.

7One day a young Levite, who had been living in Bethlehem in
Judah, arrived in that area. 8He had left Bethlehem in search of
another place to live, and as he traveled, he came to the hill
country of Ephraim. He happened to stop at Micah's house as he
was traveling through. 9"Where are you from?" Micah asked him.

He replied, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am
looking for a place to live."

10"Stay here with me," Micah said, "and you can be a father and
priest to me. I will give you ten pieces of silver* a year, plus a
change of clothes and your food." 11The Levite agreed to this, and
the young man became like one of Micah's sons.

12So Micah installed the Levite as his personal priest, and he lived
in Micah's house. 13"I know the LORD will bless me now," Micah
said, "because I have a Levite serving as my priest."

Judges 18

IDOLATRY IN THE TRIBE OF DAN

1Now in those days Israel had no king. And the tribe of Dan was
trying to find a place where they could settle, for they had not yet
moved into the land assigned to them when the land was divided
among the tribes of Israel. 2So the men of Dan chose from their
clans five capable warriors from the towns of Zorah and Eshtaol to
scout out a land for them to settle in.

When these warriors arrived in the hill country of Ephraim, they
came to Micah's house and spent the night there. 3While at Micah's
house, they recognized the young Levite's accent, so they went over
and asked him, "Who brought you here, and what are you doing in
this place? Why are you here?" 4He told them about his agreement
with Micah and that he had been hired as Micah's personal priest.

5Then they said, "Ask God whether or not our journey will be
successful."

6"Go in peace," the priest replied. "For the LORD is watching over
your journey."

7So the five men went on to the town of Laish, where they noticed
the people living carefree lives, like the Sidonians; they were
peaceful and secure.* The people were also wealthy because their
land was very fertile. And they lived a great distance from Sidon
and had no allies nearby.

8When the men returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, their relatives asked

them, “What did you find?”

9The men replied, “Come on, let’s attack them! We have seen the
land, and it is very good. What are you waiting for? Don’t hesitate
to go and take possession of it. 10When you get there, you will find
the people living carefree lives. God has given us a spacious and
fertile land, lacking in nothing!”

11So 600 men from the tribe of Dan, armed with weapons of war,
set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. 12They camped at a place west of
Kiriath-jearim in Judah, which is called Mahaneh-dan* to this day.
13Then they went on from there into the hill country of Ephraim
and came to the house of Micah.

14The five men who had scouted out the land around Laish
explained to the others, “These buildings contain a sacred ephod, as
well as some household idols, a carved image, and a cast idol. What
do you think you should do?” 15Then the five men turned off the
road and went over to Micah’s house, where the young Levite lived,
and greeted him kindly. 16As the 600 armed warriors from the tribe
of Dan stood at the entrance of the gate, 17the five scouts entered
the shrine and removed the carved image, the sacred ephod, the
household idols, and the cast idol. Meanwhile, the priest was
standing at the gate with the 600 armed warriors.

18When the priest saw the men carrying all the sacred objects out of
Micah’s shrine, he said, “What are you doing?”

19“Be quiet and come with us,” they said. “Be a father and priest to
all of us. Isn’t it better to be a priest for an entire tribe and clan of
Israel than for the household of just one man?”

20The young priest was quite happy to go with them, so he took
along the sacred ephod, the household idols, and the carved image.
21They turned and started on their way again, placing their
children, livestock, and possessions in front of them.

22When the people from the tribe of Dan were quite a distance from
Micah's house, the people who lived near Micah came chasing after
them. 23They were shouting as they caught up with them. The men
of Dan turned around and said to Micah, "What's the matter? Why
have you called these men together and chased after us like this?"

24"What do you mean, 'What's the matter?'" Micah replied. "You've
taken away all the gods I have made, and my priest, and I have
nothing left!"

25The men of Dan said, "Watch what you say! There are some short-
tempered men around here who might get angry and kill you and
your family." 26So the men of Dan continued on their way. When
Micah saw that there were too many of them for him to attack, he
turned around and went home.

27Then, with Micah's idols and his priest, the men of Dan came to
the town of Laish, whose people were peaceful and secure. They
attacked with swords and burned the town to the ground. 28There
was no one to rescue the people, for they lived a great distance
from Sidon and had no allies nearby. This happened in the valley
near Beth-rehob.

Then the people of the tribe of Dan rebuilt the town and lived there.
29They renamed the town Dan after their ancestor, Israel's son, but
it had originally been called Laish.

30Then they set up the carved image, and they appointed Jonathan
son of Gershom, son of Moses,* as their priest. This family
continued as priests for the tribe of Dan until the Exile. 31So Micah's
carved image was worshiped by the tribe of Dan as long as the
Tabernacle of God remained at Shiloh.

Judges 19

THE LEVITE AND HIS CONCUBINE

1Now in those days Israel had no king. There was a man from the
tribe of Levi living in a remote area of the hill country of Ephraim.
One day he brought home a woman from Bethlehem in Judah to be
his concubine. 2But she became angry with him* and returned to her
father's home in Bethlehem.

After about four months, 3her husband set out for Bethlehem to
speak personally to her and persuade her to come back. He took
with him a servant and a pair of donkeys. When he arrived at* her
father's house, her father saw him and welcomed him. 4Her father
urged him to stay awhile, so he stayed three days, eating, drinking,
and sleeping there.

5On the fourth day the man was up early, ready to leave, but the
woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Have something to eat
before you go." 6So the two men sat down together and had
something to eat and drink. Then the woman's father said, "Please
stay another night and enjoy yourself." 7The man got up to leave,
but his father-in-law kept urging him to stay, so he finally gave in
and stayed the night.

8On the morning of the fifth day he was up early again, ready to
leave, and again the woman's father said, "Have something to eat;
then you can leave later this afternoon." So they had another day of
feasting. 9Later, as the man and his concubine and servant were
preparing to leave, his father-in-law said, "Look, it's almost evening.
Stay the night and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow you can get up early
and be on your way."

10But this time the man was determined to leave. So he took his two
saddled donkeys and his concubine and headed in the direction of
Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). 11It was late in the day when they neared
Jebus, and the man's servant said to him, "Let's stop at this Jebusite
town and spend the night there."

12"No," his master said, "we can't stay in this foreign town where

there are no Israelites. Instead, we will go on to Gibeah. 13Come on,
let's try to get as far as Gibeah or Ramah, and we'll spend the night
in one of those towns." 14So they went on. The sun was setting as
they came to Gibeah, a town in the land of Benjamin, 15so they
stopped there to spend the night. They rested in the town square,
but no one took them in for the night.

16That evening an old man came home from his work in the fields.
He was from the hill country of Ephraim, but he was living in
Gibeah, where the people were from the tribe of Benjamin. 17When
he saw the travelers sitting in the town square, he asked them
where they were from and where they were going.

18"We have been in Bethlehem in Judah," the man replied. "We are
on our way to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim, which
is my home. I traveled to Bethlehem, and now I'm returning home.*
But no one has taken us in for the night, 19even though we have
everything we need. We have straw and feed for our donkeys and
plenty of bread and wine for ourselves."

20"You are welcome to stay with me," the old man said. "I will give
you anything you might need. But whatever you do, don't spend the
night in the square." 21So he took them home with him and fed the
donkeys. After they washed their feet, they ate and drank together.

22While they were enjoying themselves, a crowd of troublemakers
from the town surrounded the house. They began beating at the
door and shouting to the old man, "Bring out the man who is
staying with you so we can have sex with him."

23The old man stepped outside to talk to them. "No, my brothers,
don't do such an evil thing. For this man is a guest in my house, and
such a thing would be shameful. 24Here, take my virgin daughter
and this man's concubine. I will bring them out to you, and you can
abuse them and do whatever you like. But don't do such a shameful
thing to this man."

25But they wouldn't listen to him. So the Levite took hold of his
concubine and pushed her out the door. The men of the town
abused her all night, taking turns raping her until morning. Finally,
at dawn they let her go. 26At daybreak the woman returned to the
house where her husband was staying. She collapsed at the door of
the house and lay there until it was light.

27When her husband opened the door to leave, there lay his
concubine with her hands on the threshold. 28He said, "Get up! Let's
go!" But there was no answer.* So he put her body on his donkey
and took her home.

29When he got home, he took a knife and cut his concubine's body
into twelve pieces. Then he sent one piece to each tribe throughout
all the territory of Israel.

30Everyone who saw it said, "Such a horrible crime has not been
committed in all the time since Israel left Egypt. Think about it!
What are we going to do? Who's going to speak up?"

Judges 20

ISRAEL'S WAR WITH BENJAMIN

1Then all the Israelites were united as one man, from Dan in the
north to Beersheba in the south, including those from across the
Jordan in the land of Gilead. The entire community assembled in
the presence of the LORD at Mizpah. 2The leaders of all the people
and all the tribes of Israel—400,000 warriors armed with swords—
took their positions in the assembly of the people of God. 3(Word
soon reached the land of Benjamin that the other tribes had gone up
to Mizpah.) The Israelites then asked how this terrible crime had
happened.

4The Levite, the husband of the woman who had been murdered,

said, “My concubine and I came to spend the night in Gibeah, a
town that belongs to the people of Benjamin. 5That night some of
the leading citizens of Gibeah surrounded the house, planning to
kill me, and they raped my concubine until she was dead. 6So I cut
her body into twelve pieces and sent the pieces throughout the
territory assigned to Israel, for these men have committed a terrible
and shameful crime. 7Now then, all of you—the entire community
of Israel—must decide here and now what should be done about
this!”

8And all the people rose to their feet in unison and declared, “None
of us will return home! No, not even one of us! 9Instead, this is what
we will do to Gibeah; we will draw lots to decide who will attack it.
10One-tenth of the men* from each tribe will be chosen to supply
the warriors with food, and the rest of us will take revenge on
Gibeah* of Benjamin for this shameful thing they have done in
Israel.” 11So all the Israelites were completely united, and they
gathered together to attack the town.

12The Israelites sent messengers to the tribe of Benjamin, saying,
“What a terrible thing has been done among you! 13Give up those
evil men, those troublemakers from Gibeah, so we can execute them
and purge Israel of this evil.”

But the people of Benjamin would not listen. 14Instead, they came
from their towns and gathered at Gibeah to fight the Israelites. 15In
all, 26,000 of their warriors armed with swords arrived in Gibeah to
join the 700 elite troops who lived there. 16Among Benjamin’s elite
troops, 700 were left-handed, and each of them could sling a rock
and hit a target within a hairsbreadth without missing. 17Israel had
400,000 experienced soldiers armed with swords, not counting
Benjamin’s warriors.

18Before the battle the Israelites went to Bethel and asked God,
“Which tribe should go first to attack the people of Benjamin?”

The LORD answered, “Judah is to go first.”

19So the Israelites left early the next morning and camped near
Gibeah. 20Then they advanced toward Gibeah to attack the men of
Benjamin. 21But Benjamin's warriors, who were defending the town,
came out and killed 22,000 Israelites on the battlefield that day.

22But the Israelites encouraged each other and took their positions
again at the same place they had fought the previous day. 23For
they had gone up to Bethel and wept in the presence of the LORD
until evening. They had asked the LORD, "Should we fight against
our relatives from Benjamin again?"

And the LORD had said, "Go out and fight against them."

24So the next day they went out again to fight against the men of
Benjamin, 25but the men of Benjamin killed another 18,000
Israelites, all of whom were experienced with the sword.

26Then all the Israelites went up to Bethel and wept in the presence
of the LORD and fasted until evening. They also brought burnt
offerings and peace offerings to the LORD. 27The Israelites went up
seeking direction from the LORD. (In those days the Ark of the
Covenant of God was in Bethel, 28and Phinehas son of Eleazar and
grandson of Aaron was the priest.) The Israelites asked the LORD,
"Should we fight against our relatives from Benjamin again, or
should we stop?"

The LORD said, "Go! Tomorrow I will hand them over to you."

29So the Israelites set an ambush all around Gibeah. 30They went out
on the third day and took their positions at the same place as
before. 31When the men of Benjamin came out to attack, they were
drawn away from the town. And as they had done before, they
began to kill the Israelites. About thirty Israelites died in the open
fields and along the roads, one leading to Bethel and the other
leading back to Gibeah.

32Then the warriors of Benjamin shouted, "We're defeating them as

we did before!” But the Israelites had planned in advance to run away so that the men of Benjamin would chase them along the roads and be drawn away from the town.

33When the main group of Israelite warriors reached Baal-tamar, they turned and took up their positions. Meanwhile, the Israelites hiding in ambush to the west* of Gibeah jumped up to fight. 34There were 10,000 elite Israelite troops who advanced against Gibeah. The fighting was so heavy that Benjamin didn’t realize the impending disaster. 35So the LORD helped Israel defeat Benjamin, and that day the Israelites killed 25,100 of Benjamin’s warriors, all of whom were experienced swordsmen. 36Then the men of Benjamin saw that they were beaten.

The Israelites had retreated from Benjamin’s warriors in order to give those hiding in ambush more room to maneuver against Gibeah. 37Then those who were hiding rushed in from all sides and killed everyone in the town. 38They had arranged to send up a large cloud of smoke from the town as a signal. 39When the Israelites saw the smoke, they turned and attacked Benjamin’s warriors.

By that time Benjamin’s warriors had killed about thirty Israelites, and they shouted, “We’re defeating them as we did in the first battle!” 40But when the warriors of Benjamin looked behind them and saw the smoke rising into the sky from every part of the town, 41the men of Israel turned and attacked. At this point the men of Benjamin became terrified, because they realized disaster was close at hand. 42So they turned around and fled before the Israelites toward the wilderness. But they couldn’t escape the battle, and the people who came out of the nearby towns were also killed.*43The Israelites surrounded the men of Benjamin and chased them relentlessly, finally overtaking them east of Gibeah.*44That day 18,000 of Benjamin’s strongest warriors died in battle. 45The survivors fled into the wilderness toward the rock of Rimmon, but Israel killed 5,000 of them along the road. They continued the chase until they had killed another 2,000 near Gidom.

46So that day the tribe of Benjamin lost 25,000 strong warriors

armed with swords, 47leaving only 600 men who escaped to the rock of Rimmon, where they lived for four months. 48And the Israelites returned and slaughtered every living thing in all the towns—the people, the livestock, and everything they found. They also burned down all the towns they came to.

Judges 21

ISRAEL PROVIDES WIVES FOR BENJAMIN

1The Israelites had vowed at Mizpah, “We will never give our daughters in marriage to a man from the tribe of Benjamin.” 2Now the people went to Bethel and sat in the presence of God until evening, weeping loudly and bitterly. 3“O LORD, God of Israel,” they cried out, “why has this happened in Israel? Now one of our tribes is missing from Israel!”

4Early the next morning the people built an altar and presented their burnt offerings and peace offerings on it. 5Then they said, “Who among the tribes of Israel did not join us at Mizpah when we held our assembly in the presence of the LORD?” At that time they had taken a solemn oath in the LORD’s presence, vowing that anyone who refused to come would be put to death.

6The Israelites felt sorry for their brother Benjamin and said, “Today one of the tribes of Israel has been cut off. 7How can we find wives for the few who remain, since we have sworn by the LORD not to give them our daughters in marriage?”

8So they asked, “Who among the tribes of Israel did not join us at Mizpah when we assembled in the presence of the LORD?” And they discovered that no one from Jabesh-gilead had attended the assembly. 9For after they counted all the people, no one from Jabesh-gilead was present.

10So the assembly sent 12,000 of their best warriors to Jabesh-

gilead with orders to kill everyone there, including women and children. 11“This is what you are to do,” they said. “Completely destroy* all the males and every woman who is not a virgin.” 12Among the residents of Jabesh-gilead they found 400 young virgins who had never slept with a man, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.

13The Israelite assembly sent a peace delegation to the remaining people of Benjamin who were living at the rock of Rimmon. 14Then the men of Benjamin returned to their homes, and the 400 women of Jabesh-gilead who had been spared were given to them as wives. But there were not enough women for all of them.

15The people felt sorry for Benjamin because the LORD had made this gap among the tribes of Israel. 16So the elders of the assembly asked, “How can we find wives for the few who remain, since the women of the tribe of Benjamin are dead? 17There must be heirs for the survivors so that an entire tribe of Israel is not wiped out. 18But we cannot give them our own daughters in marriage because we have sworn with a solemn oath that anyone who does this will fall under God’s curse.”

19Then they thought of the annual festival of the LORD held in Shiloh, south of Lebonah and north of Bethel, along the east side of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem. 20They told the men of Benjamin who still needed wives, “Go and hide in the vineyards. 21When you see the young women of Shiloh come out for their dances, rush out from the vineyards, and each of you can take one of them home to the land of Benjamin to be your wife! 22And when their fathers and brothers come to us in protest, we will tell them, ‘Please be sympathetic. Let them have your daughters, for we didn’t find wives for all of them when we destroyed Jabesh-gilead. And you are not guilty of breaking the vow since you did not actually give your daughters to them in marriage.’”

23So the men of Benjamin did as they were told. Each man caught one of the women as she danced in the celebration and carried her

off to be his wife. They returned to their own land, and they rebuilt their towns and lived in them.

24Then the people of Israel departed by tribes and families, and they returned to their own homes.

25In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

Ruth

Introduction 1 2 3 4

WELCOME TO

RUTH

The book of Ruth presents a beautiful story that provides light during the chaotic time of the judges. The love and hope reflected in this story are a welcome relief from the social and moral darkness that seemed to engulf the land because of Israel's sin.

Ruth is a Moabite who decides to stay with her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi, after tragedy widows both of them. Ruth's heritage outside the people of Israel shows that God is the God of the whole world, not simply of particular individuals or nations. God rewards Ruth for her faithfulness to him by blessing her with a husband, Boaz, and a son. Through Ruth, he also blesses Naomi with grandchildren. Ruth's great-grandson David will become the greatest king of Israel.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly over Ruth, never stopping. But if you'd like, linger a minute and read this story—it's brief, with a very happy ending. Your next stop is at 1 Samuel 3:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You'll see Ruth's loyalty and dedication to

Naomi. Although their story starts out sad, it ends happily. Your next stop is at Ruth 1:1.

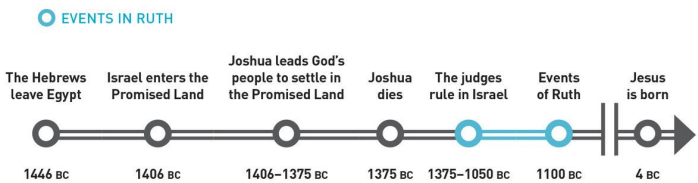
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll enjoy the full story of Ruth and Naomi. It's a wonderful account of loyalty and love—and an important part of the lineage of the great King David. Your next stop is at Ruth 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN RUTH

In the book of Ruth, Jesus is most clearly seen in the person of Boaz. In fact, Boaz was an ancestor of Jesus. Boaz didn't simply fulfill the letter of the law that required landowners to leave the corners of their field uncut; he fulfilled the purpose of the law by generously leaving extra food behind for the poor, including Ruth. He stepped in as the family redeemer, allowing Naomi's family line to be extended and protecting her from ruin—just as Jesus grafts us into God's family and saves us from our sin.

Boaz provided for Ruth by marrying her even though she was not an Israelite. In the same way, Jesus invites everyone, even outsiders, to enter into life with God.



JESUS' FAMILY RUTH 1–2

THE LAND OF MOAB

Ruth 1

ELIMELECH MOVES HIS FAMILY TO MOAB

1 In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came
upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home
and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two
sons with him. 2 The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife was

Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there.

3Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. 4The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, 5both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

NAOMI AND RUTH RETURN

6Then Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland. 7With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah.

8But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back to your mothers' homes. And may the LORD reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me. 9May the LORD bless you with the security of another marriage." Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept.

10"No," they said. "We want to go with you to your people."

11But Naomi replied, "Why should you go on with me? Can I still give birth to other sons who could grow up to be your husbands? 12No, my daughters, return to your parents' homes, for I am too old to marry again. And even if it were possible, and I were to get married tonight and bear sons, then what? 13Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? No, of course not, my daughters! Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD himself has raised his fist against me."

14And again they wept together, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth clung tightly to Naomi. 15“Look,” Naomi said to her, “your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same.”

16But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. 17Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!” 18When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

19So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Naomi?” the women asked.

20“Don’t call me Naomi,” she responded. “Instead, call me Mara,* for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. 21I went away full, but the LORD has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the LORD has caused me to suffer* and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?”

22So Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, the young Moabite woman. They arrived in Bethlehem in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Ruth 2

RUTH WORKS IN BOAZ'S FIELD

1Now there was a wealthy and influential man in Bethlehem named
Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi's husband, Elimelech.

2One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go out into the
harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone
who is kind enough to let me do it."

Naomi replied, "All right, my daughter, go ahead." 3So Ruth went
out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she
found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative
of her father-in-law, Elimelech.

4While she was there, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the
harvesters. "The LORD be with you!" he said.

"The LORD bless you!" the harvesters replied.

5Then Boaz asked his foreman, "Who is that young woman over
there? Who does she belong to?"

6And the foreman replied, "She is the young woman from Moab
who came back with Naomi. 7She asked me this morning if she
could gather grain behind the harvesters. She has been hard at work
ever since, except for a few minutes' rest in the shelter."

8Boaz went over and said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Stay right
here with us when you gather grain; don't go to any other fields.
Stay right behind the young women working in my field. 9See which
part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have
warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are
thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well."

10Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. "What have I done

to deserve such kindness?” she asked. “I am only a foreigner.”

11“Yes, I know,” Boaz replied. “But I also know about everything
you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your
husband. I have heard how you left your father and mother and
your own land to live here among complete strangers. 12May the
LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take
refuge, reward you fully for what you have done.”

13“I hope I continue to please you, sir,” she replied. “You have
comforted me by speaking so kindly to me, even though I am not
one of your workers.”

14At mealtime Boaz called to her, “Come over here, and help
yourself to some food. You can dip your bread in the sour wine.” So
she sat with his harvesters, and Boaz gave her some roasted grain to
eat. She ate all she wanted and still had some left over.

15When Ruth went back to work again, Boaz ordered his young
men, “Let her gather grain right among the sheaves without
stopping her. 16And pull out some heads of barley from the bundles
and drop them on purpose for her. Let her pick them up, and don’t
give her a hard time!”

17So Ruth gathered barley there all day, and when she beat out the
grain that evening, it filled an entire basket.*18She carried it back
into town and showed it to her mother-in-law. Ruth also gave her
the roasted grain that was left over from her meal.

19“Where did you gather all this grain today?” Naomi asked.
“Where did you work? May the LORD bless the one who helped
you!”

So Ruth told her mother-in-law about the man in whose field she

had worked. She said, “The man I worked with today is named Boaz.”

20“May the LORD bless him!” Naomi told her daughter-in-law. “He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband.* That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers.”

21Then Ruth* said, “What’s more, Boaz even told me to come back and stay with his harvesters until the entire harvest is completed.”

22“Good!” Naomi exclaimed. “Do as he said, my daughter. Stay with his young women right through the whole harvest. You might be harassed in other fields, but you’ll be safe with him.”

23So Ruth worked alongside the women in Boaz’s fields and gathered grain with them until the end of the barley harvest. Then she continued working with them through the wheat harvest in early summer. And all the while she lived with her mother-in-law.

Ruth 3

RUTH AT THE THRESHING FLOOR

1One day Naomi said to Ruth, “My daughter, it’s time that I found a
permanent home for you, so that you will be provided for. 2Boaz is
a close relative of ours, and he’s been very kind by letting you
gather grain with his young women. Tonight he will be winnowing
barley at the threshing floor. 3Now do as I tell you—take a bath and
put on perfume and dress in your nicest clothes. Then go to the
threshing floor, but don’t let Boaz see you until he has finished
eating and drinking. 4Be sure to notice where he lies down; then go
and uncover his feet and lie down there. He will tell you what to
do.”

5“I will do everything you say,” Ruth replied. 6So she went down to
the threshing floor that night and followed the instructions of her
mother-in-law.

7After Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good
spirits, he lay down at the far end of the pile of grain and went to
sleep. Then Ruth came quietly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8Around midnight Boaz suddenly woke up and turned over. He was
surprised to find a woman lying at his feet! 9"Who are you?" he
asked.

"I am your servant Ruth," she replied. "Spread the corner of your
covering over me, for you are my family redeemer."

10"The LORD bless you, my daughter!" Boaz exclaimed. "You are
showing even more family loyalty now than you did before, for you
have not gone after a younger man, whether rich or poor. 11Now
don't worry about a thing, my daughter. I will do what is necessary,
for everyone in town knows you are a virtuous woman. 12But while
it's true that I am one of your family redeemers, there is another
man who is more closely related to you than I am. 13Stay here
tonight, and in the morning I will talk to him. If he is willing to
redeem you, very well. Let him marry you. But if he is not willing,
then as surely as the LORD lives, I will redeem you myself! Now lie
down here until morning."

14So Ruth lay at Boaz's feet until the morning, but she got up before
it was light enough for people to recognize each other. For Boaz
had said, "No one must know that a woman was here at the
threshing floor." 15Then Boaz said to her, "Bring your cloak and
spread it out." He measured six scoops* of barley into the cloak and
placed it on her back. Then he* returned to the town.

16When Ruth went back to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "What
happened, my daughter?"

Ruth told Naomi everything Boaz had done for her, 17and she
added, "He gave me these six scoops of barley and said, 'Don't go
back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"

18Then Naomi said to her, "Just be patient, my daughter, until we
hear what happens. The man won't rest until he has settled things
today."

Ruth 4

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH

1Boaz went to the town gate and took a seat there. Just then the
family redeemer he had mentioned came by, so Boaz called out to
him, “Come over here and sit down, friend. I want to talk to you.”
So they sat down together. 2Then Boaz called ten leaders from the
town and asked them to sit as witnesses. 3And Boaz said to the
family redeemer, “You know Naomi, who came back from Moab.
She is selling the land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. 4I
thought I should speak to you about it so that you can redeem it if
you wish. If you want the land, then buy it here in the presence of
these witnesses. But if you don’t want it, let me know right away,
because I am next in line to redeem it after you.”

The man replied, “All right, I’ll redeem it.”

5Then Boaz told him, “Of course, your purchase of the land from
Naomi also requires that you marry Ruth, the Moabite widow. That
way she can have children who will carry on her husband’s name
and keep the land in the family.”

6“Then I can’t redeem it,” the family redeemer replied, “because
this might endanger my own estate. You redeem the land; I cannot
do it.”

7Now in those days it was the custom in Israel for anyone
transferring a right of purchase to remove his sandal and hand it to
the other party. This publicly validated the transaction. 8So the
other family redeemer drew off his sandal as he said to Boaz, “You
buy the land.”

9Then Boaz said to the elders and to the crowd standing around,
“You are witnesses that today I have bought from Naomi all the
property of Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon. 10And with the land I
have acquired Ruth, the Moabite widow of Mahlon, to be my wife.
This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her

dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today."

11Then the elders and all the people standing in the gate replied, "We are witnesses! May the LORD make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Israel descended! May you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12And may the LORD give you descendants by this young woman who will be like those of our ancestor Perez, the son of Tamar and Judah."

THE DESCENDANTS OF BOAZ

13So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the LORD enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. 14Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise the LORD, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. 15May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!"

16Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own. 17The neighbor women said, "Now at last Naomi has a son again!" And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.

18This is the genealogical record of their ancestor Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron.

19Hezron was the father of Ram.
Ram was the father of Amminadab.

20Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.*

21Salmon was the father of Boaz.
Boaz was the father of Obed.

22Obed was the father of Jesse.
Jesse was the father of David.

1 Samuel

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

WELCOME TO

1 SAMUEL

First Samuel tells the story of Israel's transition from a coalition of tribes during the period of the judges into a united nation under the leadership of a human king. Samuel serves as the bridge between these two stages. He is Israel's last and greatest judge, as well as a prophet and priest who anoints the first two kings of Israel.

Israel's enemies the Philistines continue to oppress the tribes of Israel, and the people cry out for a king. With God's guidance, Samuel anoints Saul as Israel's first king. Although Saul leads the nation in great military successes, he neglects to follow God's direction, so God ultimately rejects him as king.

God guides Samuel to anoint another king and chooses a young man who proves to be a successful warrior: David. Seeking to hold on to his royal position, Saul jealously pursues David, trying to kill him; but God protects his anointed one. The book ends with Saul's

tragic death, allowing God's plan for David to unfold.

2 STOPS

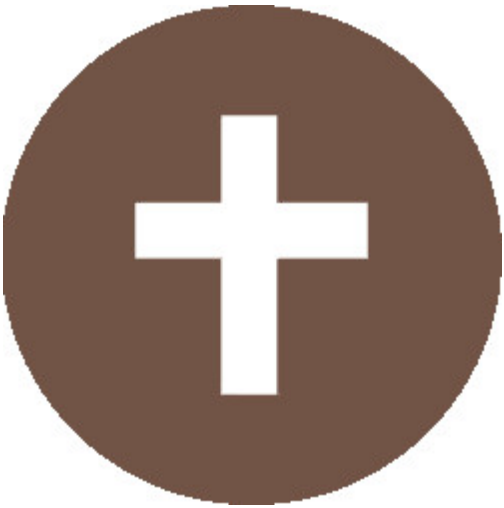
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Both stops in 1 Samuel are great stories about young boys—Samuel and David—who believed in a great God. Your next stop is at 1 Samuel 3:1.

8 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: On your journey through 1 Samuel, you'll read eight passages that shine a light on the early history of the nation of Israel, from Samuel's unlikely birth to David's growth in God's favor. Your next stop is at 1 Samuel 1:1.

13 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: As you travel through 1 Samuel, you'll get a detailed overview of the early history of the kingdom of Israel. Highlights include the journey of the Ark of the Covenant, David's fight with Goliath, Saul and David's conflict, and Saul's tragic death. Your next stop is at 1 Samuel 1:1.

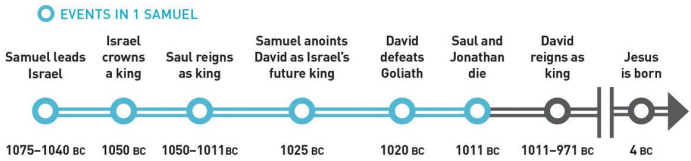


FINDING JESUS IN 1 SAMUEL

Samuel was the last judge of Israel, but he served as a priest and prophet as well. These three leadership positions—prophet, priest, and judge—also characterize Jesus, who perfectly fulfills these roles because he is without sin.

David prefigured Jesus in many ways. David was a literal shepherd; Jesus is the "Good Shepherd" who cares for his people. David became a king whose kingdom had geographical boundaries; Jesus, as King of all of God's people, has a spiritual kingdom that transcends all political, social, and geographical borders. Jesus was called the "Son of David" for good reason. Jesus is the ultimate King

of God's people.



1 Samuel 1

ELKANAH AND HIS FAMILY

1There was a man named Elkanah who lived in Ramah in the region
of Zuph* in the hill country of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham,
son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, of Ephraim. 2Elkanah had
two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but
Hannah did not.

THE CITY OF SHILOH

3Each year Elkanah would travel to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice
to the LORD of Heaven's Armies at the Tabernacle. The priests of
the LORD at that time were the two sons of Eli—Hophni and
Phinehas. 4On the days Elkanah presented his sacrifice, he would
give portions of the meat to Peninnah and each of her children.
5And though he loved Hannah, he would give her only one choice
portion* because the LORD had given her no children. 6So Peninnah
would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the LORD had
kept her from having children. 7Year after year it was the same—
Peninnah would taunt Hannah as they went to the Tabernacle.*
Each time, Hannah would be reduced to tears and would not even
eat.

8"Why are you crying, Hannah?" Elkanah would ask. "Why aren't
you eating? Why be downhearted just because you have no
children? You have me—isn't that better than having ten sons?"

HANNAH'S PRAYER FOR A SON

9Once after a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and went to
pray. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the
entrance of the Tabernacle.* 10Hannah was in deep anguish, crying
bitterly as she prayed to the LORD. 11And she made this vow: “O
LORD of Heaven’s Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and
answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to
you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he
has been dedicated to the LORD, his hair will never be cut.*”

12As she was praying to the LORD, Eli watched her. 13Seeing her lips
moving but hearing no sound, he thought she had been drinking.
14“Must you come here drunk?” he demanded. “Throw away your
wine!”

15“Oh no, sir!” she replied. “I haven’t been drinking wine or
anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring
out my heart to the LORD. 16Don’t think I am a wicked woman! For
I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow.”

17“In that case,” Eli said, “go in peace! May the God of Israel grant
the request you have asked of him.”

18“Oh, thank you, sir!” she exclaimed. Then she went back and
began to eat again, and she was no longer sad.

SAMUEL’S BIRTH AND DEDICATION

19The entire family got up early the next morning and went to
worship the LORD once more. Then they returned home to Ramah.
When Elkanah slept with Hannah, the LORD remembered her plea,
20and in due time she gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel,*
for she said, “I asked the LORD for him.”

21The next year Elkanah and his family went on their annual trip to
offer a sacrifice to the LORD and to keep his vow. 22But Hannah did
not go. She told her husband, “Wait until the boy is weaned. Then I

will take him to the Tabernacle and leave him there with the LORD permanently.*”

23“Whatever you think is best,” Elkanah agreed. “Stay here for now, and may the LORD help you keep your promise.*” So she stayed home and nursed the boy until he was weaned.

24When the child was weaned, Hannah took him to the Tabernacle in Shiloh. They brought along a three-year-old bull* for the sacrifice and a basket* of flour and some wine. 25After sacrificing the bull, they brought the boy to Eli. 26“Sir, do you remember me?” Hannah asked. “I am the very woman who stood here several years ago praying to the LORD. 27I asked the LORD to give me this boy, and he has granted my request. 28Now I am giving him to the LORD, and he will belong to the LORD his whole life.” And they* worshiped the LORD there.

SONGS 1 SAMUEL 2:1-10

1 Samuel 2

HANNAH'S PRAYER OF PRAISE

1Then Hannah prayed: "My heart rejoices in the LORD!

The LORD has made me strong.*
Now I have an answer for my enemies; I rejoice because you rescued me.

2No one is holy like the LORD!
There is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.

3"Stop acting so proud and haughty!
Don't speak with such arrogance!
For the LORD is a God who knows what you have done; he will judge your actions.

4The bow of the mighty is now broken, and those who stumbled are now strong.

5Those who were well fed are now starving, and those who were starving are now full.
The childless woman now has seven children, and the woman with many children wastes away.

6The LORD gives both death and life; he brings some down to the grave* but raises others up.

7The LORD makes some poor and others rich; he brings some down and lifts others up.

8He lifts the poor from the dust and the needy from the garbage dump.
He sets them among princes, placing them in seats of honor.
For all the earth is the LORD's, and he has set the world in order.

9"He will protect his faithful ones, but the wicked will disappear in

darkness.
No one will succeed by strength alone.

10 Those who fight against the LORD will be shattered.
He thunders against them from heaven; the LORD judges
throughout the earth.
He gives power to his king; he increases the strength* of his
anointed one."

11 Then Elkanah returned home to Ramah without Samuel. And the
boy served the LORD by assisting Eli the priest.

ELI'S WICKED SONS

12 Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels who had no respect for the
LORD 13 or for their duties as priests. Whenever anyone offered a
sacrifice, Eli's sons would send over a servant with a three-pronged
fork. While the meat of the sacrificed animal was still boiling, 14 the
servant would stick the fork into the pot and demand that whatever
it brought up be given to Eli's sons. All the Israelites who came to
worship at Shiloh were treated this way. 15 Sometimes the servant
would come even before the animal's fat had been burned on the
altar. He would demand raw meat before it had been boiled so that
it could be used for roasting.

16 The man offering the sacrifice might reply, "Take as much as you
want, but the fat must be burned first." Then the servant would
demand, "No, give it to me now, or I'll take it by force." 17 So the sin
of these young men was very serious in the LORD's sight, for they
treated the LORD's offerings with contempt.

18But Samuel, though he was only a boy, served the LORD. He wore
a linen garment like that of a priest.*19Each year his mother made a
small coat for him and brought it to him when she came with her
husband for the sacrifice. 20Before they returned home, Eli would
bless Elkanah and his wife and say, “May the LORD give you other
children to take the place of this one she gave to the LORD.*” 21And
the LORD blessed Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to
three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, Samuel grew up in the
presence of the LORD.

22Now Eli was very old, but he was aware of what his sons were
doing to the people of Israel. He knew, for instance, that his sons
were seducing the young women who assisted at the entrance of the
Tabernacle.*23Eli said to them, “I have been hearing reports from all
the people about the wicked things you are doing. Why do you keep
sinning? 24You must stop, my sons! The reports I hear among the
LORD’s people are not good. 25If someone sins against another
person, God* can mediate for the guilty party. But if someone sins
against the LORD, who can intercede?” But Eli’s sons wouldn’t
listen to their father, for the LORD was already planning to put
them to death.

26Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew taller and grew in favor with the
LORD and with the people.

A WARNING FOR ELI’S FAMILY

27One day a man of God came to Eli and gave him this message
from the LORD: “I revealed myself* to your ancestors when they
were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt. 28I chose your ancestor Aaron* from
among all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer sacrifices on
my altar, to burn incense, and to wear the priestly vest* as he
served me. And I assigned the sacrificial offerings to you priests.
29So why do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings? Why do you

give your sons more honor than you give me—for you and they
have become fat from the best offerings of my people Israel!

30“Therefore, the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I promised that
your branch of the tribe of Levi* would always be my priests. But I
will honor those who honor me, and I will despise those who think
lightly of me. 31The time is coming when I will put an end to your
family, so it will no longer serve as my priests. All the members of
your family will die before their time. None will reach old age.
32You will watch with envy as I pour out prosperity on the people
of Israel. But no members of your family will ever live out their
days. 33The few not cut off from serving at my altar will survive, but
only so their eyes can go blind and their hearts break, and their
children will die a violent death.*34And to prove that what I have
said will come true, I will cause your two sons, Hophni and
Phinehas, to die on the same day!

35“Then I will raise up a faithful priest who will serve me and do
what I desire. I will establish his family, and they will be priests to
my anointed kings forever. 36Then all of your surviving family will
bow before him, begging for money and food. ‘Please,’ they will
say, ‘give us jobs among the priests so we will have enough to eat.’”

1 Samuel 3

THE LORD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

1Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the LORD by assisting Eli. Now
in those days messages from the LORD were very rare, and visions
were quite uncommon.

2One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. 3The

lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle* near the Ark of God. 4Suddenly the LORD called out, “Samuel!”

“Yes?” Samuel replied. “What is it?” 5He got up and ran to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?”

“I didn’t call you,” Eli replied. “Go back to bed.” So he did.

6Then the LORD called out again, “Samuel!”

Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?”

“I didn’t call you, my son,” Eli said. “Go back to bed.”

7Samuel did not yet know the LORD because he had never had a message from the LORD before. 8So the LORD called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?”

Then Eli realized it was the LORD who was calling the boy. 9So he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, ‘Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went back to bed.

10And the LORD came and called as before, “Samuel! Samuel!”

And Samuel replied, “Speak, your servant is listening.”

11Then the LORD said to Samuel, “I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel. 12I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family, from beginning to end. 13I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God* and he hasn’t disciplined them. 14So I have vowed that the sins of Eli and his sons will never be forgiven by sacrifices or offerings.”

SAMUEL SPEAKS FOR THE LORD

15Samuel stayed in bed until morning, then got up and opened the
doors of the Tabernacle* as usual. He was afraid to tell Eli what the
LORD had said to him. 16But Eli called out to him, “Samuel, my
son.”

“Here I am,” Samuel replied.

17“What did the LORD say to you? Tell me everything. And may
God strike you and even kill you if you hide anything from me!”
18So Samuel told Eli everything; he didn’t hold anything back. “It is
the LORD’s will,” Eli replied. “Let him do what he thinks best.”

19As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him, and everything
Samuel said proved to be reliable. 20And all Israel, from Dan in the
north to Beersheba in the south, knew that Samuel was confirmed
as a prophet of the LORD. 21The LORD continued to appear at
Shiloh and gave messages to Samuel there at the Tabernacle.

1 Samuel 4

THE PHILISTINES CAPTURE THE ARK

1And Samuel's words went out to all the people of Israel.* At that
time Israel was at war with the Philistines. The Israelite army was
camped near Ebenezer, and the Philistines were at Aphek. 2The
Philistines attacked and defeated the army of Israel, killing 4,000
men. 3After the battle was over, the troops retreated to their camp,
and the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the LORD allow us to be
defeated by the Philistines?" Then they said, "Let's bring the Ark of
the Covenant of the LORD from Shiloh. If we carry it into battle
with us, it* will save us from our enemies."

4So they sent men to Shiloh to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the
LORD of Heaven's Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim.
Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were also there with the Ark
of the Covenant of God. 5When all the Israelites saw the Ark of the
Covenant of the LORD coming into the camp, their shout of joy was
so loud it made the ground shake!

6"What's going on?" the Philistines asked. "What's all the shouting
about in the Hebrew camp?" When they were told it was because
the Ark of the LORD had arrived, 7they panicked. "The gods have*
come into their camp!" they cried. "This is a disaster! We have
never had to face anything like this before! 8Help! Who can save us
from these mighty gods of Israel? They are the same gods who
destroyed the Egyptians with plagues when Israel was in the
wilderness. 9Fight as never before, Philistines! If you don't, we will
become the Hebrews' slaves just as they have been ours! Stand up
like men and fight!"

10So the Philistines fought desperately, and Israel was defeated

again. The slaughter was great; 30,000 Israelite soldiers died that day. The survivors turned and fled to their tents. 11The Ark of God was captured, and Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were killed.

SKIP TO 5:1

THE DEATH OF ELI

12A man from the tribe of Benjamin ran from the battlefield and arrived at Shiloh later that same day. He had torn his clothes and put dust on his head to show his grief. 13Eli was waiting beside the road to hear the news of the battle, for his heart trembled for the safety of the Ark of God. When the messenger arrived and told what had happened, an outcry resounded throughout the town.

14"What is all the noise about?" Eli asked.

The messenger rushed over to Eli, 15who was ninety-eight years old and blind. 16He said to Eli, "I have just come from the battlefield—I was there this very day."

"What happened, my son?" Eli demanded.

17"Israel has been defeated by the Philistines," the messenger replied. "The people have been slaughtered, and your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were also killed. And the Ark of God has been captured."

18When the messenger mentioned what had happened to the Ark of

God, Eli fell backward from his seat beside the gate. He broke his neck and died, for he was old and overweight. He had been Israel's judge for forty years.

19Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near her time of delivery. When she heard that the Ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth. 20She died in childbirth, but before she passed away the midwives tried to encourage her. "Don't be afraid," they said. "You have a baby boy!" But she did not answer or pay attention to them.

21She named the child Ichabod (which means "Where is the glory?"), for she said, "Israel's glory is gone." She named him this because the Ark of God had been captured and because her father-in-law and husband were dead. 22Then she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God has been captured."

1 Samuel 5

THE ARK IN PHILISTIA

1After the Philistines captured the Ark of God, they took it from the battleground at Ebenezer to the town of Ashdod. 2They carried the Ark of God into the temple of Dagon and placed it beside an idol of Dagon. 3But when the citizens of Ashdod went to see it the next morning, Dagon had fallen with his face to the ground in front of the Ark of the LORD! So they took Dagon and put him in his place again. 4But the next morning the same thing happened—Dagon had fallen face down before the Ark of the LORD again. This time his head and hands had broken off and were lying in the doorway. Only the trunk of his body was left intact. 5That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor anyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod will step on its threshold.

THE CITY OF ASHDOD

6Then the LORD's heavy hand struck the people of Ashdod and the
nearby villages with a plague of tumors.*7When the people realized
what was happening, they cried out, "We can't keep the Ark of the
God of Israel here any longer! He is against us! We will all be
destroyed along with Dagon, our god." 8So they called together the
rulers of the Philistine towns and asked, "What should we do with
the Ark of the God of Israel?"

The rulers discussed it and replied, "Move it to the town of Gath."
So they moved the Ark of the God of Israel to Gath. 9But when the
Ark arrived at Gath, the LORD's heavy hand fell on its men, young
and old; he struck them with a plague of tumors, and there was a
great panic.

10So they sent the Ark of God to the town of Ekron, but when the
people of Ekron saw it coming they cried out, "They are bringing
the Ark of the God of Israel here to kill us, too!" 11The people
summoned the Philistine rulers again and begged them, "Please
send the Ark of the God of Israel back to its own country, or it* will
kill us all." For the deadly plague from God had already begun, and
great fear was sweeping across the town. 12Those who didn't die
were afflicted with tumors; and the cry from the town rose to
heaven.

1 Samuel 6

THE PHILISTINES RETURN THE ARK

1The Ark of the LORD remained in Philistine territory seven months
in all. 2Then the Philistines called in their priests and diviners and
asked them, "What should we do about the Ark of the LORD? Tell
us how to return it to its own country."

3"Send the Ark of the God of Israel back with a gift," they were

told. “Send a guilt offering so the plague will stop. Then, if you are healed, you will know it was his hand that caused the plague.”

4“What sort of guilt offering should we send?” they asked.

And they were told, “Since the plague has struck both you and your five rulers, make five gold tumors and five gold rats, just like those that have ravaged your land. 5Make these things to show honor to the God of Israel. Perhaps then he will stop afflicting you, your gods, and your land. 6Don’t be stubborn and rebellious as Pharaoh and the Egyptians were. By the time God was finished with them, they were eager to let Israel go.

7“Now build a new cart, and find two cows that have just given birth to calves. Make sure the cows have never been yoked to a cart. Hitch the cows to the cart, but shut their calves away from them in a pen. 8Put the Ark of the LORD on the cart, and beside it place a chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors you are sending as a guilt offering. Then let the cows go wherever they want. 9If they cross the border of our land and go to Beth-shemesh, we will know it was the LORD who brought this great disaster upon us. If they don’t, we will know it was not his hand that caused the plague. It came simply by chance.”

10So these instructions were carried out. Two cows were hitched to the cart, and their newborn calves were shut up in a pen. 11Then the Ark of the LORD and the chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors were placed on the cart. 12And sure enough, without veering off in other directions, the cows went straight along the road toward Beth-shemesh, lowing as they went. The Philistine rulers followed them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.

13The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley, and when they saw the Ark, they were overjoyed! 14The cart came into the field of a man named Joshua and stopped beside a large rock. So the people broke up the wood of the cart for a fire and killed the cows and sacrificed them to the LORD as a burnt offering.

15Several men of the tribe of Levi lifted the Ark of the LORD and the
chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors from the cart and
placed them on the large rock. Many sacrifices and burnt offerings
were offered to the LORD that day by the people of Beth-shemesh.
16The five Philistine rulers watched all this and then returned to
Ekron that same day.

17The five gold tumors sent by the Philistines as a guilt offering to
the LORD were gifts from the rulers of Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon,
Gath, and Ekron. 18The five gold rats represented the five Philistine
towns and their surrounding villages, which were controlled by the
five rulers. The large rock* at Beth-shemesh, where they set the Ark
of the LORD, still stands in the field of Joshua as a witness to what
happened there.

THE ARK MOVED TO KIRIATH-JEARIM

19But the LORD killed seventy men* from Beth-shemesh because
they looked into the Ark of the LORD. And the people mourned
greatly because of what the LORD had done. 20"Who is able to stand
in the presence of the LORD, this holy God?" they cried out. "Where
can we send the Ark from here?"

21So they sent messengers to the people at Kiriath-jearim and told
them, "The Philistines have returned the Ark of the LORD. Come
here and get it!"

1 Samuel 7

1So the men of Kiriath-jearim came to get the Ark of the LORD.
They took it to the hillside home of Abinadab and ordained Eleazar,
his son, to be in charge of it. 2The Ark remained in Kiriath-jearim
for a long time—twenty years in all. During that time all Israel
mourned because it seemed the LORD had abandoned them.

SAMUEL LEADS ISRAEL TO VICTORY

3Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, “If you want to return
to the LORD with all your hearts, get rid of your foreign gods and
your images of Ashtoreth. Turn your hearts to the LORD and obey
him alone; then he will rescue you from the Philistines.” 4So the
Israelites got rid of their images of Baal and Ashtoreth and
worshiped only the LORD.

5Then Samuel told them, “Gather all of Israel to Mizpah, and I will
pray to the LORD for you.” 6So they gathered at Mizpah and, in a
great ceremony, drew water from a well and poured it out before
the LORD. They also went without food all day and confessed that
they had sinned against the LORD. (It was at Mizpah that Samuel
became Israel’s judge.)

7When the Philistine rulers heard that Israel had gathered at
Mizpah, they mobilized their army and advanced. The Israelites
were badly frightened when they learned that the Philistines were
approaching. 8“Don’t stop pleading with the LORD our God to save
us from the Philistines!” they begged Samuel. 9So Samuel took a
young lamb and offered it to the LORD as a whole burnt offering.
He pleaded with the LORD to help Israel, and the LORD answered
him.

10Just as Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines
arrived to attack Israel. But the LORD spoke with a mighty voice of
thunder from heaven that day, and the Philistines were thrown into
such confusion that the Israelites defeated them. 11The men of Israel

chased them from Mizpah to a place below Beth-car, slaughtering them all along the way.

12Samuel then took a large stone and placed it between the towns of Mizpah and Jeshanah.* He named it Ebenezer (which means “the stone of help”), for he said, “Up to this point the LORD has helped us!”

13So the Philistines were subdued and didn’t invade Israel again for some time. And throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the LORD’s powerful hand was raised against the Philistines. 14The Israelite villages near Ekron and Gath that the Philistines had captured were restored to Israel, along with the rest of the territory that the Philistines had taken. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites in those days.

15Samuel continued as Israel’s judge for the rest of his life. 16Each year he traveled around, setting up his court first at Bethel, then at Gilgal, and then at Mizpah. He judged the people of Israel at each of these places. 17Then he would return to his home at Ramah, and he would hear cases there, too. And Samuel built an altar to the LORD at Ramah.

1 Samuel 8

ISRAEL REQUESTS A KING

1As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges over Israel. 2Joel and Abijah, his oldest sons, held court in Beersheba. 3But they were not like their father, for they were greedy for money. They accepted bribes and perverted justice.

4Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel. 5“Look,” they told him, “you are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other

nations have.”

6Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the LORD
for guidance. 7“Do everything they say to you,” the LORD replied,
“for they are rejecting me, not you. They don’t want me to be their
king any longer. 8Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have
continually abandoned me and followed other gods. And now they
are giving you the same treatment. 9Do as they ask, but solemnly
warn them about the way a king will reign over them.”

SAMUEL WARNS AGAINST A KINGDOM

10So Samuel passed on the LORD’s warning to the people who were
asking him for a king. 11“This is how a king will reign over you,”
Samuel said. “The king will draft your sons and assign them to his
chariots and his charioteers, making them run before his chariots.
12Some will be generals and captains in his army,* some will be
forced to plow in his fields and harvest his crops, and some will
make his weapons and chariot equipment. 13The king will take your
daughters from you and force them to cook and bake and make
perfumes for him. 14He will take away the best of your fields and
vineyards and olive groves and give them to his own officials. 15He
will take a tenth of your grain and your grape harvest and distribute
it among his officers and attendants. 16He will take your male and
female slaves and demand the finest of your cattle* and donkeys for
his own use. 17He will demand a tenth of your flocks, and you will
be his slaves. 18When that day comes, you will beg for relief from
this king you are demanding, but then the LORD will not help you.”

19But the people refused to listen to Samuel’s warning. “Even so, we
still want a king,” they said. 20“We want to be like the nations
around us. Our king will judge us and lead us into battle.”

21So Samuel repeated to the LORD what the people had said, 22and
the LORD replied, “Do as they say, and give them a king.” Then
Samuel agreed and sent the people home.

1 Samuel 9

SAUL MEETS SAMUEL

1There was a wealthy, influential man named Kish from the tribe of
Benjamin. He was the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath,
son of Aphiah, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2His son Saul was the most
handsome man in Israel—head and shoulders taller than anyone
else in the land.

3One day Kish's donkeys strayed away, and he told Saul, "Take a
servant with you, and go look for the donkeys." 4So Saul took one of
the servants and traveled through the hill country of Ephraim, the
land of Shalishah, the Shaalim area, and the entire land of
Benjamin, but they couldn't find the donkeys anywhere.

5Finally, they entered the region of Zuph, and Saul said to his
servant, "Let's go home. By now my father will be more worried
about us than about the donkeys!"

6But the servant said, "I've just thought of something! There is a

man of God who lives here in this town. He is held in high honor by all the people because everything he says comes true. Let's go find him. Perhaps he can tell us which way to go."

7"But we don't have anything to offer him," Saul replied. "Even our food is gone, and we don't have a thing to give him."

8"Well," the servant said, "I have one small silver piece.* We can at least offer it to the man of God and see what happens!" 9(In those days if people wanted a message from God, they would say, "Let's go and ask the seer," for prophets used to be called seers.)

10"All right," Saul agreed, "let's try it!" So they started into the town where the man of God lived.

11As they were climbing the hill to the town, they met some young women coming out to draw water. So Saul and his servant asked, "Is the seer here today?"

12"Yes," they replied. "Stay right on this road. He is at the town gates. He has just arrived to take part in a public sacrifice up at the place of worship. 13Hurry and catch him before he goes up there to eat. The guests won't begin eating until he arrives to bless the food."

14So they entered the town, and as they passed through the gates, Samuel was coming out toward them to go up to the place of worship.

15Now the LORD had told Samuel the previous day, 16"About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him to be the leader of my people, Israel. He will rescue them from the Philistines, for I have looked down on my people in mercy and have heard their cry."

17When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said, “That’s the man I told you
about! He will rule my people.”

18Just then Saul approached Samuel at the gateway and asked, “Can
you please tell me where the seer’s house is?”

19“I am the seer!” Samuel replied. “Go up to the place of worship
ahead of me. We will eat there together, and in the morning I’ll tell
you what you want to know and send you on your way. 20And don’t
worry about those donkeys that were lost three days ago, for they
have been found. And I am here to tell you that you and your
family are the focus of all Israel’s hopes.”

21Saul replied, “But I’m only from the tribe of Benjamin, the
smallest tribe in Israel, and my family is the least important of all
the families of that tribe! Why are you talking like this to me?”

22Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant into the hall and placed
them at the head of the table, honoring them above the thirty
special guests. 23Samuel then instructed the cook to bring Saul the
finest cut of meat, the piece that had been set aside for the guest of
honor. 24So the cook brought in the meat and placed it before Saul.
“Go ahead and eat it,” Samuel said. “I was saving it for you even
before I invited these others!” So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

25When they came down from the place of worship and returned to
town, Samuel took Saul up to the roof of the house and prepared a
bed for him there.*26At daybreak the next morning, Samuel called
to Saul, “Get up! It’s time you were on your way.” So Saul got
ready, and he and Samuel left the house together. 27When they
reached the edge of town, Samuel told Saul to send his servant on
ahead. After the servant was gone, Samuel said, “Stay here, for I
have received a special message for you from God.”

HOLY SPIRIT 1 SAMUEL 10:1-16

1 Samuel 10

SAMUEL ANOINTS SAUL AS KING

1Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it over Saul's
head. He kissed Saul and said, "I am doing this because the LORD
has appointed you to be the ruler over Israel, his special
possession.*2When you leave me today, you will see two men beside
Rachel's tomb at Zelzah, on the border of Benjamin. They will tell
you that the donkeys have been found and that your father has
stopped worrying about them and is now worried about you. He is

asking, ‘Have you seen my son?’

3“When you get to the oak of Tabor, you will see three men coming
toward you who are on their way to worship God at Bethel. One
will be bringing three young goats, another will have three loaves
of bread, and the third will be carrying a wineskin full of wine.
4They will greet you and offer you two of the loaves, which you are
to accept.

5“When you arrive at Gibeah of God,* where the garrison of the
Philistines is located, you will meet a band of prophets coming
down from the place of worship. They will be playing a harp, a
tambourine, a flute, and a lyre, and they will be prophesying. 6At
that time the Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you,
and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a
different person. 7After these signs take place, do what must be
done, for God is with you. 8Then go down to Gilgal ahead of me. I
will join you there to sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings.
You must wait for seven days until I arrive and give you further
instructions.”

SAMUEL’S SIGNS ARE FULFILLED

9As Saul turned and started to leave, God gave him a new heart,
and all Samuel’s signs were fulfilled that day. 10When Saul and his
servant arrived at Gibeah, they saw a group of prophets coming
toward them. Then the Spirit of God came powerfully upon Saul,
and he, too, began to prophesy. 11When those who knew Saul heard
about it, they exclaimed, “What? Is even Saul a prophet? How did
the son of Kish become a prophet?”

12And one of those standing there said, “Can anyone become a
prophet, no matter who his father is?”* So that is the origin of the
saying “Is even Saul a prophet?”

13When Saul had finished prophesying, he went up to the place of
worship. 14"Where have you been?" Saul's uncle asked him and his
servant.

"We were looking for the donkeys," Saul replied, "but we couldn't
find them. So we went to Samuel to ask him where they were."

15"Oh? And what did he say?" his uncle asked.

16"He told us that the donkeys had already been found," Saul
replied. But Saul didn't tell his uncle what Samuel said about the
kingdom.

SAUL IS ACCLAIMED KING

17Later Samuel called all the people of Israel to meet before the
LORD at Mizpah. 18And he said, "This is what the LORD, the God of
Israel, has declared: I brought you from Egypt and rescued you from
the Egyptians and from all of the nations that were oppressing you.
19But though I have rescued you from your misery and distress, you
have rejected your God today and have said, 'No, we want a king
instead!' Now, therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by
tribes and clans."

20So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel before the LORD, and
the tribe of Benjamin was chosen by lot. 21Then he brought each
family of the tribe of Benjamin before the LORD, and the family of
the Matrites was chosen. And finally Saul son of Kish was chosen
from among them. But when they looked for him, he had
disappeared! 22So they asked the LORD, "Where is he?"

And the LORD replied, "He is hiding among the baggage." 23So they
found him and brought him out, and he stood head and shoulders
above anyone else.

24Then Samuel said to all the people, "This is the man the LORD has
chosen as your king. No one in all Israel is like him!"

And all the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

25Then Samuel told the people what the rights and duties of a king were. He wrote them down on a scroll and placed it before the LORD. Then Samuel sent the people home again.

26When Saul returned to his home at Gibeah, a group of men whose hearts God had touched went with him. 27But there were some scoundrels who complained, “How can this man save us?” And they scorned him and refused to bring him gifts. But Saul ignored them.

[Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the people of Gad and Reuben who lived east of the Jordan River. He gouged out the right eye of each of the Israelites living there, and he didn’t allow anyone to come and rescue them. In fact, of all the Israelites east of the Jordan, there wasn’t a single one whose right eye Nahash had not gouged out. But there were 7,000 men who had escaped from the Ammonites, and they had settled in Jabesh-gilead.]*

1 Samuel 11

SAUL DEFEATS THE AMMONITES

1About a month later,* King Nahash of Ammon led his army against the Israelite town of Jabesh-gilead. But all the citizens of Jabesh asked for peace. “Make a treaty with us, and we will be your servants,” they pleaded.

2“All right,” Nahash said, “but only on one condition. I will gouge
out the right eye of every one of you as a disgrace to all Israel!”

3“Give us seven days to send messengers throughout Israel!” replied
the elders of Jabesh. “If no one comes to save us, we will agree to
your terms.”

4When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the people
about their plight, everyone broke into tears. 5Saul had been
plowing a field with his oxen, and when he returned to town, he
asked, “What’s the matter? Why is everyone crying?” So they told
him about the message from Jabesh.

6Then the Spirit of God came powerfully upon Saul, and he became
very angry. 7He took two oxen and cut them into pieces and sent
the messengers to carry them throughout Israel with this message:
“This is what will happen to the oxen of anyone who refuses to
follow Saul and Samuel into battle!” And the LORD made the
people afraid of Saul’s anger, and all of them came out together as
one. 8When Saul mobilized them at Bezek, he found that there were
300,000 men from Israel and 30,000* men from Judah.

9So Saul sent the messengers back to Jabesh-gilead to say, “We will
rescue you by noontime tomorrow!” There was great joy
throughout the town when that message arrived!

10The men of Jabesh then told their enemies, “Tomorrow we will
come out to you, and you can do to us whatever you wish.” 11But
before dawn the next morning, Saul arrived, having divided his
army into three detachments. He launched a surprise attack against
the Ammonites and slaughtered them the whole morning. The
remnant of their army was so badly scattered that no two of them
were left together.

12Then the people exclaimed to Samuel, “Now where are those men
who said, ‘Why should Saul rule over us?’ Bring them here, and we

will kill them!”

13But Saul replied, “No one will be executed today, for today the
LORD has rescued Israel!”

14Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, let us all go to Gilgal to
renew the kingdom.” 15So they all went to Gilgal, and in a solemn
ceremony before the LORD they made Saul king. Then they offered
peace offerings to the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites were
filled with joy.

1 Samuel 12

SAMUEL’S FAREWELL ADDRESS

1Then Samuel addressed all Israel: “I have done as you asked and
given you a king. 2Your king is now your leader. I stand here before
you—an old, gray-haired man—and my sons serve you. I have
served as your leader from the time I was a boy to this very day.
3Now testify against me in the presence of the LORD and before his
anointed one. Whose ox or donkey have I stolen? Have I ever
cheated any of you? Have I ever oppressed you? Have I ever taken a
bribe and perverted justice? Tell me and I will make right whatever
I have done wrong.”

4“No,” they replied, “you have never cheated or oppressed us, and
you have never taken even a single bribe.”

5“The LORD and his anointed one are my witnesses today,” Samuel
declared, “that my hands are clean.”

“Yes, he is a witness,” they replied.

6“It was the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron,” Samuel
continued. “He brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt.

7Now stand here quietly before the LORD as I remind you of all the
great things the LORD has done for you and your ancestors.

8"When the Israelites were* in Egypt and cried out to the LORD, he
sent Moses and Aaron to rescue them from Egypt and to bring them
into this land. 9But the people soon forgot about the LORD their
God, so he handed them over to Sisera, the commander of Hazor's
army, and also to the Philistines and to the king of Moab, who
fought against them.

10"Then they cried to the LORD again and confessed, 'We have
sinned by turning away from the LORD and worshiping the images
of Baal and Ashtoreth. But we will worship you and you alone if
you will rescue us from our enemies.' 11Then the LORD sent
Gideon,* Bedan,* Jephthah, and Samuel* to save you, and you lived
in safety.

12"But when you were afraid of Nahash, the king of Ammon, you
came to me and said that you wanted a king to reign over you, even
though the LORD your God was already your king. 13All right, here
is the king you have chosen. You asked for him, and the LORD has
granted your request.

14"Now if you fear and worship the LORD and listen to his voice,
and if you do not rebel against the LORD's commands, then both
you and your king will show that you recognize the LORD as your
God. 15But if you rebel against the LORD's commands and refuse to
listen to him, then his hand will be as heavy upon you as it was
upon your ancestors.

16"Now stand here and see the great thing the LORD is about to do.
17You know that it does not rain at this time of the year during the
wheat harvest. I will ask the LORD to send thunder and rain today.
Then you will realize how wicked you have been in asking the
LORD for a king!"

18So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and
rain that day. And all the people were terrified of the LORD and of
Samuel. 19“Pray to the LORD your God for us, or we will die!” they
all said to Samuel. “For now we have added to our sins by asking
for a king.”

20“Don’t be afraid,” Samuel reassured them. “You have certainly
done wrong, but make sure now that you worship the LORD with
all your heart, and don’t turn your back on him. 21Don’t go back to
worshiping worthless idols that cannot help or rescue you—they are
totally useless! 22The LORD will not abandon his people, because
that would dishonor his great name. For it has pleased the LORD to
make you his very own people.

23“As for me, I will certainly not sin against the LORD by ending my
prayers for you. And I will continue to teach you what is good and
right. 24But be sure to fear the LORD and faithfully serve him. Think
of all the wonderful things he has done for you. 25But if you
continue to sin, you and your king will be swept away.”

1 Samuel 13

CONTINUED WAR WITH PHILISTIA

1Saul was thirty* years old when he became king, and he reigned
for forty-two years.*

2Saul selected 3,000 special troops from the army of Israel and sent
the rest of the men home. He took 2,000 of the chosen men with
him to Micmash and the hill country of Bethel. The other 1,000
went with Saul’s son Jonathan to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin.

3Soon after this, Jonathan attacked and defeated the garrison of
Philistines at Geba. The news spread quickly among the Philistines.
So Saul blew the ram’s horn throughout the land, saying, “Hebrews,
hear this! Rise up in revolt!” 4All Israel heard the news that Saul

had destroyed the Philistine garrison at Geba and that the Philistines now hated the Israelites more than ever. So the entire Israelite army was summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

5The Philistines mustered a mighty army of 3,000* chariots, 6,000 charioteers, and as many warriors as the grains of sand on the seashore! They camped at Micmash east of Beth-aven. 6The men of Israel saw what a tight spot they were in; and because they were hard pressed by the enemy, they tried to hide in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, and cisterns. 7Some of them crossed the Jordan River and escaped into the land of Gad and Gilead.

SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE AND SAMUEL'S REBUKE

Meanwhile, Saul stayed at Gilgal, and his men were trembling with fear. 8Saul waited there seven days for Samuel, as Samuel had instructed him earlier, but Samuel still didn't come. Saul realized that his troops were rapidly slipping away. 9So he demanded, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings!" And Saul sacrificed the burnt offering himself.

10Just as Saul was finishing with the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet and welcome him, 11but Samuel said, "What is this you have done?"

Saul replied, "I saw my men scattering from me, and you didn't arrive when you said you would, and the Philistines are at Micmash ready for battle. 12So I said, 'The Philistines are ready to march against us at Gilgal, and I haven't even asked for the LORD's help!' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself before you came."

13"How foolish!" Samuel exclaimed. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. Had you kept it, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14But now your kingdom must end, for the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart. The LORD has already appointed him to be the

leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

ISRAEL'S MILITARY DISADVANTAGE

15Samuel then left Gilgal and went on his way, but the rest of the troops went with Saul to meet the army. They went up from Gilgal to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin.* When Saul counted the men who were still with him, he found only 600 were left! 16Saul and Jonathan and the troops with them were staying at Geba in the land of Benjamin. The Philistines set up their camp at Micmash. 17Three raiding parties soon left the camp of the Philistines. One went north toward Ophrah in the land of Shual, 18another went west to Beth-horon, and the third moved toward the border above the valley of Zeboim near the wilderness.

19There were no blacksmiths in the land of Israel in those days. The Philistines wouldn't allow them for fear they would make swords and spears for the Hebrews. 20So whenever the Israelites needed to sharpen their plowshares, picks, axes, or sickles,* they had to take them to a Philistine blacksmith. 21The charges were as follows: a quarter of an ounce* of silver for sharpening a plowshare or a pick, and an eighth of an ounce* for sharpening an ax or making the point of an ox goad. 22So on the day of the battle none of the people of Israel had a sword or spear, except for Saul and Jonathan.

23The pass at Micmash had meanwhile been secured by a contingent of the Philistine army.

1 Samuel 14

JONATHAN'S DARING PLAN

1One day Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to where the Philistines have their outpost." But Jonathan did not tell his father what he was doing.

2Meanwhile, Saul and his 600 men were camped on the outskirts of
Gibeah, around the pomegranate tree* at Migron. 3Among Saul's
men was Ahijah the priest, who was wearing the ephod, the priestly
vest. Ahijah was the son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub, son of
Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the LORD who had served at
Shiloh.

No one realized that Jonathan had left the Israelite camp. 4To reach
the Philistine outpost, Jonathan had to go down between two rocky
cliffs that were called Bozez and Seneh. 5The cliff on the north was
in front of Micmash, and the one on the south was in front of Geba.
6"Let's go across to the outpost of those pagans," Jonathan said to
his armor bearer. "Perhaps the LORD will help us, for nothing can
hinder the LORD. He can win a battle whether he has many
warriors or only a few!"

7"Do what you think is best," the armor bearer replied. "I'm with
you completely, whatever you decide."

8"All right then," Jonathan told him. "We will cross over and let
them see us. 9If they say to us, 'Stay where you are or we'll kill you,'
then we will stop and not go up to them. 10But if they say, 'Come on
up and fight,' then we will go up. That will be the LORD's sign that
he will help us defeat them."

11When the Philistines saw them coming, they shouted, "Look! The
Hebrews are crawling out of their holes!" 12Then the men from the
outpost shouted to Jonathan, "Come on up here, and we'll teach
you a lesson!"

"Come on, climb right behind me," Jonathan said to his armor
bearer, "for the LORD will help us defeat them!"

13So they climbed up using both hands and feet, and the Philistines
fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer killed those who came
behind them. 14They killed some twenty men in all, and their bodies

were scattered over about half an acre.*

15Suddenly, panic broke out in the Philistine army, both in the camp and in the field, including even the outposts and raiding parties. And just then an earthquake struck, and everyone was terrified.

ISRAEL DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES

16Saul's lookouts in Gibeah of Benjamin saw a strange sight—the vast army of Philistines began to melt away in every direction.*17"Call the roll and find out who's missing," Saul ordered. And when they checked, they found that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone.

18Then Saul shouted to Ahijah, "Bring the ephod here!" For at that time Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of the Israelites.*19But while Saul was talking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp grew louder and louder. So Saul said to the priest, "Never mind; let's get going!"*

20Then Saul and all his men rushed out to the battle and found the Philistines killing each other. There was terrible confusion everywhere. 21Even the Hebrews who had previously gone over to the Philistine army revolted and joined in with Saul, Jonathan, and the rest of the Israelites. 22Likewise, the men of Israel who were hiding in the hill country of Ephraim joined the chase when they saw the Philistines running away. 23So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle continued to rage even beyond Beth-aven.

SAUL'S FOOLISH OATH

24Now the men of Israel were pressed to exhaustion that day, because Saul had placed them under an oath, saying, "Let a curse fall on anyone who eats before evening—before I have full revenge

on my enemies." So no one ate anything all day, 25even though they had all found honeycomb on the ground in the forest. 26They didn't dare touch the honey because they all feared the oath they had taken.

27But Jonathan had not heard his father's command, and he dipped the end of his stick into a piece of honeycomb and ate the honey. After he had eaten it, he felt refreshed.*28But one of the men saw him and said, "Your father made the army take a strict oath that anyone who eats food today will be cursed. That is why everyone is weary and faint."

29"My father has made trouble for us all!" Jonathan exclaimed. "A command like that only hurts us. See how refreshed I am now that I have eaten this little bit of honey. 30If the men had been allowed to eat freely from the food they found among our enemies, think how many more Philistines we could have killed!"

31They chased and killed the Philistines all day from Micmash to Aijalon, growing more and more faint. 32That evening they rushed for the battle plunder and butchered the sheep, goats, cattle, and calves, but they ate them without draining the blood. 33Someone reported to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that still has blood in it."

"That is very wrong," Saul said. "Find a large stone and roll it over here. 34Then go out among the troops and tell them, 'Bring the cattle, sheep, and goats here to me. Kill them here, and drain the blood before you eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it.'"

So that night all the troops brought their animals and slaughtered them there. 35Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first of the altars he built to the LORD.

36Then Saul said, "Let's chase the Philistines all night and plunder them until sunrise. Let's destroy every last one of them."

His men replied, “We’ll do whatever you think is best.”

But the priest said, “Let’s ask God first.”

37So Saul asked God, “Should we go after the Philistines? Will you help us defeat them?” But God made no reply that day.

38Then Saul said to the leaders, “Something’s wrong! I want all my army commanders to come here. We must find out what sin was committed today. 39I vow by the name of the LORD who rescued Israel that the sinner will surely die, even if it is my own son Jonathan!” But no one would tell him what the trouble was.

40Then Saul said, “Jonathan and I will stand over here, and all of you stand over there.”

And the people responded to Saul, “Whatever you think is best.”

41Then Saul prayed, “O LORD, God of Israel, please show us who is guilty and who is innocent.*” Then they cast sacred lots, and Jonathan and Saul were chosen as the guilty ones, and the people were declared innocent.

42Then Saul said, “Now cast lots again and choose between me and Jonathan.” And Jonathan was shown to be the guilty one.

43“Tell me what you have done,” Saul demanded of Jonathan.

“I tasted a little honey,” Jonathan admitted. “It was only a little bit on the end of my stick. Does that deserve death?”

44“Yes, Jonathan,” Saul said, “you must die! May God strike me and even kill me if you do not die for this.”

45But the people broke in and said to Saul, “Jonathan has won this
great victory for Israel. Should he die? Far from it! As surely as the
LORD lives, not one hair on his head will be touched, for God
helped him do a great deed today.” So the people rescued Jonathan,
and he was not put to death.

46Then Saul called back the army from chasing the Philistines, and
the Philistines returned home.

SAUL’S MILITARY SUCCESSES

47Now when Saul had secured his grasp on Israel’s throne, he fought
against his enemies in every direction—against Moab, Ammon,
Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. And wherever he
turned, he was victorious.*48He performed great deeds and
conquered the Amalekites, saving Israel from all those who had
plundered them.

49Saul’s sons included Jonathan, Ishbosheth,* and Malkishua. He
also had two daughters: Merab, who was older, and Michal. 50Saul’s
wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The commander of
Saul’s army was Abner, the son of Saul’s uncle Ner. 51Saul’s father,
Kish, and Abner’s father, Ner, were both sons of Abiel.

52The Israelites fought constantly with the Philistines throughout
Saul’s lifetime. So whenever Saul observed a young man who was
brave and strong, he drafted him into his army.

1 Samuel 15

SAUL DEFEATS THE AMALEKITES

1One day Samuel said to Saul, “It was the LORD who told me to
anoint you as king of his people, Israel. Now listen to this message

from the LORD! 2This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies has declared: I have decided to settle accounts with the nation of Amalek for opposing Israel when they came from Egypt. 3Now go and completely destroy* the entire Amalekite nation—men, women, children, babies, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys."

4So Saul mobilized his army at Telaim. There were 200,000 soldiers from Israel and 10,000 men from Judah. 5Then Saul and his army went to a town of the Amalekites and lay in wait in the valley. 6Saul sent this warning to the Kenites: "Move away from where the Amalekites live, or you will die with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites packed up and left.

7Then Saul slaughtered the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, east of Egypt. 8He captured Agag, the Amalekite king, but completely destroyed everyone else. 9Saul and his men spared Agag's life and kept the best of the sheep and goats, the cattle, the fat calves, and the lambs—everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality.

THE LORD REJECTS SAUL

10Then the LORD said to Samuel, 11"I am sorry that I ever made
Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused to obey
my command." Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard this
that he cried out to the LORD all night.

12Early the next morning Samuel went to find Saul. Someone told
him, "Saul went to the town of Carmel to set up a monument to
himself; then he went on to Gilgal."

13When Samuel finally found him, Saul greeted him cheerfully.
"May the LORD bless you," he said. "I have carried out the LORD's
command!"

14"Then what is all the bleating of sheep and goats and the lowing
of cattle I hear?" Samuel demanded.

15"It's true that the army spared the best of the sheep, goats, and
cattle," Saul admitted. "But they are going to sacrifice them to the
LORD your God. We have destroyed everything else."

16Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! Listen to what the LORD told me
last night!"

"What did he tell you?" Saul asked.

17And Samuel told him, "Although you may think little of yourself,
are you not the leader of the tribes of Israel? The LORD has
anointed you king of Israel. 18And the LORD sent you on a mission
and told you, 'Go and completely destroy the sinners, the
Amalekites, until they are all dead.' 19Why haven't you obeyed the
LORD? Why did you rush for the plunder and do what was evil in
the LORD's sight?"

20"But I did obey the LORD," Saul insisted. "I carried out the
mission he gave me. I brought back King Agag, but I destroyed

everyone else. 21Then my troops brought in the best of the sheep,
goats, cattle, and plunder to sacrifice to the LORD your God in
Gilgal."

22But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your
burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice?

Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better
than offering the fat of rams.

23Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as
worshiping idols.
So because you have rejected the command of the LORD, he has
rejected you as king."

SAUL PLEADS FOR FORGIVENESS

24Then Saul admitted to Samuel, "Yes, I have sinned. I have
disobeyed your instructions and the LORD's command, for I was
afraid of the people and did what they demanded. 25But now, please
forgive my sin and come back with me so that I may worship the
LORD."

26But Samuel replied, "I will not go back with you! Since you have
rejected the LORD's command, he has rejected you as king of
Israel."

27As Samuel turned to go, Saul tried to hold him back and tore the
hem of his robe. 28And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the
kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone else

—one who is better than you. 29And he who is the Glory of Israel
will not lie, nor will he change his mind, for he is not human that
he should change his mind!”

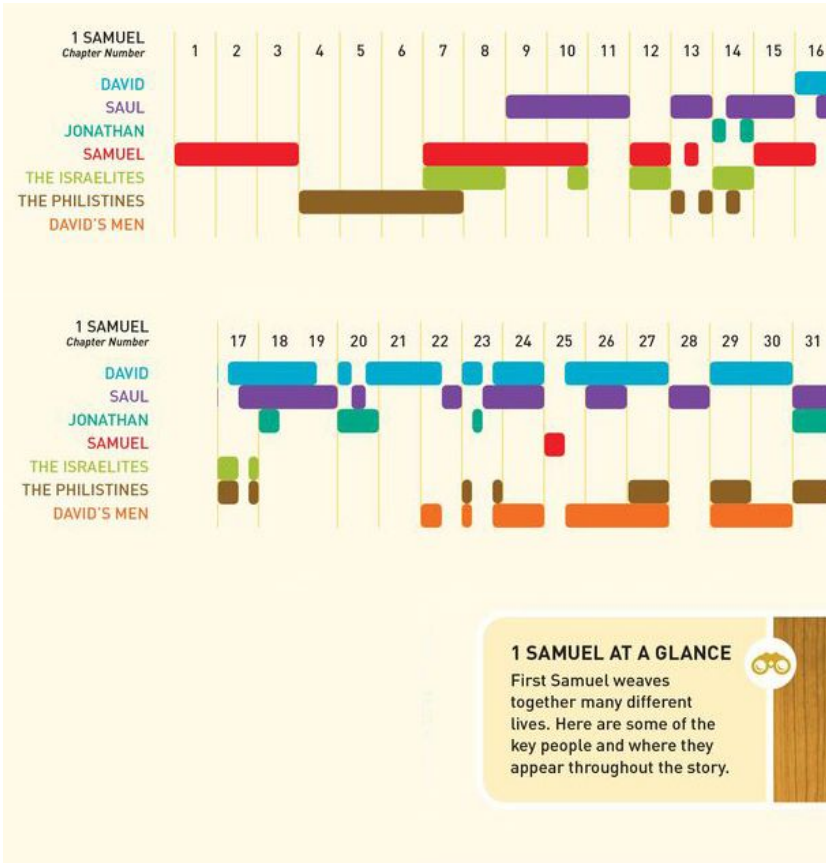
30Then Saul pleaded again, “I know I have sinned. But please, at
least honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel by
coming back with me so that I may worship the LORD your God.”
31So Samuel finally agreed and went back with him, and Saul
worshiped the LORD.

SAMUEL EXECUTES KING AGAG

32Then Samuel said, “Bring King Agag to me.” Agag arrived full of
hope, for he thought, “Surely the worst is over, and I have been
spared!”*33But Samuel said, “As your sword has killed the sons of
many mothers, now your mother will be childless.” And Samuel cut
Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

34Then Samuel went home to Ramah, and Saul returned to his
house at Gibeah of Saul. 35Samuel never went to meet with Saul
again, but he mourned constantly for him. And the LORD was sorry
he had ever made Saul king of Israel.

WHO, ME? 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13



1 SAMUEL AT A GLANCE

1 Samuel 16

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID AS KING

1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, “You have mourned long enough
for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with

olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king."

2But Samuel asked, "How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me."

"Take a heifer with you," the LORD replied, "and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. 3Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me."

4So Samuel did as the LORD instructed. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town came trembling to meet him. "What's wrong?" they asked. "Do you come in peace?"

5"Yes," Samuel replied. "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." Then Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice, too.

6When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the LORD's anointed!"

7But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

8Then Jesse told his son Abinadab to step forward and walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "This is not the one the LORD has chosen." 9Next Jesse summoned Shimea,* but Samuel said, "Neither is this the one the LORD has chosen." 10In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." 11Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?"

“There is still the youngest,” Jesse replied. “But he’s out in the fields watching the sheep and goats.”

“Send for him at once,” Samuel said. “We will not sit down to eat until he arrives.”

12So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes.

And the LORD said, “This is the one; anoint him.”

13So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

DAVID SERVES IN SAUL’S COURT

14Now the Spirit of the LORD had left Saul, and the LORD sent a tormenting spirit* that filled him with depression and fear.

15Some of Saul’s servants said to him, “A tormenting spirit from God is troubling you. 16Let us find a good musician to play the harp whenever the tormenting spirit troubles you. He will play soothing music, and you will soon be well again.”

17“All right,” Saul said. “Find me someone who plays well, and bring him here.”

18One of the servants said to Saul, “One of Jesse’s sons from Bethlehem is a talented harp player. Not only that—he is a brave warrior, a man of war, and has good judgment. He is also a fine-looking young man, and the LORD is with him.”

19So Saul sent messengers to Jesse to say, “Send me your son David,

the shepherd.” 20Jesse responded by sending David to Saul, along with a young goat, a donkey loaded with bread, and a wineskin full of wine.

21So David went to Saul and began serving him. Saul loved David very much, and David became his armor bearer.

22Then Saul sent word to Jesse asking, “Please let David remain in my service, for I am very pleased with him.”

23And whenever the tormenting spirit from God troubled Saul, David would play the harp. Then Saul would feel better, and the tormenting spirit would go away.

1 Samuel 17

GOLIATH CHALLENGES THE ISRAELITES

1 The Philistines now mustered their army for battle and camped
between Socoh in Judah and Azekah at Ephes-dammim. 2 Saul
countered by gathering his Israelite troops near the valley of Elah.
3 So the Philistines and Israelites faced each other on opposite hills,
with the valley between them.

4Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel. He was over nine feet* tall! 5He wore a bronze helmet, and his bronze coat of mail weighed 125 pounds.*6He also wore bronze leg armor, and he carried a bronze javelin on his shoulder. 7The shaft of his spear was as heavy and thick as a weaver's beam, tipped with an iron spearhead that weighed 15 pounds.* His armor bearer walked ahead of him carrying a shield.

8Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites. "Why are you all coming out to fight?" he called. "I am the Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of Saul. Choose one man to come down here and fight me! 9If he kills me, then we will be your slaves. But if I kill him, you will be our slaves! 10I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!" 11When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.

JESSE SENDS DAVID TO SAUL'S CAMP

12Now David was the son of a man named Jesse, an Ephrathite from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. Jesse was an old man at that time, and he had eight sons. 13Jesse's three oldest sons—Eliab, Abinadab, and Shimea*—had already joined Saul's army to fight the Philistines. 14David was the youngest son. David's three oldest brothers stayed with Saul's army, 15but David went back and forth so he could help his father with the sheep in Bethlehem.

16For forty days, every morning and evening, the Philistine champion strutted in front of the Israelite army.

THE VALLEY OF ELAH

17One day Jesse said to David, “Take this basket* of roasted grain
and these ten loaves of bread, and carry them quickly to your
brothers. 18And give these ten cuts of cheese to their captain. See
how your brothers are getting along, and bring back a report on
how they are doing.*” 19David’s brothers were with Saul and the
Israelite army at the valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines.

20So David left the sheep with another shepherd and set out early
the next morning with the gifts, as Jesse had directed him. He
arrived at the camp just as the Israelite army was leaving for the
battlefield with shouts and battle cries. 21Soon the Israelite and
Philistine forces stood facing each other, army against army.
22David left his things with the keeper of supplies and hurried out
to the ranks to greet his brothers. 23As he was talking with them,
Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, came out from the
Philistine ranks. Then David heard him shout his usual taunt to the
army of Israel.

24As soon as the Israelite army saw him, they began to run away in
fright. 25“Have you seen the giant?” the men asked. “He comes out
each day to defy Israel. The king has offered a huge reward to
anyone who kills him. He will give that man one of his daughters
for a wife, and the man’s entire family will be exempted from
paying taxes!”

26David asked the soldiers standing nearby, “What will a man get
for killing this Philistine and ending his defiance of Israel? Who is
this pagan Philistine anyway, that he is allowed to defy the armies
of the living God?”

27And these men gave David the same reply. They said, “Yes, that is
the reward for killing him.”

28But when David’s oldest brother, Eliab, heard David talking to the
men, he was angry. “What are you doing around here anyway?” he

demanded. “What about those few sheep you’re supposed to be taking care of? I know about your pride and deceit. You just want to see the battle!”

29“What have I done now?” David replied. “I was only asking a question!” 30He walked over to some others and asked them the same thing and received the same answer. 31Then David’s question was reported to King Saul, and the king sent for him.

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

32“Don’t worry about this Philistine,” David told Saul. “I’ll go fight him!”

33“Don’t be ridiculous!” Saul replied. “There’s no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You’re only a boy, and he’s been a man of war since his youth.”

34But David persisted. “I have been taking care of my father’s sheep and goats,” he said. “When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, 35I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. 36I have done this to both lions and bears, and I’ll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! 37The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!”

Saul finally consented. “All right, go ahead,” he said. “And may the LORD be with you!”

38Then Saul gave David his own armor—a bronze helmet and a coat of mail. 39David put it on, strapped the sword over it, and took a step or two to see what it was like, for he had never worn such things before.

“I can’t go in these,” he protested to Saul. “I’m not used to them.” So David took them off again. 40He picked up five smooth stones

from a stream and put them into his shepherd's bag. Then, armed only with his shepherd's staff and sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine.

41Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, 42sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy. 43"Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by the names of his gods. 44"Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled.

45David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46Today the LORD will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! 47And everyone assembled here will know that the LORD rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the LORD's battle, and he will give you to us!"

48As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. 49Reaching into his shepherd's bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it with his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face down on the ground.

50So David triumphed over the Philistine with only a sling and a stone, for he had no sword. 51Then David ran over and pulled Goliath's sword from its sheath. David used it to kill him and cut off his head.

ISRAEL ROUTS THE PHILISTINES

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they turned and ran. 52Then the men of Israel and Judah gave a great shout of triumph and rushed after the Philistines, chasing them as far as Gath* and the gates of Ekron. The bodies of the dead and wounded Philistines were strewn all along the road from Shaaraim, as far as

Gath and Ekron. 53Then the Israelite army returned and plundered
the deserted Philistine camp. 54(David took the Philistine's head to
Jerusalem, but he stored the man's armor in his own tent.)

55As Saul watched David go out to fight the Philistine, he asked
Abner, the commander of his army, "Abner, whose son is this young
man?"

"I really don't know," Abner declared.

56"Well, find out who he is!" the king told him.

57As soon as David returned from killing Goliath, Abner brought
him to Saul with the Philistine's head still in his hand. 58"Tell me
about your father, young man," Saul said.

And David replied, "His name is Jesse, and we live in Bethlehem."

1 Samuel 18

SAUL BECOMES JEALOUS OF DAVID

1After David had finished talking with Saul, he met Jonathan, the
king's son. There was an immediate bond between them, for
Jonathan loved David. 2From that day on Saul kept David with him
and wouldn't let him return home. 3And Jonathan made a solemn
pact with David, because he loved him as he loved himself.
4Jonathan sealed the pact by taking off his robe and giving it to
David, together with his tunic, sword, bow, and belt.

5Whatever Saul asked David to do, David did it successfully. So Saul
made him a commander over the men of war, an appointment that
was welcomed by the people and Saul's officers alike.

6When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David
had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came
out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with
tambourines and cymbals.*7This was their song: "Saul has killed his
thousands, and David his ten thousands!"

8This made Saul very angry. “What’s this?” he said. “They credit
David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they’ll
be making him their king!” 9So from that time on Saul kept a
jealous eye on David.

10The very next day a tormenting spirit* from God overwhelmed
Saul, and he began to rave in his house like a madman. David was
playing the harp, as he did each day. But Saul had a spear in his
hand, 11and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to
the wall. But David escaped him twice.

12Saul was then afraid of David, for the LORD was with David and
had turned away from Saul. 13Finally, Saul sent him away and
appointed him commander over 1,000 men, and David faithfully
led his troops into battle.

14David continued to succeed in everything he did, for the LORD
was with him. 15When Saul recognized this, he became even more
afraid of him. 16But all Israel and Judah loved David because he was
so successful at leading his troops into battle.

DAVID MARRIES SAUL’S DAUGHTER

17One day Saul said to David, “I am ready to give you my older
daughter, Merab, as your wife. But first you must prove yourself to
be a real warrior by fighting the LORD’s battles.” For Saul thought,
“I’ll send him out against the Philistines and let them kill him rather
than doing it myself.”

18“Who am I, and what is my family in Israel that I should be the
king’s son-in-law?” David exclaimed. “My father’s family is
nothing!” 19So* when the time came for Saul to give his daughter
Merab in marriage to David, he gave her instead to Adriel, a man
from Meholah.

20In the meantime, Saul's daughter Michal had fallen in love with
David, and Saul was delighted when he heard about it. 21"Here's
another chance to see him killed by the Philistines!" Saul said to
himself. But to David he said, "Today you have a second chance to
become my son-in-law!"

22Then Saul told his men to say to David, "The king really likes you,
and so do we. Why don't you accept the king's offer and become his
son-in-law?"

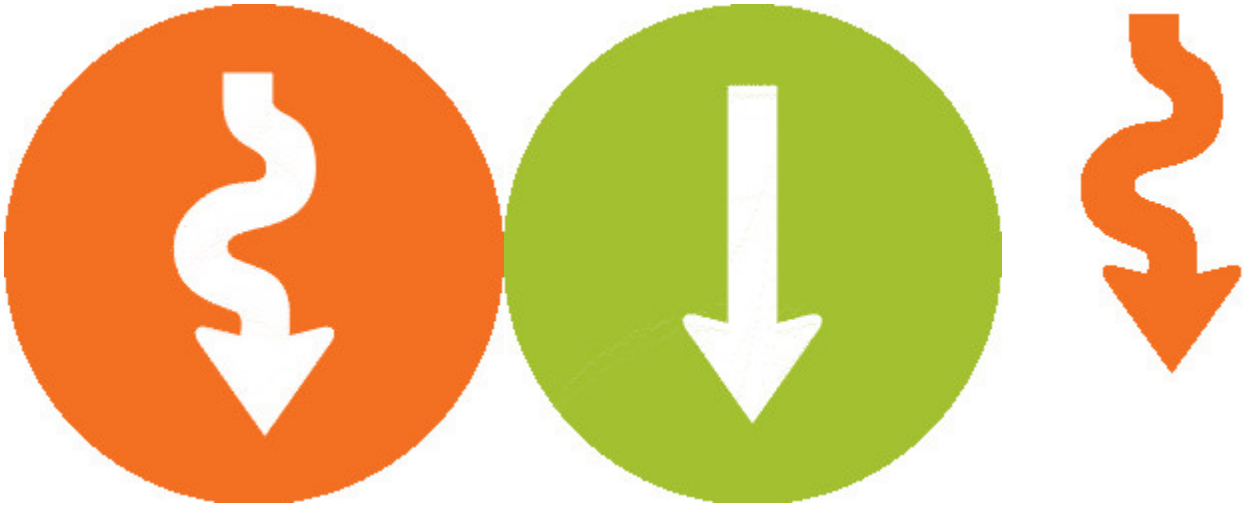
23When Saul's men said these things to David, he replied, "How can
a poor man from a humble family afford the bride price for the
daughter of a king?"

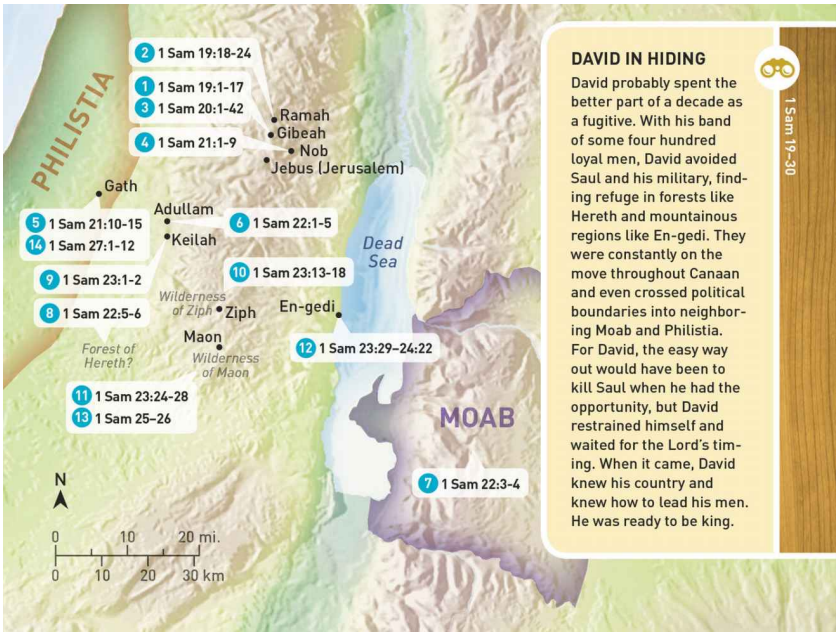
24When Saul's men reported this back to the king, 25he told them,
"Tell David that all I want for the bride price is 100 Philistine
foreskins! Vengeance on my enemies is all I really want." But what
Saul had in mind was that David would be killed in the fight.

26David was delighted to accept the offer. Before the time limit
expired, 27he and his men went out and killed 200 Philistines. Then
David fulfilled the king's requirement by presenting all their
foreskins to him. So Saul gave his daughter Michal to David to be
his wife.

28When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and how much
his daughter Michal loved him, 29Saul became even more afraid of
him, and he remained David's enemy for the rest of his life.

30Every time the commanders of the Philistines attacked, David was
more successful against them than all the rest of Saul's officers. So
David's name became very famous.





DAVID IN HIDING

1 Samuel 19

SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

1Saul now urged his servants and his son Jonathan to assassinate
David. But Jonathan, because of his strong affection for David, 2told
him what his father was planning. "Tomorrow morning," he warned
him, "you must find a hiding place out in the fields. 3I'll ask my
father to go out there with me, and I'll talk to him about you. Then
I'll tell you everything I can find out."

4The next morning Jonathan spoke with his father about David,
saying many good things about him. "The king must not sin against
his servant David," Jonathan said. "He's never done anything to
harm you. He has always helped you in any way he could. 5Have
you forgotten about the time he risked his life to kill the Philistine
giant and how the LORD brought a great victory to all Israel as a

result? You were certainly happy about it then. Why should you murder an innocent man like David? There is no reason for it at all!”

6So Saul listened to Jonathan and vowed, “As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be killed.”

7Afterward Jonathan called David and told him what had happened. Then he brought David to Saul, and David served in the court as before.

8War broke out again after that, and David led his troops against the Philistines. He attacked them with such fury that they all ran away.

9But one day when Saul was sitting at home, with spear in hand, the tormenting spirit* from the LORD suddenly came upon him again. As David played his harp, 10Saul hurled his spear at David. But David dodged out of the way, and leaving the spear stuck in the wall, he fled and escaped into the night.

MICHAL SAVES DAVID’S LIFE

11Then Saul sent troops to watch David’s house. They were told to kill David when he came out the next morning. But Michal, David’s wife, warned him, “If you don’t escape tonight, you will be dead by morning.” 12So she helped him climb out through a window, and he fled and escaped. 13Then she took an idol* and put it in his bed, covered it with blankets, and put a cushion of goat’s hair at its head.

14When the troops came to arrest David, she told them he was sick and couldn’t get out of bed.

15But Saul sent the troops back to get David. He ordered, “Bring
him to me in his bed so I can kill him!” 16But when they came to
carry David out, they discovered that it was only an idol in the bed
with a cushion of goat’s hair at its head.

17“Why have you betrayed me like this and let my enemy escape?”
Saul demanded of Michal.

“I had to,” Michal replied. “He threatened to kill me if I didn’t help
him.”

THE CITY OF RAMAH

18So David escaped and went to Ramah to see Samuel, and he told
him all that Saul had done to him. Then Samuel took David with
him to live at Naioth. 19When the report reached Saul that David
was at Naioth in Ramah, 20he sent troops to capture him. But when
they arrived and saw Samuel leading a group of prophets who were
prophesying, the Spirit of God came upon Saul’s men, and they also
began to prophesy. 21When Saul heard what had happened, he sent
other troops, but they, too, prophesied! The same thing happened a
third time. 22Finally, Saul himself went to Ramah and arrived at the
great well in Secu. “Where are Samuel and David?” he demanded.

“They are at Naioth in Ramah,” someone told him.

23But on the way to Naioth in Ramah the Spirit of God came even
upon Saul, and he, too, began to prophesy all the way to Naioth!
24He tore off his clothes and lay naked on the ground all day and all
night, prophesying in the presence of Samuel. The people who were
watching exclaimed, “What? Is even Saul a prophet?”

1 Samuel 20

JONATHAN HELPS DAVID

1David now fled from Naioth in Ramah and found Jonathan. “What
have I done?” he exclaimed. “What is my crime? How have I
offended your father that he is so determined to kill me?”

2“That’s not true!” Jonathan protested. “You’re not going to die. He
always tells me everything he’s going to do, even the little things. I
know my father wouldn’t hide something like this from me. It just
isn’t so!”

3Then David took an oath before Jonathan and said, “Your father
knows perfectly well about our friendship, so he has said to himself,
‘I won’t tell Jonathan—why should I hurt him?’ But I swear to you
that I am only a step away from death! I swear it by the LORD and
by your own soul!”

4“Tell me what I can do to help you,” Jonathan exclaimed.

5David replied, “Tomorrow we celebrate the new moon festival. I’ve
always eaten with the king on this occasion, but tomorrow I’ll hide
in the field and stay there until the evening of the third day. 6If your
father asks where I am, tell him I asked permission to go home to
Bethlehem for an annual family sacrifice. 7If he says, ‘Fine!’ you will
know all is well. But if he is angry and loses his temper, you will
know he is determined to kill me. 8Show me this loyalty as my
sworn friend—for we made a solemn pact before the LORD—or kill
me yourself if I have sinned against your father. But please don’t
betray me to him!”

9“Never!” Jonathan exclaimed. “You know that if I had the slightest
notion my father was planning to kill you, I would tell you at once.”

10Then David asked, “How will I know whether or not your father is
angry?”

11“Come out to the field with me,” Jonathan replied. And they went
out there together. 12Then Jonathan told David, “I promise by the
LORD, the God of Israel, that by this time tomorrow, or the next
day at the latest, I will talk to my father and let you know at once
how he feels about you. If he speaks favorably about you, I will let
you know. 13But if he is angry and wants you killed, may the LORD
strike me and even kill me if I don’t warn you so you can escape
and live. May the LORD be with you as he used to be with my
father. 14And may you treat me with the faithful love of the LORD
as long as I live. But if I die, 15treat my family with this faithful
love, even when the LORD destroys all your enemies from the face
of the earth.”

16So Jonathan made a solemn pact with David,* saying, “May the
LORD destroy all your enemies!” 17And Jonathan made David
reaffirm his vow of friendship again, for Jonathan loved David as he
loved himself.

18Then Jonathan said, “Tomorrow we celebrate the new moon
festival. You will be missed when your place at the table is empty.
19The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where
you hid before, and wait there by the stone pile.*20I will come out
and shoot three arrows to the side of the stone pile as though I were
shooting at a target. 21Then I will send a boy to bring the arrows
back. If you hear me tell him, ‘They’re on this side,’ then you will
know, as surely as the LORD lives, that all is well, and there is no
trouble. 22But if I tell him, ‘Go farther—the arrows are still ahead of
you,’ then it will mean that you must leave immediately, for the
LORD is sending you away. 23And may the LORD make us keep our
promises to each other, for he has witnessed them.”

24So David hid himself in the field, and when the new moon festival
began, the king sat down to eat. 25He sat at his usual place against
the wall, with Jonathan sitting opposite him* and Abner beside him.
But David’s place was empty. 26Saul didn’t say anything about it
that day, for he said to himself, “Something must have made David
ceremonially unclean.” 27But when David’s place was empty again

the next day, Saul asked Jonathan, “Why hasn’t the son of Jesse
been here for the meal either yesterday or today?”

28Jonathan replied, “David earnestly asked me if he could go to
Bethlehem. 29He said, ‘Please let me go, for we are having a family
sacrifice. My brother demanded that I be there. So please let me get
away to see my brothers.’ That’s why he isn’t here at the king’s
table.”

30Saul boiled with rage at Jonathan. “You stupid son of a whore!”*
he swore at him. “Do you think I don’t know that you want him to
be king in your place, shaming yourself and your mother? 31As long
as that son of Jesse is alive, you’ll never be king. Now go and get
him so I can kill him!”

32“But why should he be put to death?” Jonathan asked his father.
“What has he done?” 33Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan,
intending to kill him. So at last Jonathan realized that his father
was really determined to kill David.

34Jonathan left the table in fierce anger and refused to eat on that
second day of the festival, for he was crushed by his father’s
shameful behavior toward David.

35The next morning, as agreed, Jonathan went out into the field and
took a young boy with him to gather his arrows. 36“Start running,”
he told the boy, “so you can find the arrows as I shoot them.” So
the boy ran, and Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him. 37When the
boy had almost reached the arrow, Jonathan shouted, “The arrow is
still ahead of you. 38Hurry, hurry, don’t wait.” So the boy quickly
gathered up the arrows and ran back to his master. 39He, of course,
suspected nothing; only Jonathan and David understood the signal.
40Then Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the boy and told him
to take them back to town.

41As soon as the boy was gone, David came out from where he had
been hiding near the stone pile.* Then David bowed three times to
Jonathan with his face to the ground. Both of them were in tears as
they embraced each other and said good-bye, especially David.

42At last Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn
loyalty to each other in the LORD’s name. The LORD is the witness
of a bond between us and our children forever.” Then David left,
and Jonathan returned to the town.*

1 Samuel 21

DAVID RUNS FROM SAUL

1*David went to the town of Nob to see Ahimelech the priest.
Ahimelech trembled when he saw him. “Why are you alone?” he
asked. “Why is no one with you?”

2“The king has sent me on a private matter,” David said. “He told
me not to tell anyone why I am here. I have told my men where to
meet me later. 3Now, what is there to eat? Give me five loaves of
bread or anything else you have.”

4“We don’t have any regular bread,” the priest replied. “But there is
the holy bread, which you can have if your young men have not
slept with any women recently.”

5“Don’t worry,” David replied. “I never allow my men to be with

women when we are on a campaign. And since they stay clean even on ordinary trips, how much more on this one!”

6Since there was no other food available, the priest gave him the holy bread—the Bread of the Presence that was placed before the LORD in the Tabernacle. It had just been replaced that day with fresh bread.

7Now Doeg the Edomite, Saul’s chief herdsman, was there that day, having been detained before the LORD.*

8David asked Ahimelech, “Do you have a spear or sword? The king’s business was so urgent that I didn’t even have time to grab a weapon!”

9“I only have the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah,” the priest replied. “It is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. Take that if you want it, for there is nothing else here.”

“There is nothing like it!” David replied. “Give it to me!”

10So David escaped from Saul and went to King Achish of Gath. 11But the officers of Achish were unhappy about his being there. “Isn’t this David, the king of the land?” they asked. “Isn’t he the one the people honor with dances, singing, ‘Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands’?”

12David heard these comments and was very afraid of what King Achish of Gath might do to him. 13So he pretended to be insane, scratching on doors and drooling down his beard.

14Finally, King Achish said to his men, “Must you bring me a madman? 15We already have enough of them around here! Why

should I let someone like this be my guest?”

1 Samuel 22

DAVID AT THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

1So David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. Soon his
brothers and all his other relatives joined him there. 2Then others
began coming—men who were in trouble or in debt or who were
just discontented—until David was the captain of about 400 men.

3Later David went to Mizpeh in Moab, where he asked the king,
“Please allow my father and mother to live here with you until I
know what God is going to do for me.” 4So David’s parents stayed in
Moab with the king during the entire time David was living in his
stronghold.

5One day the prophet Gad told David, “Leave the stronghold and
return to the land of Judah.” So David went to the forest of Hereth.

6The news of his arrival in Judah soon reached Saul. At the time,
the king was sitting beneath the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah,
holding his spear and surrounded by his officers.

7“Listen here, you men of Benjamin!” Saul shouted to his officers
when he heard the news. “Has that son of Jesse promised every one
of you fields and vineyards? Has he promised to make you all
generals and captains in his army?*8Is that why you have conspired
against me? For not one of you told me when my own son made a
solemn pact with the son of Jesse. You’re not even sorry for me.
Think of it! My own son—encouraging him to kill me, as he is
trying to do this very day!”

9Then Doeg the Edomite, who was standing there with Saul’s men,

spoke up. “When I was at Nob,” he said, “I saw the son of Jesse talking to the priest, Ahimelech son of Ahitub. 10Ahimelech consulted the LORD for him. Then he gave him food and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE PRIESTS

11King Saul immediately sent for Ahimelech and all his family, who served as priests at Nob. 12When they arrived, Saul shouted at him, “Listen to me, you son of Ahitub!”

“What is it, my king?” Ahimelech asked.

13“Why have you and the son of Jesse conspired against me?” Saul demanded. “Why did you give him food and a sword? Why have you consulted God for him? Why have you encouraged him to kill me, as he is trying to do this very day?”

14“But sir,” Ahimelech replied, “is anyone among all your servants as faithful as David, your son-in-law? Why, he is the captain of your bodyguard and a highly honored member of your household! 15This was certainly not the first time I had consulted God for him! May the king not accuse me and my family in this matter, for I knew nothing at all of any plot against you.”

16“You will surely die, Ahimelech, along with your entire family!” the king shouted. 17And he ordered his bodyguards, “Kill these priests of the LORD, for they are allies and conspirators with David! They knew he was running away from me, but they didn’t tell me!” But Saul’s men refused to kill the LORD’s priests.

18Then the king said to Doeg, “You do it.” So Doeg the Edomite turned on them and killed them that day, eighty-five priests in all, still wearing their priestly garments. 19Then he went to Nob, the town of the priests, and killed the priests’ families—men and women, children and babies—and all the cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats.

20Only Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escaped and fled to
David. 21When he told David that Saul had killed the priests of the
LORD, 22David exclaimed, “I knew it! When I saw Doeg the Edomite
there that day, I knew he was sure to tell Saul. Now I have caused
the death of all your father’s family. 23Stay here with me, and don’t
be afraid. I will protect you with my own life, for the same person
wants to kill us both.”

1 Samuel 23

DAVID PROTECTS THE TOWN OF KEILAH

1One day news came to David that the Philistines were at Keilah
stealing grain from the threshing floors. 2David asked the LORD,
“Should I go and attack them?”

“Yes, go and save Keilah,” the LORD told him.

3But David’s men said, “We’re afraid even here in Judah. We
certainly don’t want to go to Keilah to fight the whole Philistine
army!”

4So David asked the LORD again, and again the LORD replied, “Go
down to Keilah, for I will help you conquer the Philistines.”

5So David and his men went to Keilah. They slaughtered the
Philistines and took all their livestock and rescued the people of
Keilah. 6Now when Abiathar son of Ahimelech fled to David at
Keilah, he brought the ephod with him.

7Saul soon learned that David was at Keilah. “Good!” he exclaimed.
“We’ve got him now! God has handed him over to me, for he has
trapped himself in a walled town!” 8So Saul mobilized his entire
army to march to Keilah and besiege David and his men.

9But David learned of Saul's plan and told Abiathar the priest to
bring the ephod and ask the LORD what he should do. 10Then David
prayed, "O LORD, God of Israel, I have heard that Saul is planning
to come and destroy Keilah because I am here. 11Will the leaders of
Keilah betray me to him?* And will Saul actually come as I have
heard? O LORD, God of Israel, please tell me."

And the LORD said, "He will come."

12Again David asked, "Will the leaders of Keilah betray me and my
men to Saul?"

And the LORD replied, "Yes, they will betray you."

DAVID HIDES IN THE WILDERNESS

13So David and his men—about 600 of them now—left Keilah and
began roaming the countryside. Word soon reached Saul that David
had escaped, so he didn't go to Keilah after all. 14David now stayed
in the strongholds of the wilderness and in the hill country of Ziph.
Saul hunted him day after day, but God didn't let Saul find him.

15One day near Horesh, David received the news that Saul was on
the way to Ziph to search for him and kill him. 16Jonathan went to
find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God.
17"Don't be afraid," Jonathan reassured him. "My father will never
find you! You are going to be the king of Israel, and I will be next to
you, as my father, Saul, is well aware." 18So the two of them
renewed their solemn pact before the LORD. Then Jonathan
returned home, while David stayed at Horesh.

19But now the men of Ziph went to Saul in Gibeah and betrayed
David to him. "We know where David is hiding," they said. "He is
in the strongholds of Horesh on the hill of Hakilah, which is in the
southern part of Jeshimon. 20Come down whenever you're ready, O
king, and we will catch him and hand him over to you!"

21“The LORD bless you,” Saul said. “At last someone is concerned
about me! 22Go and check again to be sure of where he is staying
and who has seen him there, for I know that he is very crafty.
23Discover his hiding places, and come back when you are sure.
Then I’ll go with you. And if he is in the area at all, I’ll track him
down, even if I have to search every hiding place in Judah!” 24So
the men of Ziph returned home ahead of Saul.

Meanwhile, David and his men had moved into the wilderness of
Maon in the Arabah Valley south of Jeshimon. 25When David heard
that Saul and his men were searching for him, he went even farther
into the wilderness to the great rock, and he remained there in the
wilderness of Maon. But Saul kept after him in the wilderness.

26Saul and David were now on opposite sides of a mountain. Just as
Saul and his men began to close in on David and his men, 27an
urgent message reached Saul that the Philistines were raiding Israel
again. 28So Saul quit chasing David and returned to fight the
Philistines. Ever since that time, the place where David was camped
has been called the Rock of Escape.*29*David then went to live in
the strongholds of En-gedi.

▸ *En-gedi, west of the Dead Sea*

THE CAVES OF EN-GEDI

1 Samuel 24

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

1*After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that
David had gone into the wilderness of En-gedi. 2So Saul chose 3,000
elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men
near the rocks of the wild goats.

3At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into
a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men
were hiding farther back in that very cave!

4"Now's your opportunity!" David's men whispered to him. "Today
the LORD is telling you, 'I will certainly put your enemy into your
power, to do with as you wish.'" So David crept forward and cut off
a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.

5But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had
cut Saul's robe. 6He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should
do this to my lord the king. I shouldn't attack the LORD's anointed
one, for the LORD himself has chosen him." 7So David restrained his
men and did not let them kill Saul.

After Saul had left the cave and gone on his way, 8David came out
and shouted after him, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked
around, David bowed low before him.

9Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say
I am trying to harm you? 10This very day you can see with your
own eyes it isn't true. For the LORD placed you at my mercy back
there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared
you. For I said, 'I will never harm the king—he is the LORD's
anointed one.' 11Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a
piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. This
proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned

against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me.

12“May the LORD judge between us. Perhaps the LORD will punish
you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you.
13As that old proverb says, ‘From evil people come evil deeds.’ So
you can be sure I will never harm you. 14Who is the king of Israel
trying to catch anyway? Should he spend his time chasing one who
is as worthless as a dead dog or a single flea? 15May the LORD
therefore judge which of us is right and punish the guilty one. He is
my advocate, and he will rescue me from your power!”

16When David had finished speaking, Saul called back, “Is that
really you, my son David?” Then he began to cry. 17And he said to
David, “You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me
good for evil. 18Yes, you have been amazingly kind to me today, for
when the LORD put me in a place where you could have killed me,
you didn’t do it. 19Who else would let his enemy get away when he
had him in his power? May the LORD reward you well for the
kindness you have shown me today. 20And now I realize that you
are surely going to be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will
flourish under your rule. 21Now swear to me by the LORD that when
that happens you will not kill my family and destroy my line of
descendants!”

22So David promised this to Saul with an oath. Then Saul went
home, but David and his men went back to their stronghold.

1 Samuel 25

THE DEATH OF SAMUEL

1Now Samuel died, and all Israel gathered for his funeral. They
buried him at his house in Ramah.

NABAL ANGERS DAVID

Then David moved down to the wilderness of Maon.*2There was a
wealthy man from Maon who owned property near the town of
Carmel. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats, and it was sheep-
shearing time. 3This man's name was Nabal, and his wife, Abigail,
was a sensible and beautiful woman. But Nabal, a descendant of
Caleb, was crude and mean in all his dealings.

4When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, 5he sent ten
of his young men to Carmel with this message for Nabal: 6"Peace
and prosperity to you, your family, and everything you own! 7I am
told that it is sheep-shearing time. While your shepherds stayed
among us near Carmel, we never harmed them, and nothing was
ever stolen from them. 8Ask your own men, and they will tell you
this is true. So would you be kind to us, since we have come at a

time of celebration? Please share any provisions you might have on hand with us and with your friend David." 9David's young men gave this message to Nabal in David's name, and they waited for a reply.

10"Who is this fellow David?" Nabal sneered to the young men. "Who does this son of Jesse think he is? There are lots of servants these days who run away from their masters. 11Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I've slaughtered for my shearers and give it to a band of outlaws who come from who knows where?"

12So David's young men returned and told him what Nabal had said. 13"Get your swords!" was David's reply as he strapped on his own. Then 400 men started off with David, and 200 remained behind to guard their equipment.

14Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants went to Abigail and told her, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed insults at them. 15These men have been very good to us, and we never suffered any harm from them. Nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us. 16In fact, day and night they were like a wall of protection to us and the sheep. 17You need to know this and figure out what to do, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family. He's so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!"

18Abigail wasted no time. She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel* of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. She packed them on donkeys 19and said to her servants, "Go on ahead. I will follow you shortly." But she didn't tell her husband Nabal what she was doing.

20As she was riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming toward her. 21David had just been saying, "A lot of good it did to help this fellow. We protected his

flocks in the wilderness, and nothing he owned was lost or stolen. But he has repaid me evil for good. 22May God strike me and kill me* if even one man of his household is still alive tomorrow morning!"

ABIGAIL INTERCEDES FOR NABAL

23When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him. 24She fell at his feet and said, "I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. Please listen to what I have to say. 25I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests.* But I never even saw the young men you sent.

26"Now, my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, since the LORD has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands, let all your enemies and those who try to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is. 27And here is a present that I, your servant, have brought to you and your young men. 28Please forgive me if I have offended you in any way. The LORD will surely reward you with a lasting dynasty, for you are fighting the LORD's battles. And you have not done wrong throughout your entire life.

29"Even when you are chased by those who seek to kill you, your life is safe in the care of the LORD your God, secure in his treasure pouch! But the lives of your enemies will disappear like stones shot from a sling! 30When the LORD has done all he promised and has made you leader of Israel, 31don't let this be a blemish on your record. Then your conscience won't have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance. And when the LORD has done these great things for you, please remember me, your servant!"

32David replied to Abigail, "Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today! 33Thank God for your good sense! Bless you for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands. 34For I swear by the LORD, the God

of Israel, who has kept me from hurting you, that if you had not hurried out to meet me, not one of Nabal's men would still be alive tomorrow morning." 35Then David accepted her present and told her, "Return home in peace. I have heard what you said. We will not kill your husband."

36When Abigail arrived home, she found that Nabal was throwing a big party and was celebrating like a king. He was very drunk, so she didn't tell him anything about her meeting with David until dawn the next day. 37In the morning when Nabal was sober, his wife told him what had happened. As a result he had a stroke,* and he lay paralyzed on his bed like a stone. 38About ten days later, the LORD struck him, and he died.

DAVID MARRIES ABIGAIL

39When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise the LORD, who has avenged the insult I received from Nabal and has kept me from doing it myself. Nabal has received the punishment for his sin." Then David sent messengers to Abigail to ask her to become his wife.

40When the messengers arrived at Carmel, they told Abigail, "David has sent us to take you back to marry him."

41She bowed low to the ground and responded, "I, your servant, would be happy to marry David. I would even be willing to become a slave, washing the feet of his servants!" 42Quickly getting ready, she took along five of her servant girls as attendants, mounted her donkey, and went with David's messengers. And so she became his wife. 43David also married Ahinoam from Jezreel, making both of them his wives. 44Saul, meanwhile, had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to a man from Gallim named Palti son of Laish.

1 Samuel 26

DAVID SPARES SAUL AGAIN

1Now some men from Ziph came to Saul at Gibeah to tell him,
“David is hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which overlooks Jeshimon.”

2So Saul took 3,000 of Israel’s elite troops and went to hunt him
down in the wilderness of Ziph. 3Saul camped along the road beside
the hill of Hakilah, near Jeshimon, where David was hiding. When
David learned that Saul had come after him into the wilderness, 4he
sent out spies to verify the report of Saul’s arrival.

5David slipped over to Saul’s camp one night to look around. Saul
and Abner son of Ner, the commander of his army, were sleeping
inside a ring formed by the slumbering warriors. 6“Who will
volunteer to go in there with me?” David asked Ahimelech the
Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab’s brother.

“I’ll go with you,” Abishai replied. 7So David and Abishai went right
into Saul’s camp and found him asleep, with his spear stuck in the
ground beside his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying asleep
around him.

8“God has surely handed your enemy over to you this time!”
Abishai whispered to David. “Let me pin him to the ground with
one thrust of the spear; I won’t need to strike twice!”

9“No!” David said. “Don’t kill him. For who can remain innocent

after attacking the LORD's anointed one? 10Surely the LORD will
strike Saul down someday, or he will die of old age or in battle.
11The LORD forbid that I should kill the one he has anointed! But
take his spear and that jug of water beside his head, and then let's
get out of here!"

12So David took the spear and jug of water that were near Saul's
head. Then he and Abishai got away without anyone seeing them or
even waking up, because the LORD had put Saul's men into a deep
sleep.

13David climbed the hill opposite the camp until he was at a safe
distance. 14Then he shouted down to the soldiers and to Abner son
of Ner, "Wake up, Abner!"

"Who is it?" Abner demanded.

15"Well, Abner, you're a great man, aren't you?" David taunted.
"Where in all Israel is there anyone as mighty? So why haven't you
guarded your master the king when someone came to kill him?
16This isn't good at all! I swear by the LORD that you and your men
deserve to die, because you failed to protect your master, the
LORD's anointed! Look around! Where are the king's spear and the
jug of water that were beside his head?"

17Saul recognized David's voice and called out, "Is that you, my son
David?"

And David replied, "Yes, my lord the king. 18Why are you chasing
me? What have I done? What is my crime? 19But now let my lord
the king listen to his servant. If the LORD has stirred you up against
me, then let him accept my offering. But if this is simply a human
scheme, then may those involved be cursed by the LORD. For they
have driven me from my home, so I can no longer live among the
LORD's people, and they have said, 'Go, worship pagan gods.'
20Must I die on foreign soil, far from the presence of the LORD?
Why has the king of Israel come out to search for a single flea? Why
does he hunt me down like a partridge on the mountains?"

21Then Saul confessed, “I have sinned. Come back home, my son,
and I will no longer try to harm you, for you valued my life today. I
have been a fool and very, very wrong.”

22“Here is your spear, O king,” David replied. “Let one of your
young men come over and get it. 23The LORD gives his own reward
for doing good and for being loyal, and I refused to kill you even
when the LORD placed you in my power, for you are the LORD’s
anointed one. 24Now may the LORD value my life, even as I have
valued yours today. May he rescue me from all my troubles.”

25And Saul said to David, “Blessings on you, my son David. You will
do many heroic deeds, and you will surely succeed.” Then David
went away, and Saul returned home.

1 Samuel 27

DAVID AMONG THE PHILISTINES

1But David kept thinking to himself, “Someday Saul is going to get
me. The best thing I can do is escape to the Philistines. Then Saul
will stop hunting for me in Israelite territory, and I will finally be
safe.”

2So David took his 600 men and went over and joined Achish son of
Maoch, the king of Gath. 3David and his men and their families
settled there with Achish at Gath. David brought his two wives
along with him—Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, Nabal’s widow
from Carmel. 4Word soon reached Saul that David had fled to Gath,
so he stopped hunting for him.

5One day David said to Achish, “If it is all right with you, we would
rather live in one of the country towns instead of here in the royal
city.”

6So Achish gave him the town of Ziklag (which still belongs to the
kings of Judah to this day), 7and they lived there among the
Philistines for a year and four months.

8David and his men spent their time raiding the Geshurites, the
Girzites, and the Amalekites—people who had lived near Shur,
toward the land of Egypt, since ancient times. 9David did not leave
one person alive in the villages he attacked. He took the sheep,
goats, cattle, donkeys, camels, and clothing before returning home
to see King Achish.

10"Where did you make your raid today?" Achish would ask.

And David would reply, "Against the south of Judah, the
Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites."

11No one was left alive to come to Gath and tell where he had really
been. This happened again and again while he was living among
the Philistines. 12Achish believed David and thought to himself, "By
now the people of Israel must hate him bitterly. Now he will have
to stay here and serve me forever!"

1 Samuel 28

SAUL CONSULTS A MEDIUM

1About that time the Philistines mustered their armies for another
war with Israel. King Achish told David, "You and your men will be
expected to join me in battle."

2"Very well!" David agreed. "Now you will see for yourself what we
can do."

Then Achish told David, "I will make you my personal bodyguard
for life."

3Meanwhile, Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him.
He was buried in Ramah, his hometown. And Saul had banned from
the land of Israel all mediums and those who consult the spirits of
the dead.

4The Philistines set up their camp at Shunem, and Saul gathered all
the army of Israel and camped at Gilboa. 5When Saul saw the vast
Philistine army, he became frantic with fear. 6He asked the LORD
what he should do, but the LORD refused to answer him, either by
dreams or by sacred lots* or by the prophets. 7Saul then said to his
advisers, “Find a woman who is a medium, so I can go and ask her
what to do.”

His advisers replied, “There is a medium at Endor.”

8So Saul disguised himself by wearing ordinary clothing instead of
his royal robes. Then he went to the woman’s home at night,
accompanied by two of his men.

“I have to talk to a man who has died,” he said. “Will you call up
his spirit for me?”

9“Are you trying to get me killed?” the woman demanded. “You
know that Saul has outlawed all the mediums and all who consult
the spirits of the dead. Why are you setting a trap for me?”

10But Saul took an oath in the name of the LORD and promised, “As
surely as the LORD lives, nothing bad will happen to you for doing
this.”

11Finally, the woman said, “Well, whose spirit do you want me to
call up?”

“Call up Samuel,” Saul replied.

12When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed, “You’ve deceived

me! You are Saul!”

13“Don’t be afraid!” the king told her. “What do you see?”

“I see a god* coming up out of the earth,” she said.

14“What does he look like?” Saul asked.

“He is an old man wrapped in a robe,” she replied. Saul realized it was Samuel, and he fell to the ground before him.

15“Why have you disturbed me by calling me back?” Samuel asked Saul.

“Because I am in deep trouble,” Saul replied. “The Philistines are at war with me, and God has left me and won’t reply by prophets or dreams. So I have called for you to tell me what to do.”

16But Samuel replied, “Why ask me, since the LORD has left you and has become your enemy? 17The LORD has done just as he said he would. He has torn the kingdom from you and given it to your rival, David. 18The LORD has done this to you today because you refused to carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites. 19What’s more, the LORD will hand you and the army of Israel over to the Philistines tomorrow, and you and your sons will be here with me. The LORD will bring down the entire army of Israel in defeat.”

20Saul fell full length on the ground, paralyzed with fright because of Samuel’s words. He was also faint with hunger, for he had eaten nothing all day and all night.

21When the woman saw how distraught he was, she said, “Sir, I obeyed your command at the risk of my life. 22Now do what I say, and let me give you a little something to eat so you can regain your

strength for the trip back."

23But Saul refused to eat anything. Then his advisers joined the
woman in urging him to eat, so he finally yielded and got up from
the ground and sat on the couch.

24The woman had been fattening a calf, so she hurried out and
killed it. She took some flour, kneaded it into dough and baked
unleavened bread. 25She brought the meal to Saul and his advisers,
and they ate it. Then they went out into the night.

1 Samuel 29

THE PHILISTINES REJECT DAVID

1The entire Philistine army now mobilized at Aphek, and the
Israelites camped at the spring in Jezreel. 2As the Philistine rulers
were leading out their troops in groups of hundreds and thousands,
David and his men marched at the rear with King Achish. 3But the
Philistine commanders demanded, "What are these Hebrews doing
here?"

And Achish told them, "This is David, the servant of King Saul of
Israel. He's been with me for years, and I've never found a single
fault in him from the day he arrived until today."

4But the Philistine commanders were angry. "Send him back to the
town you've given him!" they demanded. "He can't go into the
battle with us. What if he turns against us in battle and becomes our
adversary? Is there any better way for him to reconcile himself with
his master than by handing our heads over to him? 5Isn't this the
same David about whom the women of Israel sing in their dances,
'Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?"

6So Achish finally summoned David and said to him, "I swear by
the LORD that you have been a trustworthy ally. I think you should

go with me into battle, for I've never found a single flaw in you from the day you arrived until today. But the other Philistine rulers won't hear of it. 7Please don't upset them, but go back quietly."

8"What have I done to deserve this treatment?" David demanded. "What have you ever found in your servant, that I can't go and fight the enemies of my lord the king?"

9But Achish insisted, "As far as I'm concerned, you're as perfect as an angel of God. But the Philistine commanders are afraid to have you with them in the battle. 10Now get up early in the morning, and leave with your men as soon as it gets light."

11So David and his men headed back into the land of the Philistines, while the Philistine army went on to Jezreel.

1 Samuel 30

DAVID DESTROYS THE AMALEKITES

1Three days later, when David and his men arrived home at their town of Ziklag, they found that the Amalekites had made a raid into the Negev and Ziklag; they had crushed Ziklag and burned it to the ground. 2They had carried off the women and children and everyone else but without killing anyone.

3When David and his men saw the ruins and realized what had happened to their families, 4they wept until they could weep no more. 5David's two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel, were among those captured. 6David was now in great danger because all his men were very bitter about losing their sons and daughters, and they began to talk of stoning him. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

7Then he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring me the ephod!" So

Abiathar brought it. 8Then David asked the LORD, “Should I chase after this band of raiders? Will I catch them?”

And the LORD told him, “Yes, go after them. You will surely recover everything that was taken from you!”

9So David and his 600 men set out, and they came to the brook Besor. 10But 200 of the men were too exhausted to cross the brook, so David continued the pursuit with 400 men.

11Along the way they found an Egyptian man in a field and brought him to David. They gave him some bread to eat and water to drink. 12They also gave him part of a fig cake and two clusters of raisins, for he hadn’t had anything to eat or drink for three days and nights. Before long his strength returned.

13“To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?” David asked him.

“I am an Egyptian—the slave of an Amalekite,” he replied. “My master abandoned me three days ago because I was sick. 14We were on our way back from raiding the Kerethites in the Negev, the territory of Judah, and the land of Caleb, and we had just burned Ziklag.”

15“Will you lead me to this band of raiders?” David asked.

The young man replied, “If you take an oath in God’s name that you will not kill me or give me back to my master, then I will guide you to them.”

16So he led David to them, and they found the Amalekites spread out across the fields, eating and drinking and dancing with joy because of the vast amount of plunder they had taken from the Philistines and the land of Judah. 17David and his men rushed in among them and slaughtered them throughout that night and the entire next day until evening. None of the Amalekites escaped

except 400 young men who fled on camels. 18David got back
everything the Amalekites had taken, and he rescued his two wives.
19Nothing was missing: small or great, son or daughter, nor
anything else that had been taken. David brought everything back.
20He also recovered all the flocks and herds, and his men drove
them ahead of the other livestock. “This plunder belongs to David!”
they said.

21Then David returned to the brook Besor and met up with the 200
men who had been left behind because they were too exhausted to
go with him. They went out to meet David and his men, and David
greeted them joyfully. 22But some evil troublemakers among David’s
men said, “They didn’t go with us, so they can’t have any of the
plunder we recovered. Give them their wives and children, and tell
them to be gone.”

23But David said, “No, my brothers! Don’t be selfish with what the
LORD has given us. He has kept us safe and helped us defeat the
band of raiders that attacked us. 24Who will listen when you talk
like this? We share and share alike—those who go to battle and
those who guard the equipment.” 25From then on David made this a
decree and regulation for Israel, and it is still followed today.

26When he arrived at Ziklag, David sent part of the plunder to the
elders of Judah, who were his friends. “Here is a present for you,
taken from the LORD’s enemies,” he said.

27The gifts were sent to the people of the following towns David
had visited: Bethel, Ramoth-negev, Jattir, 28Aroer, Siphmoth,
Eshtemoa, 29Racal,* the towns of the Jerahmeelites, the towns of the
Kenites, 30Hormah, Bor-ashan, Athach, 31Hebron, and all the other
places David and his men had visited.

1 Samuel 31

THE DEATH OF SAUL

1Now the Philistines attacked Israel, and the men of Israel fled
before them. Many were slaughtered on the slopes of Mount Gilboa.
2The Philistines closed in on Saul and his sons, and they killed three
of his sons—Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malkishua. 3The fighting
grew very fierce around Saul, and the Philistine archers caught up
with him and wounded him severely.

4Saul groaned to his armor bearer, “Take your sword and kill me
before these pagan Philistines come to run me through and taunt
and torture me.”

But his armor bearer was afraid and would not do it. So Saul took
his own sword and fell on it. 5When his armor bearer realized that
Saul was dead, he fell on his own sword and died beside the king.
6So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer, and his troops all died
together that same day.

7When the Israelites on the other side of the Jezreel Valley and

beyond the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their towns and fled. So the Philistines moved in and occupied their towns.

8The next day, when the Philistines went out to strip the dead, they found the bodies of Saul and his three sons on Mount Gilboa. 9So they cut off Saul's head and stripped off his armor. Then they proclaimed the good news of Saul's death in their pagan temple and to the people throughout the land of Philistia. 10They placed his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of the city of Beth-shan.

11But when the people of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12all their mighty warriors traveled through the night to Beth-shan and took the bodies of Saul and his sons down from the wall. They brought them to Jabesh, where they burned the bodies. 13Then they took their bones and buried them beneath the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted for seven days.

2 Samuel

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

WELCOME TO

2 SAMUEL

The reign of King David is a high point in the history of Israel, a time when the nation is united under a ruler who follows God with all his heart. Second Samuel tells the story of his reign. After Saul's death, David unites the twelve tribes under his kingship, moves the capital to Jerusalem, brings the sacred Ark of the Covenant there, and greatly expands the borders of Israel.

Although he loves the Lord, David is far from perfect and sins repeatedly. David's occasionally troubled reign is described in some detail in the stories of 2 Samuel, including his personal sins and how they affect his family and the nation. David triumphs as king but suffers in his personal life, which is marred by turbulent family discord.

0 STOPS

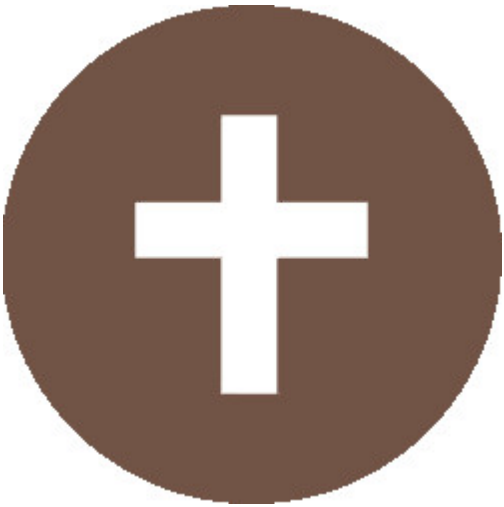
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over 2 Samuel, never touching down. If you are curious about this book, take a glance at the section headings. You'll get an idea of what 2 Samuel contains and be on your way. Your next stop is at 1 Kings 3:1.

2 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your two stops in 2 Samuel focus on the life of King David: his coronation over a united kingdom and his act of kindness toward Saul's son Mephibosheth. Your next stop is at 2 Samuel 5:1.

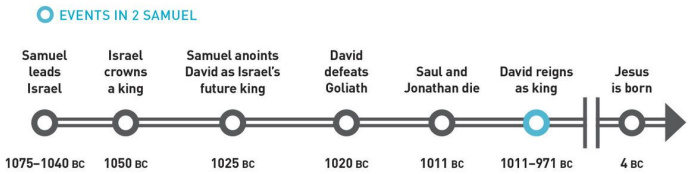
9 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your route through 2 Samuel consists of nine stops that focus on the life of King David: his accomplishments, his failures, and the strife in his family. Your next stop is at 2 Samuel 5:1.



FINDING JESUS IN 2 SAMUEL

Many of King David's words and actions show us a picture of Jesus' faithfulness and obedience to his Father. God also promised David that his kingdom would continue "for all time" and that one of his descendants, whose throne "will be secure forever," would rule in his place. These promises point ahead to the coming Messiah, Jesus. Jesus and his new covenant surpassed David and the earlier covenant even as they fulfilled them.



2 Samuel 1

DAVID LEARNS OF SAUL'S DEATH

1After the death of Saul, David returned from his victory over the
Amalekites and spent two days in Ziklag. 2On the third day a man
arrived from Saul's army camp. He had torn his clothes and put dirt
on his head to show that he was in mourning. He fell to the ground
before David in deep respect.

3"Where have you come from?" David asked.

"I escaped from the Israelite camp," the man replied.

4"What happened?" David demanded. "Tell me how the battle
went."

The man replied, "Our entire army fled from the battle. Many of the
men are dead, and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead."

5"How do you know Saul and Jonathan are dead?" David demanded
of the young man.

6The man answered, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there
was Saul leaning on his spear with the enemy chariots and
charioteers closing in on him. 7When he turned and saw me, he
cried out for me to come to him. 'How can I help?' I asked him.

8“He responded, ‘Who are you?’

“‘I am an Amalekite,’ I told him.

9“Then he begged me, ‘Come over here and put me out of my misery, for I am in terrible pain and want to die.’

10“So I killed him,” the Amalekite told David, “for I knew he couldn’t live. Then I took his crown and his armband, and I have brought them here to you, my lord.”

11David and his men tore their clothes in sorrow when they heard the news. 12They mourned and wept and fasted all day for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the LORD’s army and the nation of Israel, because they had died by the sword that day.

13Then David said to the young man who had brought the news, “Where are you from?”

And he replied, “I am a foreigner, an Amalekite, who lives in your land.”

14“Why were you not afraid to kill the LORD’s anointed one?” David asked.

15Then David said to one of his men, “Kill him!” So the man thrust his sword into the Amalekite and killed him. 16“You have condemned yourself,” David said, “for you yourself confessed that you killed the LORD’s anointed one.”

DAVID’S SONG FOR SAUL AND JONATHAN

17Then David composed a funeral song for Saul and Jonathan, 18and he commanded that it be taught to the people of Judah. It is known as the Song of the Bow, and it is recorded in *The Book of Jashar.* *

19Your pride and joy, O Israel, lies dead on the hills!
Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen!

20Don't announce the news in Gath, don't proclaim it in the streets
of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice and the
pagans will laugh in triumph.

21O mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor
fruitful fields producing offerings of grain.*
For there the shield of the mighty heroes was defiled; the shield of
Saul will no longer be anointed with oil.

22The bow of Jonathan was powerful, and the sword of Saul did its
mighty work.
They shed the blood of their enemies and pierced the bodies of
mighty heroes.

23How beloved and gracious were Saul and Jonathan!
They were together in life and in death.
They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

24O women of Israel, weep for Saul, for he dressed you in luxurious
scarlet clothing, in garments decorated with gold.

25Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen in battle!
Jonathan lies dead on the hills.

26How I weep for you, my brother Jonathan!
Oh, how much I loved you!
And your love for me was deep, deeper than the love of women!

27Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen!
Stripped of their weapons, they lie dead.

2 Samuel 2

DAVID ANOINTED KING OF JUDAH

1After this, David asked the LORD, "Should I move back to one of
the towns of Judah?"

“Yes,” the LORD replied.

Then David asked, “Which town should I go to?”

“To Hebron,” the LORD answered.

2David’s two wives were Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, the
widow of Nabal from Carmel. So David and his wives 3and his men
and their families all moved to Judah, and they settled in the
villages near Hebron. 4Then the men of Judah came to David and
anointed him king over the people of Judah.

When David heard that the men of Jabesh-gilead had buried Saul,
5he sent them this message: “May the LORD bless you for being so
loyal to your master Saul and giving him a decent burial. 6May the
LORD be loyal to you in return and reward you with his unfailing
love! And I, too, will reward you for what you have done. 7Now that
Saul is dead, I ask you to be my strong and loyal subjects like the
people of Judah, who have anointed me as their new king.”

ISHBOSHETH PROCLAIMED KING OF ISRAEL

8But Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul’s army, had already
gone to Mahanaim with Saul’s son Ishbosheth.*9There he
proclaimed Ishbosheth king over Gilead, Jezreel, Ephraim,
Benjamin, the land of the Ashurites, and all the rest of Israel.

10Ishbosheth, Saul’s son, was forty years old when he became king,
and he ruled from Mahanaim for two years. Meanwhile, the people
of Judah remained loyal to David. 11David made Hebron his capital,
and he ruled as king of Judah for seven and a half years.

WAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JUDAH

12One day Abner led Ishbosheth’s troops from Mahanaim to Gibeon.
13About the same time, Joab son of Zeruiah led David’s troops out
and met them at the pool of Gibeon. The two groups sat down

there, facing each other from opposite sides of the pool.

14Then Abner suggested to Joab, “Let’s have a few of our warriors
fight hand to hand here in front of us.”

“All right,” Joab agreed. 15So twelve men were chosen to fight from
each side—twelve men of Benjamin representing Ishbosheth son of
Saul, and twelve representing David. 16Each one grabbed his
opponent by the hair and thrust his sword into the other’s side so
that all of them died. So this place at Gibeon has been known ever
since as the Field of Swords.*

17A fierce battle followed that day, and Abner and the men of Israel
were defeated by the forces of David.

THE DEATH OF ASAHEL

18Joab, Abishai, and Asahel—the three sons of Zeruiah—were
among David’s forces that day. Asahel could run like a gazelle,
19and he began chasing Abner. He pursued him relentlessly, not
stopping for anything. 20When Abner looked back and saw him
coming, he called out, “Is that you, Asahel?”

“Yes, it is,” he replied.

21“Go fight someone else!” Abner warned. “Take on one of the
younger men, and strip him of his weapons.” But Asahel kept right
on chasing Abner.

22Again Abner shouted to him, “Get away from here! I don’t want to
kill you. How could I ever face your brother Joab again?”

23But Asahel refused to turn back, so Abner thrust the butt end of
his spear through Asahel’s stomach, and the spear came out through
his back. He stumbled to the ground and died there. And everyone
who came by that spot stopped and stood still when they saw

Asahel lying there.

24When Joab and Abishai found out what had happened, they set
out after Abner. The sun was just going down as they arrived at the
hill of Ammah near Giah, along the road to the wilderness of
Gibeon. 25Abner's troops from the tribe of Benjamin regrouped there
at the top of the hill to take a stand.

26Abner shouted down to Joab, "Must we always be killing each
other? Don't you realize that bitterness is the only result? When will
you call off your men from chasing their Israelite brothers?"

27Then Joab said, "God only knows what would have happened if
you hadn't spoken, for we would have chased you all night if
necessary." 28So Joab blew the ram's horn, and his men stopped
chasing the troops of Israel.

29All that night Abner and his men retreated through the Jordan
Valley.* They crossed the Jordan River, traveling all through the
morning,* and didn't stop until they arrived at Mahanaim.

30Meanwhile, Joab and his men also returned home. When Joab
counted his casualties, he discovered that only 19 men were missing
in addition to Asahel. 31But 360 of Abner's men had been killed, all
from the tribe of Benjamin. 32Joab and his men took Asahel's body
to Bethlehem and buried him there in his father's tomb. Then they
traveled all night and reached Hebron at daybreak.

2 Samuel 3

1That was the beginning of a long war between those who were
loyal to Saul and those loyal to David. As time passed David became
stronger and stronger, while Saul's dynasty became weaker and
weaker.

DAVID'S SONS BORN IN HEBRON

2These are the sons who were born to David in Hebron: The oldest
was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.

3The second was Daniel,* whose mother was Abigail, the widow of
Nabal from Carmel.
The third was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of
Talmai, king of Geshur.

4The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith.
The fifth was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital.

5The sixth was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, David's wife.

These sons were all born to David in Hebron.

ABNER JOINS FORCES WITH DAVID

6As the war between the house of Saul and the house of David went
on, Abner became a powerful leader among those loyal to Saul.
7One day Ishbosheth,* Saul's son, accused Abner of sleeping with
one of his father's concubines, a woman named Rizpah, daughter of
Aiah.

8Abner was furious. "Am I some Judean dog to be kicked around
like this?" he shouted. "After all I have done for your father, Saul,
and his family and friends by not handing you over to David, is this
my reward—that you find fault with me about this woman? 9May
God strike me and even kill me if I don't do everything I can to help
David get what the LORD has promised him! 10I'm going to take
Saul's kingdom and give it to David. I will establish the throne of
David over Israel as well as Judah, all the way from Dan in the
north to Beersheba in the south." 11Ishbosheth didn't dare say
another word because he was afraid of what Abner might do.

12Then Abner sent messengers to David, saying, “Doesn’t the entire land belong to you? Make a solemn pact with me, and I will help turn over all of Israel to you.”

13“All right,” David replied, “but I will not negotiate with you unless you bring back my wife Michal, Saul’s daughter, when you come.”

14David then sent this message to Ishbosheth, Saul’s son: “Give me back my wife Michal, for I bought her with the lives* of 100 Philistines.”

15So Ishbosheth took Michal away from her husband, Palti* son of Laish. 16Palti followed along behind her as far as Bahurim, weeping as he went. Then Abner told him, “Go back home!” So Palti returned.

17Meanwhile, Abner had consulted with the elders of Israel. “For some time now,” he told them, “you have wanted to make David your king. 18Now is the time! For the LORD has said, ‘I have chosen David to save my people Israel from the hands of the Philistines and from all their other enemies.’” 19Abner also spoke with the men of Benjamin. Then he went to Hebron to tell David that all the people of Israel and Benjamin had agreed to support him.

20When Abner and twenty of his men came to Hebron, David entertained them with a great feast. 21Then Abner said to David, “Let me go and call an assembly of all Israel to support my lord the king. They will make a covenant with you to make you their king, and you will rule over everything your heart desires.” So David sent Abner safely on his way.

JOAB MURDERS ABNER

22But just after David had sent Abner away in safety, Joab and some
of David's troops returned from a raid, bringing much plunder with
them. 23When Joab arrived, he was told that Abner had just been
there visiting the king and had been sent away in safety.

24Joab rushed to the king and demanded, "What have you done?
What do you mean by letting Abner get away? 25You know perfectly
well that he came to spy on you and find out everything you're
doing!"

26Joab then left David and sent messengers to catch up with Abner,
asking him to return. They found him at the well of Sirah and
brought him back, though David knew nothing about it. 27When
Abner arrived back at Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gateway
as if to speak with him privately. But then he stabbed Abner in the
stomach and killed him in revenge for killing his brother Asahel.

28When David heard about it, he declared, "I vow by the LORD that
I and my kingdom are forever innocent of this crime against Abner
son of Ner. 29Joab and his family are the guilty ones. May the family
of Joab be cursed in every generation with a man who has open
sores or leprosy* or who walks on crutches* or dies by the sword or
begs for food!"

30So Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because Abner had
killed their brother Asahel at the battle of Gibeon.

DAVID MOURNS ABNER'S DEATH

31Then David said to Joab and all those who were with him, "Tear
your clothes and put on burlap. Mourn for Abner." And King David
himself walked behind the procession to the grave. 32They buried
Abner in Hebron, and the king and all the people wept at his
graveside. 33Then the king sang this funeral song for Abner: "Should
Abner have died as fools die?

34Your hands were not bound; your feet were not chained.
No, you were murdered— the victim of a wicked plot.”

All the people wept again for Abner. 35David had refused to eat anything on the day of the funeral, and now everyone begged him to eat. But David had made a vow, saying, “May God strike me and even kill me if I eat anything before sundown.”

36This pleased the people very much. In fact, everything the king did pleased them! 37So everyone in Judah and all Israel understood that David was not responsible for Abner’s murder.

38Then King David said to his officials, “Don’t you realize that a great commander has fallen today in Israel? 39And even though I am the anointed king, these two sons of Zeruiah—Joab and Abishai—are too strong for me to control. So may the LORD repay these evil men for their evil deeds.”

2 Samuel 4

THE MURDER OF ISHBOSHETH

1When Ishbosheth,* Saul’s son, heard about Abner’s death at Hebron, he lost all courage, and all Israel became paralyzed with fear. 2Now there were two brothers, Baanah and Recab, who were captains of Ishbosheth’s raiding parties. They were sons of Rimmon, a member of the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Beeroth. The town of Beeroth is now part of Benjamin’s territory 3because the original people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim, where they still live as foreigners.

4(Saul’s son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth,* who was crippled as a child. He was five years old when the report came from Jezreel that Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle. When the child’s nurse heard the news, she picked him up and fled. But as she hurried away, she dropped him, and he became crippled.)

5One day Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon from Beeroth,
went to Ishbosheth's house around noon as he was taking his
midday rest. 6The doorkeeper, who had been sifting wheat, became
drowsy and fell asleep. So Recab and Baanah slipped past
her.*7They went into the house and found Ishbosheth sleeping on
his bed. They struck and killed him and cut off his head. Then,
taking his head with them, they fled across the Jordan Valley*
through the night. 8When they arrived at Hebron, they presented
Ishbosheth's head to David. "Look!" they exclaimed to the king.
"Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of your enemy Saul who
tried to kill you. Today the LORD has given my lord the king
revenge on Saul and his entire family!"

9But David said to Recab and Baanah, "The LORD, who saves me
from all my enemies, is my witness. 10Someone once told me, 'Saul
is dead,' thinking he was bringing me good news. But I seized him
and killed him at Ziklag. That's the reward I gave him for his news!
11How much more should I reward evil men who have killed an
innocent man in his own house and on his own bed? Shouldn't I
hold you responsible for his blood and rid the earth of you?"

12So David ordered his young men to kill them, and they did. They
cut off their hands and feet and hung their bodies beside the pool in
Hebron. Then they took Ishbosheth's head and buried it in Abner's
tomb in Hebron.

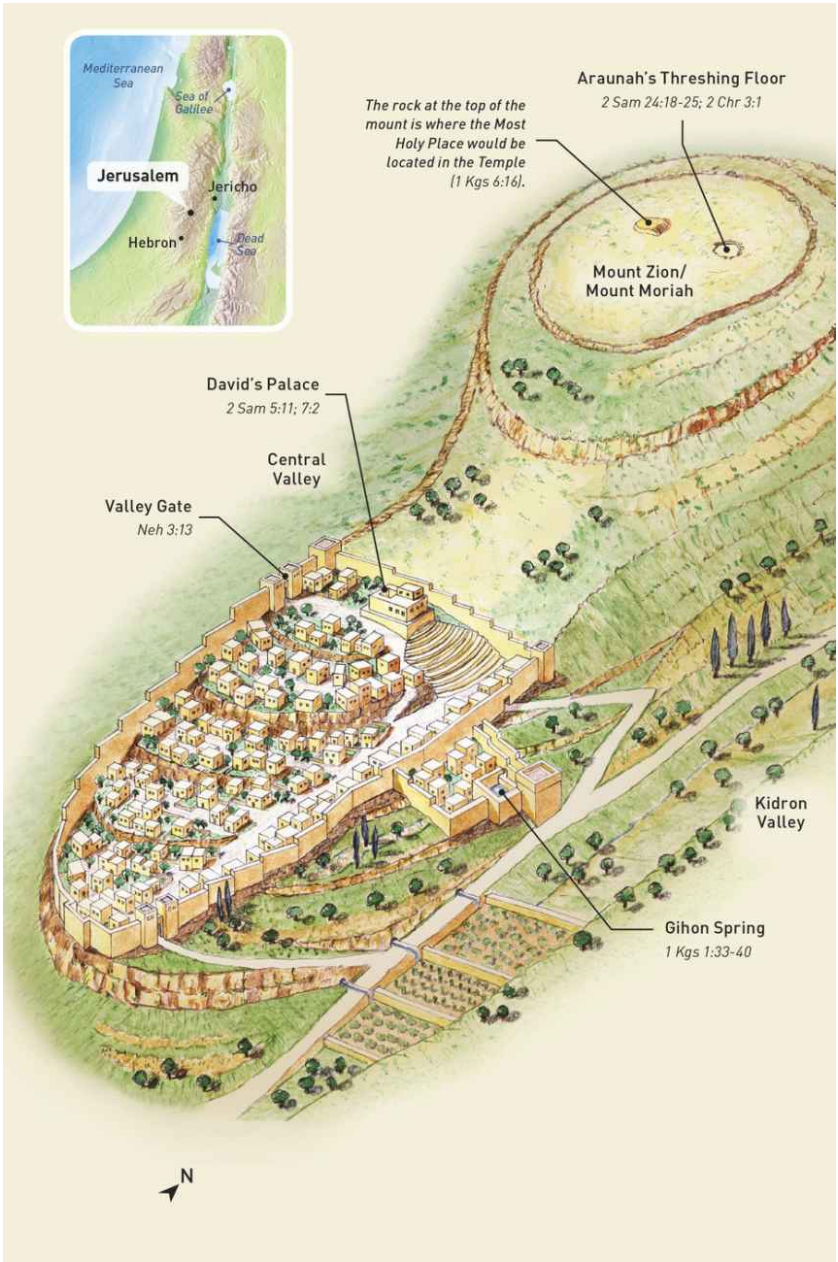
2 Samuel 5

DAVID BECOMES KING OF ALL ISRAEL

1Then all the tribes of Israel went to David at Hebron and told him,
“We are your own flesh and blood. 2In the past,* when Saul was our
king, you were the one who really led the forces of Israel. And the
LORD told you, ‘You will be the shepherd of my people Israel. You
will be Israel’s leader.’”

3So there at Hebron, King David made a covenant before the LORD
with all the elders of Israel. And they anointed him king of Israel.

4David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned
forty years in all. 5He had reigned over Judah from Hebron for
seven years and six months, and from Jerusalem he reigned over all
Israel and Judah for thirty-three years.



JERUSALEM: THE CITY OF DAVID

DAVID CAPTURES JERUSALEM

6David then led his men to Jerusalem to fight against the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land who were living there. The Jebusites taunted David, saying, “You’ll never get in here! Even the blind and lame could keep you out!” For the Jebusites thought they were safe. 7But David captured the fortress of Zion, which is now called the City of David.

8On the day of the attack, David said to his troops, “I hate those ‘lame’ and ‘blind’ Jebusites.* Whoever attacks them should strike by going into the city through the water tunnel.*” That is the origin of the saying, “The blind and the lame may not enter the house.”*

9So David made the fortress his home, and he called it the City of David. He extended the city, starting at the supporting terraces* and working inward. 10And David became more and more powerful, because the LORD God of Heaven’s Armies was with him.

11Then King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar timber and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built David a palace. 12And David realized that the LORD had confirmed him as king over Israel and had blessed his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

13After moving from Hebron to Jerusalem, David married more concubines and wives, and they had more sons and daughters. 14These are the names of David’s sons who were born in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

DAVID CONQUERS THE PHILISTINES

17When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of Israel, they mobilized all their forces to capture him. But David was

told they were coming, so he went into the stronghold. 18The Philistines arrived and spread out across the valley of Rephaim. 19So David asked the LORD, “Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?”

The LORD replied to David, “Yes, go ahead. I will certainly hand them over to you.”

20So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. “The LORD did it!” David exclaimed. “He burst through my enemies like a raging flood!” So he named that place Baal-perazim (which means “the Lord who bursts through”). 21The Philistines had abandoned their idols there, so David and his men confiscated them.

22But after a while the Philistines returned and again spread out across the valley of Rephaim. 23And again David asked the LORD what to do. “Do not attack them straight on,” the LORD replied. “Instead, circle around behind and attack them near the poplar* trees. 24When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, be on the alert! That will be the signal that the LORD is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistine army.” 25So David did what the LORD commanded, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon* to Gezer.

2 Samuel 6

MOVING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

1Then David again gathered all the elite troops in Israel, 30,000 in
all. 2He led them to Baalah of Judah* to bring back the Ark of God,
which bears the name of the LORD of Heaven's Armies,* who is
enthroned between the cherubim. 3They placed the Ark of God on a
new cart and brought it from Abinadab's house, which was on a
hill. Uzzah and Ahio, Abinadab's sons, were guiding the cart 4that
carried the Ark of God.* Ahio walked in front of the Ark. 5David and
all the people of Israel were celebrating before the LORD, singing
songs* and playing all kinds of musical instruments—lyres, harps,
tambourines, castanets, and cymbals.

6But when they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen
stumbled, and Uzzah reached out his hand and steadied the Ark of
God. 7Then the LORD's anger was aroused against Uzzah, and God
struck him dead because of this.* So Uzzah died right there beside
the Ark of God.

8David was angry because the LORD's anger had burst out against

Uzzah. He named that place Perez-uzzah (which means “to burst out against Uzzah”), as it is still called today.

9David was now afraid of the LORD, and he asked, “How can I ever bring the Ark of the LORD back into my care?” 10So David decided not to move the Ark of the LORD into the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath. 11The Ark of the LORD remained there in Obed-edom’s house for three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and his entire household.

12Then King David was told, “The LORD has blessed Obed-edom’s household and everything he has because of the Ark of God.” So David went there and brought the Ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the City of David with a great celebration. 13After the men who were carrying the Ark of the LORD had gone six steps, David sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. 14And David danced before the LORD with all his might, wearing a priestly garment.*15So David and all the people of Israel brought up the Ark of the LORD with shouts of joy and the blowing of rams’ horns.

MICHAL’S CONTEMPT FOR DAVID

16But as the Ark of the LORD entered the City of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked down from her window. When she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she was filled with contempt for him.

17They brought the Ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the special tent David had prepared for it. And David sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings to the LORD. 18When he had finished his sacrifices, David blessed the people in the name of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. 19Then he gave to every Israelite man and woman in the crowd a loaf of bread, a cake of dates,* and a cake of raisins. Then all the people returned to their homes.

20When David returned home to bless his own family, Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet him. She said in disgust, “How

distinguished the king of Israel looked today, shamelessly exposing himself to the servant girls like any vulgar person might do!”

21David retorted to Michal, “I was dancing before the LORD, who chose me above your father and all his family! He appointed me as the leader of Israel, the people of the LORD, so I celebrate before the LORD. 22Yes, and I am willing to look even more foolish than this, even to be humiliated in my own eyes! But those servant girls you mentioned will indeed think I am distinguished!” 23So Michal, the daughter of Saul, remained childless throughout her entire life.

THE MESSIAH 2 SAMUEL 7:1-16

2 Samuel 7

THE LORD’S COVENANT PROMISE TO DAVID

1When King David was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies, 2the king

summoned Nathan the prophet. “Look,” David said, “I am living in a beautiful cedar palace,* but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!”

3Nathan replied to the king, “Go ahead and do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you.”

4But that same night the LORD said to Nathan,

5“Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD has declared: Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? 6I have never lived in a house, from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling. 7Yet no matter where I have gone with the Israelites, I have never once complained to Israel’s tribal leaders, the shepherds of my people Israel. I have never asked them, “Why haven’t you built me a beautiful cedar house?”’

8“Now go and say to my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel. 9I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth! 10And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won’t oppress them as they’ve done in the past, 11starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies.
“‘Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! 12For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. 13He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever. 14I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do. 15But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight. 16Your house

and your kingdom will continue before me* for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.'"

17So Nathan went back to David and told him everything the LORD had said in this vision.

DAVID'S PRAYER OF THANKS

18Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and prayed,

"Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 19And now, Sovereign LORD, in addition to everything else, you speak of giving your servant a lasting dynasty! Do you deal with everyone this way, O Sovereign LORD?*

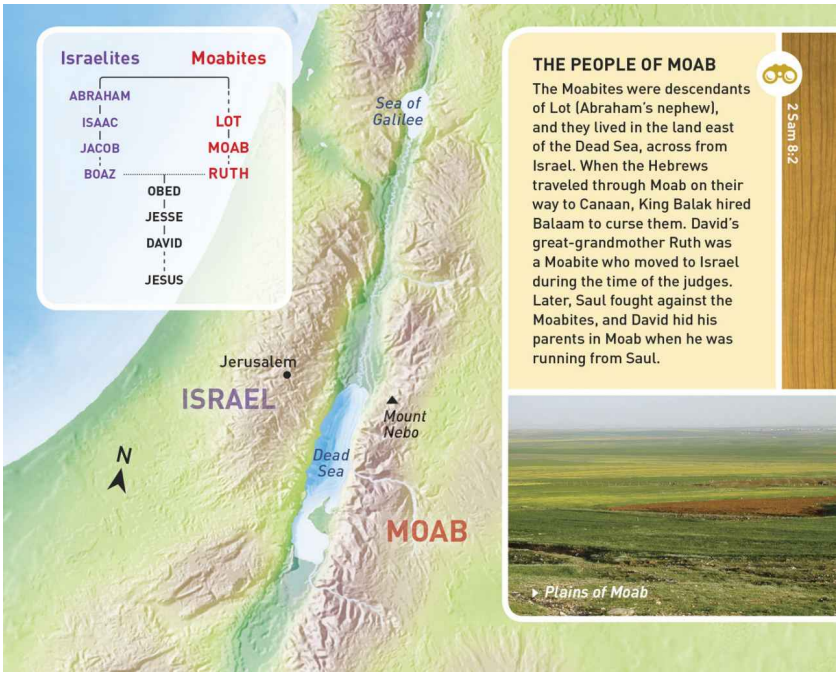
20"What more can I say to you? You know what your servant is really like, Sovereign LORD. 21Because of your promise and according to your will, you have done all these great things and have made them known to your servant.

22"How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you! 23What other nation on earth is like your people Israel? What other nation, O God, have you redeemed from slavery to be your own people? You made a great name for yourself when you redeemed your people from Egypt. You performed awesome miracles and drove out the nations and gods that stood in their way.*24You made Israel your very own people forever, and you, O LORD, became their God.

25"And now, O LORD God, I am your servant; do as you have promised concerning me and my family. Confirm it as a promise that will last forever. 26And may your name be honored forever so that everyone will say, 'The LORD of Heaven's Armies is God over Israel!' And may the house of your servant David continue before you forever.

27"O LORD of Heaven's Armies, God of Israel, I have been bold enough to pray this prayer to you because you have revealed all this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings!' 28For you are God, O Sovereign LORD. Your words are

truth, and you have promised these good things to your servant.
29And now, may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so
that it may continue forever before you. For you have spoken, and
when you grant a blessing to your servant, O Sovereign LORD, it is
an eternal blessing!”



THE PEOPLE OF MOAB

2 Samuel 8

DAVID'S MILITARY VICTORIES

1After this, David defeated and subdued the Philistines by
conquering Gath, their largest town.*2David also conquered the land
of Moab. He made the people lie down on the ground in a row, and
he measured them off in groups with a length of rope. He measured
off two groups to be executed for every one group to be spared. The
Moabites who were spared became David's subjects and paid him
tribute money.

3David also destroyed the forces of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of
Zobah, when Hadadezer marched out to strengthen his control
along the Euphrates River. 4David captured 1,000 chariots, 7,000
charioteers,* and 20,000 foot soldiers. He crippled all the chariot

horses except enough for 100 chariots.

5When Arameans from Damascus arrived to help King Hadadezer,
David killed 22,000 of them. 6Then he placed several army
garrisons in Damascus, the Aramean capital, and the Arameans
became David's subjects and paid him tribute money. So the LORD
made David victorious wherever he went.

7David brought the gold shields of Hadadezer's officers to
Jerusalem, 8along with a large amount of bronze from Hadadezer's
towns of Tebah* and Berothai.

9When King Toi of Hamath heard that David had destroyed the
entire army of Hadadezer, 10he sent his son Joram to congratulate
King David for his successful campaign. Hadadezer and Toi had
been enemies and were often at war. Joram presented David with
many gifts of silver, gold, and bronze.

11King David dedicated all these gifts to the LORD, as he did with
the silver and gold from the other nations he had defeated—12from
Edom,* Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek—and from Hadadezer
son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13So David became even more famous when he returned from
destroying 18,000 Edomites* in the Valley of Salt. 14He placed army
garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became David's
subjects. In fact, the LORD made David victorious wherever he
went.

15So David reigned over all Israel and did what was just and right
for all his people. 16Joab son of Zeruiah was commander of the
army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the royal historian. 17Zadok
son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were the priests.
Seraiah was the court secretary. 18Benaiah son of Jehoiada was
captain of the king's bodyguard.* And David's sons served as

priestly leaders.*

2 Samuel 9

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

1One day David asked, "Is anyone in Saul's family still alive—
anyone to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" 2He
summoned a man named Ziba, who had been one of Saul's servants.

“Are you Ziba?” the king asked.

“Yes sir, I am,” Ziba replied.

3The king then asked him, “Is anyone still alive from Saul’s family? If so, I want to show God’s kindness to them.”

Ziba replied, “Yes, one of Jonathan’s sons is still alive. He is crippled in both feet.”

4“Where is he?” the king asked.

“In Lo-debar,” Ziba told him, “at the home of Makir son of Ammiel.”

5So David sent for him and brought him from Makir’s home. 6His name was Mephibosheth*; he was Jonathan’s son and Saul’s grandson. When he came to David, he bowed low to the ground in deep respect. David said, “Greetings, Mephibosheth.”

Mephibosheth replied, “I am your servant.”

7“Don’t be afraid!” David said. “I intend to show kindness to you because of my promise to your father, Jonathan. I will give you all the property that once belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will eat here with me at the king’s table!”

8Mephibosheth bowed respectfully and exclaimed, “Who is your servant, that you should show such kindness to a dead dog like me?”

9Then the king summoned Saul’s servant Ziba and said, “I have given your master’s grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. 10You and your sons and servants are to farm the land for him to produce food for your master’s household.* But Mephibosheth, your master’s grandson, will eat here at my table.” (Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)

11Ziba replied, “Yes, my lord the king; I am your servant, and I will
do all that you have commanded.” And from that time on,
Mephibosheth ate regularly at David’s table,* like one of the king’s
own sons.

12Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. From then on, all the
members of Ziba’s household were Mephibosheth’s servants. 13And
Mephibosheth, who was crippled in both feet, lived in Jerusalem
and ate regularly at the king’s table.

2 Samuel 10

DAVID DEFEATS THE AMMONITES

1Some time after this, King Nahash* of the Ammonites died, and his
son Hanun became king. 2David said, “I am going to show loyalty to
Hanun just as his father, Nahash, was always loyal to me.” So David
sent ambassadors to express sympathy to Hanun about his father’s
death.

But when David’s ambassadors arrived in the land of Ammon, 3the
Ammonite commanders said to Hanun, their master, “Do you really
think these men are coming here to honor your father? No! David
has sent them to spy out the city so they can come in and conquer
it!” 4So Hanun seized David’s ambassadors and shaved off half of
each man’s beard, cut off their robes at the buttocks, and sent them
back to David in shame.

5When David heard what had happened, he sent messengers to tell
the men, “Stay at Jericho until your beards grow out, and then
come back.” For they felt deep shame because of their appearance.

6When the people of Ammon realized how seriously they had
angered David, they sent and hired 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers
from the lands of Beth-rehob and Zobah, 1,000 from the king of
Maacah, and 12,000 from the land of Tob. 7When David heard
about this, he sent Joab and all his warriors to fight them. 8The
Ammonite troops came out and drew up their battle lines at the
entrance of the city gate, while the Arameans from Zobah and
Rehob and the men from Tob and Maacah positioned themselves to
fight in the open fields.

9When Joab saw that he would have to fight on both the front and
the rear, he chose some of Israel’s elite troops and placed them
under his personal command to fight the Arameans in the fields.
10He left the rest of the army under the command of his brother
Abishai, who was to attack the Ammonites. 11“If the Arameans are
too strong for me, then come over and help me,” Joab told his
brother. “And if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come
and help you. 12Be courageous! Let us fight bravely for our people
and the cities of our God. May the LORD’s will be done.”

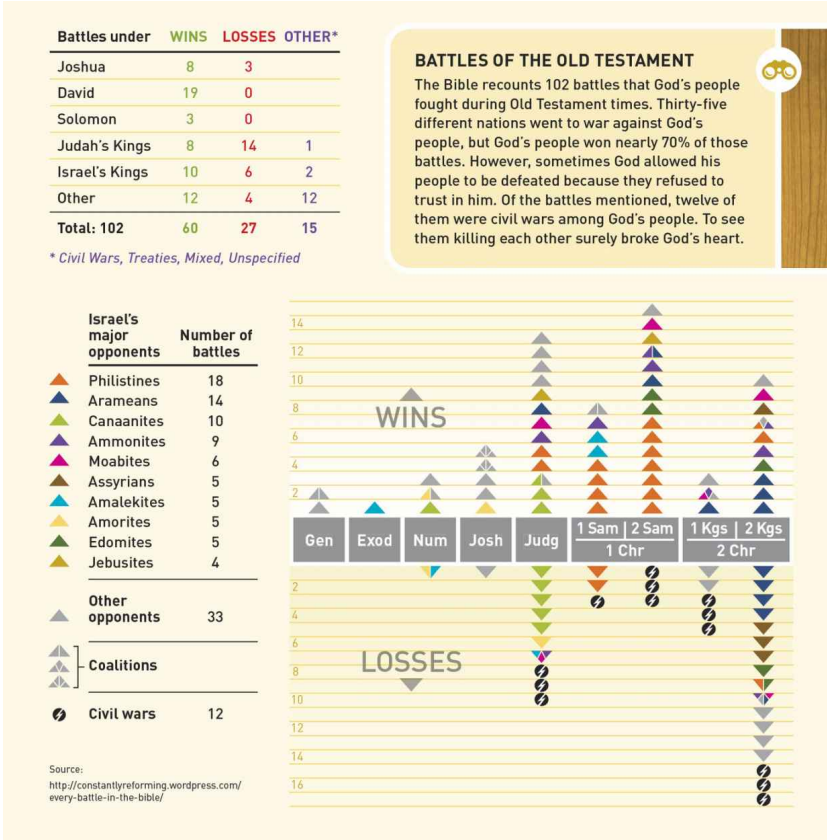
13When Joab and his troops attacked, the Arameans began to run
away. 14And when the Ammonites saw the Arameans running, they
ran from Abishai and retreated into the city. After the battle was
over, Joab returned to Jerusalem.

15The Arameans now realized that they were no match for Israel. So
when they regrouped, 16they were joined by additional Aramean
troops summoned by Hadadezer from the other side of the
Euphrates River.* These troops arrived at Helam under the
command of Shobach, the commander of Hadadezer’s forces.

17When David heard what was happening, he mobilized all Israel,
crossed the Jordan River, and led the army to Helam. The Arameans

positioned themselves in battle formation and fought against David.
18But again the Arameans fled from the Israelites. This time David's
forces killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers,* including
Shobach, the commander of their army. 19When all the kings allied
with Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they
surrendered to Israel and became their subjects. After that, the
Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites.

JESUS' FAMILY 2 SAMUEL 11:1-27



BATTLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

2 Samuel 11

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

1In the spring of the year,* when kings normally go out to war,
David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight the Ammonites.
They destroyed the Ammonite army and laid siege to the city of
Rabbah. However, David stayed behind in Jerusalem.

2Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and
was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the

city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. 3He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” 4Then David sent messengers to get her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her. She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period. Then she returned home. 5Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent David a message, saying, “I’m pregnant.”

6Then David sent word to Joab: “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” So Joab sent him to David. 7When Uriah arrived, David asked him how Joab and the army were getting along and how the war was progressing. 8Then he told Uriah, “Go on home and relax.*” David even sent a gift to Uriah after he had left the palace. 9But Uriah didn’t go home. He slept that night at the palace entrance with the king’s palace guard.

10When David heard that Uriah had not gone home, he summoned him and asked, “What’s the matter? Why didn’t you go home last night after being away for so long?”

11Uriah replied, “The Ark and the armies of Israel and Judah are living in tents,* and Joab and my master’s men are camping in the open fields. How could I go home to wine and dine and sleep with my wife? I swear that I would never do such a thing.”

12“Well, stay here today,” David told him, “and tomorrow you may return to the army.” So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13Then David invited him to dinner and got him drunk. But even then he couldn’t get Uriah to go home to his wife. Again he slept at the palace entrance with the king’s palace guard.

DAVID ARRANGES FOR URIAH’S DEATH

14So the next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and gave it to Uriah to deliver. 15The letter instructed Joab, “Station Uriah on the

front lines where the battle is fiercest. Then pull back so that he will be killed.” 16So Joab assigned Uriah to a spot close to the city wall where he knew the enemy’s strongest men were fighting. 17And when the enemy soldiers came out of the city to fight, Uriah the Hittite was killed along with several other Israelite soldiers.

18Then Joab sent a battle report to David. 19He told his messenger, “Report all the news of the battle to the king. 20But he might get angry and ask, ‘Why did the troops go so close to the city? Didn’t they know there would be shooting from the walls? 21Wasn’t Abimelech son of Gideon* killed at Thebez by a woman who threw a millstone down on him from the wall? Why would you get so close to the wall?’ Then tell him, ‘Uriah the Hittite was killed, too.’”

22So the messenger went to Jerusalem and gave a complete report to David. 23“The enemy came out against us in the open fields,” he said. “And as we chased them back to the city gate, 24the archers on the wall shot arrows at us. Some of the king’s men were killed, including Uriah the Hittite.”

25“Well, tell Joab not to be discouraged,” David said. “The sword devours this one today and that one tomorrow! Fight harder next time, and conquer the city!”

26When Uriah’s wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. 27When the period of mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to the palace, and she became one of his wives. Then she gave birth to a son. But the LORD was displeased with what David had done.

2 Samuel 12

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID

1So the LORD sent Nathan the prophet to tell David this story:
"There were two men in a certain town. One was rich, and one was
poor. 2The rich man owned a great many sheep and cattle. 3The
poor man owned nothing but one little lamb he had bought. He
raised that little lamb, and it grew up with his children. It ate from
the man's own plate and drank from his cup. He cuddled it in his
arms like a baby daughter. 4One day a guest arrived at the home of
the rich man. But instead of killing an animal from his own flock or
herd, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and prepared it for
his guest."

5David was furious. "As surely as the LORD lives," he vowed, "any
man who would do such a thing deserves to die! 6He must repay
four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no
pity."

7Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man! The LORD, the God
of Israel, says: I anointed you king of Israel and saved you from the

power of Saul. 8I gave you your master's house and his wives and
the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough,
I would have given you much, much more. 9Why, then, have you
despised the word of the LORD and done this horrible deed? For
you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the
Ammonites and stolen his wife. 10From this time on, your family
will live by the sword because you have despised me by taking
Uriah's wife to be your own.

11"This is what the LORD says: Because of what you have done, I
will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your
wives to another man before your very eyes, and he will go to bed
with them in public view. 12You did it secretly, but I will make this
happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel."

DAVID CONFESSES HIS GUILT

13Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the
LORD."

Nathan replied, "Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you, and you
won't die for this sin. 14Nevertheless, because you have shown utter
contempt for the word of the LORD* by doing this, your child will
die."

15After Nathan returned to his home, the LORD sent a deadly illness
to the child of David and Uriah's wife. 16David begged God to spare
the child. He went without food and lay all night on the bare
ground. 17The elders of his household pleaded with him to get up
and eat with them, but he refused.

18Then on the seventh day the child died. David's advisers were
afraid to tell him. "He wouldn't listen to reason while the child was
ill," they said. "What drastic thing will he do when we tell him the
child is dead?"

19When David saw them whispering, he realized what had

happened. “Is the child dead?” he asked.

“Yes,” they replied, “he is dead.”

20Then David got up from the ground, washed himself, put on
lotions,* and changed his clothes. He went to the Tabernacle and
worshiped the LORD. After that, he returned to the palace and was
served food and ate.

21His advisers were amazed. “We don’t understand you,” they told
him. “While the child was still living, you wept and refused to eat.
But now that the child is dead, you have stopped your mourning
and are eating again.”

22David replied, “I fasted and wept while the child was alive, for I
said, ‘Perhaps the LORD will be gracious to me and let the child
live.’ 23But why should I fast when he is dead? Can I bring him back
again? I will go to him one day, but he cannot return to me.”

24Then David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and slept with her.
She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and David* named
him Solomon. The LORD loved the child 25and sent word through
Nathan the prophet that they should name him Jedidiah (which
means “beloved of the LORD”), as the LORD had commanded.*

DAVID CAPTURES RABBAH

26Meanwhile, Joab was fighting against Rabbah, the capital of
Ammon, and he captured the royal fortifications.*27Joab sent
messengers to tell David, “I have fought against Rabbah and
captured its water supply.*28Now bring the rest of the army and
capture the city. Otherwise, I will capture it and get credit for the
victory.”

29So David gathered the rest of the army and went to Rabbah, and
he fought against it and captured it. 30David removed the crown
from the king’s head,* and it was placed on his own head. The
crown was made of gold and set with gems, and it weighed seventy-
five pounds.* David took a vast amount of plunder from the city.
31He also made slaves of the people of Rabbah and forced them to
labor with* saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and to work in the brick
kilns.* That is how he dealt with the people of all the Ammonite
towns. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 13

THE RAPE OF TAMAR

1Now David’s son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar. And
Amnon, her half brother, fell desperately in love with her. 2Amnon
became so obsessed with Tamar that he became ill. She was a
virgin, and Amnon thought he could never have her.

3But Amnon had a very crafty friend—his cousin Jonadab. He was
the son of David’s brother Shimea.*4One day Jonadab said to
Amnon, “What’s the trouble? Why should the son of a king look so
dejected morning after morning?”

So Amnon told him, “I am in love with Tamar, my brother
Absalom’s sister.”

5“Well,” Jonadab said, “I’ll tell you what to do. Go back to bed and
pretend you are ill. When your father comes to see you, ask him to

let Tamar come and prepare some food for you. Tell him you'll feel better if she prepares it as you watch and feeds you with her own hands."

6So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. And when the king came to see him, Amnon asked him, "Please let my sister Tamar come and cook my favorite dish* as I watch. Then I can eat it from her own hands." 7So David agreed and sent Tamar to Amnon's house to prepare some food for him.

8When Tamar arrived at Amnon's house, she went to the place where he was lying down so he could watch her mix some dough. Then she baked his favorite dish for him. 9But when she set the serving tray before him, he refused to eat. "Everyone get out of here," Amnon told his servants. So they all left.

10Then he said to Tamar, "Now bring the food into my bedroom and feed it to me here." So Tamar took his favorite dish to him. 11But as she was feeding him, he grabbed her and demanded, "Come to bed with me, my darling sister."

12"No, my brother!" she cried. "Don't be foolish! Don't do this to me! Such wicked things aren't done in Israel. 13Where could I go in my shame? And you would be called one of the greatest fools in Israel. Please, just speak to the king about it, and he will let you marry me."

14But Amnon wouldn't listen to her, and since he was stronger than she was, he raped her. 15Then suddenly Amnon's love turned to hate, and he hated her even more than he had loved her. "Get out of here!" he snarled at her.

16"No, no!" Tamar cried. "Sending me away now is worse than what you've already done to me."

But Amnon wouldn't listen to her. 17He shouted for his servant and demanded, "Throw this woman out, and lock the door behind her!"

18So the servant put her out and locked the door behind her. She was wearing a long, beautiful robe,* as was the custom in those days for the king's virgin daughters. 19But now Tamar tore her robe and put ashes on her head. And then, with her face in her hands, she went away crying.

20Her brother Absalom saw her and asked, "Is it true that Amnon has been with you? Well, my sister, keep quiet for now, since he's your brother. Don't you worry about it." So Tamar lived as a desolate woman in her brother Absalom's house.

21When King David heard what had happened, he was very angry.*22And though Absalom never spoke to Amnon about this, he hated Amnon deeply because of what he had done to his sister.

ABSALOM'S REVENGE ON AMNON

23Two years later, when Absalom's sheep were being sheared at Baal-hazor near Ephraim, Absalom invited all the king's sons to come to a feast. 24He went to the king and said, "My sheep-shearers are now at work. Would the king and his servants please come to celebrate the occasion with me?"

25The king replied, "No, my son. If we all came, we would be too much of a burden on you." Absalom pressed him, but the king would not come, though he gave Absalom his blessing.

26"Well, then," Absalom said, "if you can't come, how about sending my brother Amnon with us?"

"Why Amnon?" the king asked. 27But Absalom kept on pressing the

king until he finally agreed to let all his sons attend, including Amnon. So Absalom prepared a feast fit for a king.*

28Absalom told his men, “Wait until Amnon gets drunk; then at my signal, kill him! Don’t be afraid. I’m the one who has given the command. Take courage and do it!” 29So at Absalom’s signal they murdered Amnon. Then the other sons of the king jumped on their mules and fled.

30As they were on the way back to Jerusalem, this report reached David: “Absalom has killed all the king’s sons; not one is left alive!” 31The king got up, tore his robe, and threw himself on the ground. His advisers also tore their clothes in horror and sorrow.

32But just then Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimea, arrived and said, “No, don’t believe that all the king’s sons have been killed! It was only Amnon! Absalom has been plotting this ever since Amnon raped his sister Tamar. 33No, my lord the king, your sons aren’t all dead! It was only Amnon.” 34Meanwhile Absalom escaped.

Then the watchman on the Jerusalem wall saw a great crowd coming down the hill on the road from the west. He ran to tell the king, “I see a crowd of people coming from the Horonaim road along the side of the hill.”*

35“Look!” Jonadab told the king. “There they are now! The king’s sons are coming, just as I said.”

36They soon arrived, weeping and sobbing, and the king and all his servants wept bitterly with them. 37And David mourned many days for his son Amnon.

Absalom fled to his grandfather, Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. 38He stayed there in Geshur for three years. 39And King David,* now reconciled to Amnon’s death, longed to be reunited with his son Absalom.*

2 Samuel 14

JOAB ARRANGES FOR ABSALOM'S RETURN

1Joab realized how much the king longed to see Absalom. 2So he sent for a woman from Tekoa who had a reputation for great wisdom. He said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning; wear mourning clothes and don't put on lotions.* Act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time. 3Then go to the king and tell him the story I am about to tell you." Then Joab told her what to say.

4When the woman from Tekoa approached* the king, she bowed with her face to the ground in deep respect and cried out, "O king! Help me!"

5"What's the trouble?" the king asked.

"Alas, I am a widow!" she replied. "My husband is dead. 6My two sons had a fight out in the field. And since no one was there to stop it, one of them was killed. 7Now the rest of the family is demanding, 'Let us have your son. We will execute him for murdering his brother. He doesn't deserve to inherit his family's property.' They want to extinguish the only coal I have left, and my husband's name and family will disappear from the face of the earth."

8"Leave it to me," the king told her. "Go home, and I'll see to it that no one touches him."

9"Oh, thank you, my lord the king," the woman from Tekoa replied. "If you are criticized for helping me, let the blame fall on me and on my father's house, and let the king and his throne be innocent."

10"If anyone objects," the king said, "bring him to me. I can assure

you he will never harm you again!”

11Then she said, “Please swear to me by the LORD your God that
you won’t let anyone take vengeance against my son. I want no
more bloodshed.”

“As surely as the LORD lives,” he replied, “not a hair on your son’s
head will be disturbed!”

12“Please allow me to ask one more thing of my lord the king,” she
said.

“Go ahead and speak,” he responded.

13She replied, “Why don’t you do as much for the people of God as
you have promised to do for me? You have convicted yourself in
making this decision, because you have refused to bring home your
own banished son. 14All of us must die eventually. Our lives are like
water spilled out on the ground, which cannot be gathered up
again. But God does not just sweep life away; instead, he devises
ways to bring us back when we have been separated from him.

15“I have come to plead with my lord the king because people have
threatened me. I said to myself, ‘Perhaps the king will listen to me
16and rescue us from those who would cut us off from the
inheritance* God has given us. 17Yes, my lord the king will give us
peace of mind again.’ I know that you are like an angel of God in
discerning good from evil. May the LORD your God be with you.”

18“I must know one thing,” the king replied, “and tell me the truth.”

“Yes, my lord the king,” she responded.

19“Did Joab put you up to this?”

And the woman replied, “My lord the king, how can I deny it?
Nobody can hide anything from you. Yes, Joab sent me and told me

what to say. 20He did it to place the matter before you in a different light. But you are as wise as an angel of God, and you understand everything that happens among us!”

21So the king sent for Joab and told him, “All right, go and bring back the young man Absalom.”

22Joab bowed with his face to the ground in deep respect and said, “At last I know that I have gained your approval, my lord the king, for you have granted me this request!”

23Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. 24But the king gave this order: “Absalom may go to his own house, but he must never come into my presence.” So Absalom did not see the king.

ABSALOM RECONCILED TO DAVID

25Now Absalom was praised as the most handsome man in all Israel. He was flawless from head to foot. 26He cut his hair only once a year, and then only because it was so heavy. When he weighed it out, it came to five pounds!* 27He had three sons and one daughter. His daughter’s name was Tamar, and she was very beautiful.

28Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years, but he never got to see the king. 29Then Absalom sent for Joab to ask him to intercede for him, but Joab refused to come. Absalom sent for him a second time, but again Joab refused to come. 30So Absalom said to his servants, “Go and set fire to Joab’s barley field, the field next to mine.” So they set his field on fire, as Absalom had commanded.

31Then Joab came to Absalom at his house and demanded, “Why did your servants set my field on fire?”

32And Absalom replied, “Because I wanted you to ask the king why
he brought me back from Geshur if he didn’t intend to see me. I
might as well have stayed there. Let me see the king; if he finds me
guilty of anything, then let him kill me.”

33So Joab told the king what Absalom had said. Then at last David
summoned Absalom, who came and bowed low before the king, and
the king kissed him.

2 Samuel 15

ABSALOM’S REBELLION

1After this, Absalom bought a chariot and horses, and he hired fifty
bodyguards to run ahead of him. 2He got up early every morning
and went out to the gate of the city. When people brought a case to
the king for judgment, Absalom would ask where in Israel they
were from, and they would tell him their tribe. 3Then Absalom
would say, “You’ve really got a strong case here! It’s too bad the
king doesn’t have anyone to hear it. 4I wish I were the judge. Then
everyone could bring their cases to me for judgment, and I would
give them justice!”

5When people tried to bow before him, Absalom wouldn't let them.
Instead, he took them by the hand and kissed them. 6Absalom did
this with everyone who came to the king for judgment, and so he
stole the hearts of all the people of Israel.

7After four years,* Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron
to offer a sacrifice to the LORD and fulfill a vow I made to him. 8For
while your servant was at Geshur in Aram, I promised to sacrifice to
the LORD in Hebron* if he would bring me back to Jerusalem."

9"All right," the king told him. "Go and fulfill your vow."

So Absalom went to Hebron. 10But while he was there, he sent
secret messengers to all the tribes of Israel to stir up a rebellion
against the king. "As soon as you hear the ram's horn," his message
read, "you are to say, 'Absalom has been crowned king in Hebron.'"
11He took 200 men from Jerusalem with him as guests, but they
knew nothing of his intentions. 12While Absalom was offering the
sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel, one of David's counselors who
lived in Giloh. Soon many others also joined Absalom, and the
conspiracy gained momentum.

DAVID ESCAPES FROM JERUSALEM

13A messenger soon arrived in Jerusalem to tell David, "All Israel
has joined Absalom in a conspiracy against you!"

14"Then we must flee at once, or it will be too late!" David urged his
men. "Hurry! If we get out of the city before Absalom arrives, both
we and the city of Jerusalem will be spared from disaster."

15"We are with you," his advisers replied. "Do what you think is
best."

16So the king and all his household set out at once. He left no one

behind except ten of his concubines to look after the palace. 17The
king and all his people set out on foot, pausing at the last house 18to
let all the king's men move past to lead the way. There were 600
men from Gath who had come with David, along with the king's
bodyguard.*

19Then the king turned and said to Ittai, a leader of the men from
Gath, "Why are you coming with us? Go on back to King Absalom,
for you are a guest in Israel, a foreigner in exile. 20You arrived only
recently, and should I force you today to wander with us? I don't
even know where we will go. Go on back and take your kinsmen
with you, and may the LORD show you his unfailing love and
faithfulness.*"

21But Ittai said to the king, "I vow by the LORD and by your own
life that I will go wherever my lord the king goes, no matter what
happens—whether it means life or death."

22David replied, "All right, come with us." So Ittai and all his men
and their families went along.

THE KIDRON VALLEY

23Everyone cried loudly as the king and his followers passed by.
They crossed the Kidron Valley and then went out toward the
wilderness.

24Zadok and all the Levites also came along, carrying the Ark of the
Covenant of God. They set down the Ark of God, and Abiathar
offered sacrifices* until everyone had passed out of the city.

25Then the king instructed Zadok to take the Ark of God back into
the city. “If the LORD sees fit,” David said, “he will bring me back
to see the Ark and the Tabernacle* again. 26But if he is through with
me, then let him do what seems best to him.”

27The king also told Zadok the priest, “Look,* here is my plan. You
and Abiathar* should return quietly to the city with your son
Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan. 28I will stop at the shallows
of the Jordan River* and wait there for a report from you.” 29So
Zadok and Abiathar took the Ark of God back to the city and stayed
there.

30David walked up the road to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he
went. His head was covered and his feet were bare as a sign of
mourning. And the people who were with him covered their heads
and wept as they climbed the hill. 31When someone told David that
his adviser Ahithophel was now backing Absalom, David prayed, “O
LORD, let Ahithophel give Absalom foolish advice!”

32When David reached the summit of the Mount of Olives where
people worshiped God, Hushai the Arkite was waiting there for
him. Hushai had torn his clothing and put dirt on his head as a sign
of mourning. 33But David told him, “If you go with me, you will

only be a burden. 34Return to Jerusalem and tell Absalom, 'I will
now be your adviser, O king, just as I was your father's adviser in
the past.' Then you can frustrate and counter Ahithophel's advice.
35Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, will be there. Tell them about the
plans being made in the king's palace, 36and they will send their
sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan to tell me what is going on."

37So David's friend Hushai returned to Jerusalem, getting there just
as Absalom arrived.

2 Samuel 16

DAVID AND ZIBA

1When David had gone a little beyond the summit of the Mount of
Olives, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth,* was waiting there for
him. He had two donkeys loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100
clusters of raisins, 100 bunches of summer fruit, and a wineskin full
of wine.

2"What are these for?" the king asked Ziba.

Ziba replied, "The donkeys are for the king's people to ride on, and
the bread and summer fruit are for the young men to eat. The wine
is for those who become exhausted in the wilderness."

3"And where is Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson?" the king asked
him.

“He stayed in Jerusalem,” Ziba replied. “He said, ‘Today I will get back the kingdom of my grandfather Saul.’”

4“In that case,” the king told Ziba, “I give you everything Mephibosheth owns.”

“I bow before you,” Ziba replied. “May I always be pleasing to you, my lord the king.”

SHIMEI CURSES DAVID

5As King David came to Bahurim, a man came out of the village cursing them. It was Shimei son of Gera, from the same clan as Saul’s family. 6He threw stones at the king and the king’s officers and all the mighty warriors who surrounded him. 7“Get out of here, you murderer, you scoundrel!” he shouted at David. 8“The LORD is paying you back for all the bloodshed in Saul’s clan. You stole his throne, and now the LORD has given it to your son Absalom. At last you will taste some of your own medicine, for you are a murderer!”

9“Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?” Abishai son of Zeruiah demanded. “Let me go over and cut off his head!”

10“No!” the king said. “Who asked your opinion, you sons of Zeruiah! If the LORD has told him to curse me, who are you to stop him?”

11Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “My own son is trying to kill me. Doesn’t this relative of Saul* have even more reason to do so? Leave him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to do it. 12And perhaps the LORD will see that I am being wronged* and will bless me because of these curses today.” 13So David and his men continued down the road, and Shimei kept pace with them on a nearby hillside, cursing and throwing stones and dirt at David.

14The king and all who were with him grew weary along the way,
so they rested when they reached the Jordan River.*

AHITHOPHEL ADVISES ABSALOM

15Meanwhile, Absalom and all the army of Israel arrived at
Jerusalem, accompanied by Ahithophel. 16When David's friend
Hushai the Arkite arrived, he went immediately to see Absalom.
"Long live the king!" he exclaimed. "Long live the king!"

17"Is this the way you treat your friend David?" Absalom asked him.
"Why aren't you with him?"

18"I'm here because I belong to the man who is chosen by the LORD
and by all the men of Israel," Hushai replied. 19"And anyway, why
shouldn't I serve you? Just as I was your father's adviser, now I will
be your adviser!"

20Then Absalom turned to Ahithophel and asked him, "What should
I do next?"

21Ahithophel told him, "Go and sleep with your father's concubines,
for he has left them here to look after the palace. Then all Israel will
know that you have insulted your father beyond hope of
reconciliation, and they will throw their support to you." 22So they
set up a tent on the palace roof where everyone could see it, and
Absalom went in and had sex with his father's concubines.

23Absalom followed Ahithophel's advice, just as David had done.
For every word Ahithophel spoke seemed as wise as though it had
come directly from the mouth of God.

1Now Ahithophel urged Absalom, “Let me choose 12,000 men to
start out after David tonight. 2I will catch up with him while he is
weary and discouraged. He and his troops will panic, and everyone
will run away. Then I will kill only the king, 3and I will bring all the
people back to you as a bride returns to her husband. After all, it is
only one man’s life that you seek.* Then you will be at peace with
all the people.” 4This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the
elders of Israel.

HUSHAI COUNTERS AHITHOPHEL’S ADVICE

5But then Absalom said, “Bring in Hushai the Arkite. Let’s see what
he thinks about this.” 6When Hushai arrived, Absalom told him
what Ahithophel had said. Then he asked, “What is your opinion?
Should we follow Ahithophel’s advice? If not, what do you
suggest?”

7“Well,” Hushai replied to Absalom, “this time Ahithophel has made
a mistake. 8You know your father and his men; they are mighty
warriors. Right now they are as enraged as a mother bear who has
been robbed of her cubs. And remember that your father is an
experienced man of war. He won’t be spending the night among the
troops. 9He has probably already hidden in some pit or cave. And
when he comes out and attacks and a few of your men fall, there
will be panic among your troops, and the word will spread that
Absalom’s men are being slaughtered. 10Then even the bravest
soldiers, though they have the heart of a lion, will be paralyzed
with fear. For all Israel knows what a mighty warrior your father is
and how courageous his men are.

11“I recommend that you mobilize the entire army of Israel,
bringing them from as far away as Dan in the north and Beersheba
in the south. That way you will have an army as numerous as the
sand on the seashore. And I advise that you personally lead the
troops. 12When we find David, we’ll fall on him like dew that falls
on the ground. Then neither he nor any of his men will be left alive.
13And if David were to escape into some town, you will have all
Israel there at your command. Then we can take ropes and drag the

walls of the town into the nearest valley until every stone is torn down."

14Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "Hushai's advice is better than Ahithophel's." For the LORD had determined to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, which really was the better plan, so that he could bring disaster on Absalom!

HUSHAI WARNS DAVID TO ESCAPE

15Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, what Ahithophel had said to Absalom and the elders of Israel and what he himself had advised instead. 16"Quick!" he told them. "Find David and urge him not to stay at the shallows of the Jordan River* tonight. He must go across at once into the wilderness beyond. Otherwise he will die and his entire army with him."

17Jonathan and Ahimaaz had been staying at En-rogel so as not to be seen entering and leaving the city. Arrangements had been made for a servant girl to bring them the message they were to take to King David. 18But a boy spotted them at En-rogel, and he told Absalom about it. So they quickly escaped to Bahurim, where a man hid them down inside a well in his courtyard. 19The man's wife put a cloth over the top of the well and scattered grain on it to dry in the sun; so no one suspected they were there.

20When Absalom's men arrived, they asked her, "Have you seen Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

The woman replied, "They were here, but they crossed over the brook." Absalom's men looked for them without success and returned to Jerusalem.

21Then the two men crawled out of the well and hurried on to King David. "Quick!" they told him, "cross the Jordan tonight!" And they told him how Ahithophel had advised that he be captured and killed. 22So David and all the people with him went across the

Jordan River during the night, and they were all on the other bank before dawn.

23When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey, went to his hometown, set his affairs in order, and hanged himself. He died there and was buried in the family tomb.

24David soon arrived at Mahanaim. By now, Absalom had mobilized the entire army of Israel and was leading his troops across the Jordan River. 25Absalom had appointed Amasa as commander of his army, replacing Joab, who had been commander under David. (Amasa was Joab's cousin. His father was Jether,* an Ishmaelite.* His mother, Abigail daughter of Nahash, was the sister of Joab's mother, Zeruiah.) 26Absalom and the Israelite army set up camp in the land of Gilead.

27When David arrived at Mahanaim, he was warmly greeted by Shobi son of Nahash, who came from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and by Makir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and by Barzillai of Gilead from Rogelim. 28They brought sleeping mats, cooking pots, serving bowls, wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans, lentils, 29honey, butter, sheep, goats, and cheese for David and those who were with him. For they said, "You must all be very hungry and tired and thirsty after your long march through the wilderness."

2 Samuel 18

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

1 David now mustered the men who were with him and appointed
generals and captains* to lead them. 2 He sent the troops out in three
groups, placing one group under Joab, one under Joab's brother
Abishai son of Zeruiah, and one under Ittai, the man from Gath. The
king told his troops, "I am going out with you."

3 But his men objected strongly. "You must not go," they urged. "If
we have to turn and run—and even if half of us die—it will make
no difference to Absalom's troops; they will be looking only for you.
You are worth 10,000 of us,* and it is better that you stay here in
the town and send help if we need it."

4 "If you think that's the best plan, I'll do it," the king answered. So
he stood alongside the gate of the town as all the troops marched
out in groups of hundreds and of thousands.

5And the king gave this command to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai: “For my sake, deal gently with young Absalom.” And all the troops heard the king give this order to his commanders.

6So the battle began in the forest of Ephraim, 7and the Israelite troops were beaten back by David’s men. There was a great slaughter that day, and 20,000 men laid down their lives. 8The battle raged all across the countryside, and more men died because of the forest than were killed by the sword.

9During the battle, Absalom happened to come upon some of David’s men. He tried to escape on his mule, but as he rode beneath the thick branches of a great tree, his hair* got caught in the tree. His mule kept going and left him dangling in the air. 10One of David’s men saw what had happened and told Joab, “I saw Absalom dangling from a great tree.”

11“What?” Joab demanded. “You saw him there and didn’t kill him? I would have rewarded you with ten pieces of silver* and a hero’s belt!”

12“I would not kill the king’s son for even a thousand pieces of silver,*” the man replied to Joab. “We all heard the king say to you and Abishai and Ittai, ‘For my sake, please spare young Absalom.’ 13And if I had betrayed the king by killing his son—and the king would certainly find out who did it—you yourself would be the first to abandon me.”

14“Enough of this nonsense,” Joab said. Then he took three daggers and plunged them into Absalom’s heart as he dangled, still alive, in the great tree. 15Ten of Joab’s young armor bearers then surrounded Absalom and killed him.

16Then Joab blew the ram's horn, and his men returned from
chasing the army of Israel. 17They threw Absalom's body into a deep
pit in the forest and piled a great heap of stones over it. And all
Israel fled to their homes.

ABSALOM'S MONUMENT

18During his lifetime, Absalom had built a monument to himself in
the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to carry on my name."
He named the monument after himself, and it is known as
Absalom's Monument to this day.

DAVID MOURNS ABSALOM'S DEATH

19Then Zadok's son Ahimaaz said, "Let me run to the king with the
good news that the LORD has rescued him from his enemies."

20"No," Joab told him, "it wouldn't be good news to the king that
his son is dead. You can be my messenger another time, but not
today."

21Then Joab said to a man from Ethiopia,* "Go tell the king what
you have seen." The man bowed and ran off.

22But Ahimaaz continued to plead with Joab, "Whatever happens,
please let me go, too."

"Why should you go, my son?" Joab replied. "There will be no
reward for your news."

THE CITY OF MAHANAIM

23"Yes, but let me go anyway," he begged.

Joab finally said, "All right, go ahead." So Ahimaaz took the less demanding route by way of the plain and ran to Mahanaim ahead of the Ethiopian.

24While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates of the town, the watchman climbed to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked, he saw a lone man running toward them. 25He shouted the news down to David, and the king replied, "If he is alone, he has news."

As the messenger came closer, 26the watchman saw another man running toward them. He shouted down, "Here comes another one!"

The king replied, "He also will have news."

27"The first man runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok," the watchman said.

"He is a good man and comes with good news," the king replied.

28Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, "Everything is all right!" He bowed before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise to the LORD your God, who has handed over the rebels who dared to stand against my lord the king."

29"What about young Absalom?" the king demanded. "Is he all right?"

Ahimaaz replied, "When Joab told me to come, there was a lot of

commotion. But I didn't know what was happening."

30"Wait here," the king told him. So Ahimaaz stepped aside.

31Then the man from Ethiopia arrived and said, "I have good news for my lord the king. Today the LORD has rescued you from all those who rebelled against you."

32"What about young Absalom?" the king demanded. "Is he all right?"

And the Ethiopian replied, "May all of your enemies, my lord the king, both now and in the future, share the fate of that young man!"

33*The king was overcome with emotion. He went up to the room over the gateway and burst into tears. And as he went, he cried, "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son."

2 Samuel 19

JOAB REBUKES THE KING

1*Word soon reached Joab that the king was weeping and mourning for Absalom. 2As all the people heard of the king's deep grief for his son, the joy of that day's victory was turned into deep sadness. 3They crept back into the town that day as though they were ashamed and had deserted in battle. 4The king covered his face with his hands and kept on crying, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

5Then Joab went to the king's room and said to him, "We saved your life today and the lives of your sons, your daughters, and your wives and concubines. Yet you act like this, making us feel ashamed

of ourselves. 6You seem to love those who hate you and hate those
who love you. You have made it clear today that your commanders
and troops mean nothing to you. It seems that if Absalom had lived
and all of us had died, you would be pleased. 7Now go out there and
congratulate your troops, for I swear by the LORD that if you don't
go out, not a single one of them will remain here tonight. Then you
will be worse off than ever before."

8So the king went out and took his seat at the town gate, and as the
news spread throughout the town that he was there, everyone went
to him.

Meanwhile, the Israelites who had supported Absalom fled to their
homes. 9And throughout all the tribes of Israel there was much
discussion and argument going on. The people were saying, "The
king rescued us from our enemies and saved us from the Philistines,
but Absalom chased him out of the country. 10Now Absalom, whom
we anointed to rule over us, is dead. Why not ask David to come
back and be our king again?"

11Then King David sent Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to say to
the elders of Judah, "Why are you the last ones to welcome back
the king into his palace? For I have heard that all Israel is ready.
12You are my relatives, my own tribe, my own flesh and blood! So
why are you the last ones to welcome back the king?" 13And David
told them to tell Amasa, "Since you are my own flesh and blood,
like Joab, may God strike me and even kill me if I do not appoint
you as commander of my army in his place."

14Then Amasa* convinced all the men of Judah, and they responded

unanimously. They sent word to the king, “Return to us, and bring back all who are with you.”

DAVID’S RETURN TO JERUSALEM

15So the king started back to Jerusalem. And when he arrived at the Jordan River, the people of Judah came to Gilgal to meet him and escort him across the river. 16Shimei son of Gera, the man from Bahurim in Benjamin, hurried across with the men of Judah to welcome King David. 17A thousand other men from the tribe of Benjamin were with him, including Ziba, the chief servant of the house of Saul, and Ziba’s fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed down to the Jordan to meet the king. 18They crossed the shallows of the Jordan to bring the king’s household across the river, helping him in every way they could.

DAVID’S MERCY TO SHIMEI AS THE KING WAS ABOUT TO CROSS THE RIVER, SHIMEI FELL DOWN BEFORE HIM. 19“MY LORD THE KING, PLEASE FORGIVE ME,” HE PLEADED. “FORGET THE TERRIBLE THING YOUR SERVANT DID WHEN YOU LEFT JERUSALEM. MAY THE KING PUT IT OUT OF HIS MIND. 20I KNOW HOW MUCH I SINNED. THAT IS WHY I HAVE COME HERE TODAY, THE VERY FIRST PERSON IN ALL ISRAEL* TO GREET MY LORD THE KING.”

21Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said, “Shimei should die, for he cursed the LORD’s anointed king!”

22“Who asked your opinion, you sons of Zeruiah!” David exclaimed. “Why have you become my adversary* today? This is not a day for execution, for today I am once again the king of Israel!” 23Then, turning to Shimei, David vowed, “Your life will be spared.”

DAVID’S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

24Now Mephibosheth,* Saul’s grandson, came down from Jerusalem

to meet the king. He had not cared for his feet, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes since the day the king left Jerusalem. 25"Why didn't you come with me, Mephibosheth?" the king asked him.

26Mephibosheth replied, "My lord the king, my servant Ziba deceived me. I told him, 'Saddle my donkey* so I can go with the king.' For as you know I am crippled. 27Ziba has slandered me by saying that I refused to come. But I know that my lord the king is like an angel of God, so do what you think is best. 28All my relatives and I could expect only death from you, my lord, but instead you have honored me by allowing me to eat at your own table! What more can I ask?"

29"You've said enough," David replied. "I've decided that you and Ziba will divide your land equally between you."

30"Give him all of it," Mephibosheth said. "I am content just to have you safely back again, my lord the king!"

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO BARZILLAI **31BARZILLAI OF GILEAD HAD COME DOWN FROM ROGELIM TO ESCORT THE KING ACROSS THE JORDAN. 32HE WAS VERY OLD—EIGHTY YEARS OF AGE—AND VERY WEALTHY. HE WAS THE ONE WHO HAD PROVIDED FOOD FOR THE KING DURING HIS STAY IN MAHANAIM. 33"COME ACROSS WITH ME AND LIVE IN JERUSALEM," THE KING SAID TO BARZILLAI. "I WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU THERE."**

34"No," he replied, "I am far too old to go with the king to Jerusalem. 35I am eighty years old today, and I can no longer enjoy anything. Food and wine are no longer tasty, and I cannot hear the singers as they sing. I would only be a burden to my lord the king. 36Just to go across the Jordan River with the king is all the honor I need! 37Then let me return again to die in my own town, where my father and mother are buried. But here is your servant, my son Kimham. Let him go with my lord the king and receive whatever

you want to give him.”

38“Good,” the king agreed. “Kimham will go with me, and I will help him in any way you would like. And I will do for you anything you want.” 39So all the people crossed the Jordan with the king. After David had blessed Barzillai and kissed him, Barzillai returned to his own home.

40The king then crossed over to Gilgal, taking Kimham with him. All the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel escorted the king on his way.

AN ARGUMENT OVER THE KING

41But all the men of Israel complained to the king, “The men of Judah stole the king and didn’t give us the honor of helping take you, your household, and all your men across the Jordan.”

42The men of Judah replied, “The king is one of our own kinsmen. Why should this make you angry? We haven’t eaten any of the king’s food or received any special favors!”

43“But there are ten tribes in Israel,” the others replied. “So we have ten times as much right to the king as you do. What right do you have to treat us with such contempt? Weren’t we the first to speak of bringing him back to be our king again?” The argument continued back and forth, and the men of Judah spoke even more harshly than the men of Israel.

2 Samuel 20

THE REVOLT OF SHEBA

1There happened to be a troublemaker there named Sheba son of Bicri, a man from the tribe of Benjamin. Sheba blew a ram’s horn

and began to chant: “Down with the dynasty of David!

We have no interest in the son of Jesse.
Come on, you men of Israel, back to your homes!”

2So all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of
Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed with their king and escorted him
from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

3When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten
concubines he had left to look after the palace and placed them in
seclusion. Their needs were provided for, but he no longer slept
with them. So each of them lived like a widow until she died.

4Then the king told Amasa, “Mobilize the army of Judah within
three days, and report back at that time.” 5So Amasa went out to
notify Judah, but it took him longer than the time he had been
given.

6Then David said to Abishai, “Sheba son of Bicri is going to hurt us
more than Absalom did. Quick, take my troops and chase after him
before he gets into a fortified town where we can’t reach him.”

7So Abishai and Joab,* together with the king’s bodyguard* and all
the mighty warriors, set out from Jerusalem to go after Sheba. 8As
they arrived at the great stone in Gibeon, Amasa met them. Joab
was wearing his military tunic with a dagger strapped to his belt. As
he stepped forward to greet Amasa, he slipped the dagger from its
sheath.*

9“How are you, my cousin?” Joab said and took him by the beard
with his right hand as though to kiss him. 10Amasa didn’t notice the
dagger in his left hand, and Joab stabbed him in the stomach with
it so that his insides gushed out onto the ground. Joab did not need
to strike again, and Amasa soon died. Joab and his brother Abishai
left him lying there and continued after Sheba.

11One of Joab's young men shouted to Amasa's troops, "If you are
for Joab and David, come and follow Joab." 12But Amasa lay in his
blood in the middle of the road, and Joab's man saw that everyone
was stopping to stare at him. So he pulled him off the road into a
field and threw a cloak over him. 13With Amasa's body out of the
way, everyone went on with Joab to capture Sheba son of Bicri.

14Meanwhile, Sheba traveled through all the tribes of Israel and
eventually came to the town of Abel-beth-maacah. All the members
of his own clan, the Bicrites,* assembled for battle and followed him
into the town. 15When Joab's forces arrived, they attacked Abel-
beth-maacah. They built a siege ramp against the town's
fortifications and began battering down the wall. 16But a wise
woman in the town called out to Joab, "Listen to me, Joab. Come
over here so I can talk to you." 17As he approached, the woman
asked, "Are you Joab?"

"I am," he replied.

So she said, "Listen carefully to your servant."

"I'm listening," he said.

18Then she continued, "There used to be a saying, 'If you want to
settle an argument, ask advice at the town of Abel.' 19I am one who
is peace loving and faithful in Israel. But you are destroying an
important town in Israel.* Why do you want to devour what belongs
to the LORD?"

20And Joab replied, "Believe me, I don't want to devour or destroy
your town! 21That's not my purpose. All I want is a man named
Sheba son of Bicri from the hill country of Ephraim, who has
revolted against King David. If you hand over this one man to me, I
will leave the town in peace."

"All right," the woman replied, "we will throw his head over the
wall to you." 22Then the woman went to all the people with her

wise advice, and they cut off Sheba's head and threw it out to Joab. So he blew the ram's horn and called his troops back from the attack. They all returned to their homes, and Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

23Now Joab was the commander of the army of Israel. Benaiah son of Jehoiada was captain of the king's bodyguard. 24Adoniram* was in charge of forced labor. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the royal historian. 25Sheva was the court secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. 26And Ira, a descendant of Jair, was David's personal priest.

2 Samuel 21

DAVID AVENGES THE GIBEONITES

1There was a famine during David's reign that lasted for three years, so David asked the LORD about it. And the LORD said, "The famine has come because Saul and his family are guilty of murdering the Gibeonites."

2So the king summoned the Gibeonites. They were not part of Israel but were all that was left of the nation of the Amorites. The people of Israel had sworn not to kill them, but Saul, in his zeal for Israel and Judah, had tried to wipe them out. 3David asked them, "What can I do for you? How can I make amends so that you will bless the LORD's people again?"

4"Well, money can't settle this matter between us and the family of Saul," the Gibeonites replied. "Neither can we demand the life of anyone in Israel."

"What can I do then?" David asked. "Just tell me and I will do it for you."

5Then they replied, "It was Saul who planned to destroy us, to keep

us from having any place at all in the territory of Israel. 6So let seven of Saul's sons be handed over to us, and we will execute them before the LORD at Gibeon, on the mountain of the LORD.*"

"All right," the king said, "I will do it." 7The king spared Jonathan's son Mephibosheth,* who was Saul's grandson, because of the oath David and Jonathan had sworn before the LORD. 8But he gave them Saul's two sons Armoni and Mephibosheth, whose mother was Rizpah daughter of Aiah. He also gave them the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab,* the wife of Adriel son of Barzillai from Meholah. 9The men of Gibeon executed them on the mountain before the LORD. So all seven of them died together at the beginning of the barley harvest.

10Then Rizpah daughter of Aiah, the mother of two of the men, spread burlap on a rock and stayed there the entire harvest season. She prevented the scavenger birds from tearing at their bodies during the day and stopped wild animals from eating them at night. 11When David learned what Rizpah, Saul's concubine, had done, 12he went to the people of Jabesh-gilead and retrieved the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. (When the Philistines had killed Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa, the people of Jabesh-gilead stole their bodies from the public square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hung them.) 13So David obtained the bones of Saul and Jonathan, as well as the bones of the men the Gibeonites had executed.

14Then the king ordered that they bury the bones in the tomb of Kish, Saul's father, at the town of Zela in the land of Benjamin. After that, God ended the famine in the land.

BATTLES AGAINST PHILISTINE GIANTS

15Once again the Philistines were at war with Israel. And when David and his men were in the thick of battle, David became weak and exhausted. 16Ishbi-benob was a descendant of the giants*; his bronze spearhead weighed more than seven pounds,* and he was armed with a new sword. He had cornered David and was about to

kill him. 17But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue and killed the Philistine. Then David's men declared, "You are not going out to battle with us again! Why risk snuffing out the light of Israel?"

18After this, there was another battle against the Philistines at Gob. As they fought, Sibbecai from Hushah killed Saph, another descendant of the giants.

19During another battle at Gob, Elhanan son of Jair* from Bethlehem killed the brother of Goliath of Gath.* The handle of his spear was as thick as a weaver's beam!

20In another battle with the Philistines at Gath, they encountered a huge man* with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all, who was also a descendant of the giants. 21But when he defied and taunted Israel, he was killed by Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimea.*

22These four Philistines were descendants of the giants of Gath, but David and his warriors killed them.

2 Samuel 22

DAVID'S SONG OF PRAISE

1David sang this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. 2He sang: "The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;

3my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.
He is my refuge, my savior, the one who saves me from violence.

4I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and he saved me
from my enemies.

5“The waves of death overwhelmed me; floods of destruction swept
over me.

6The grave* wrapped its ropes around me; death laid a trap in my
path.

7But in my distress I cried out to the LORD; yes, I cried to my God
for help.
He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry reached his ears.

8“Then the earth quaked and trembled.
The foundations of the heavens shook; they quaked because of his
anger.

9Smoke poured from his nostrils; fierce flames leaped from his
mouth.
Glowing coals blazed forth from him.

10He opened the heavens and came down; dark storm clouds were
beneath his feet.

11Mounted on a mighty angelic being,* he flew, soaring* on the
wings of the wind.

12He shrouded himself in darkness, veiling his approach with dense
rain clouds.

13A great brightness shone around him, and burning coals* blazed
forth.

14The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High
resounded.

15He shot arrows and scattered his enemies; his lightning flashed,
and they were confused.

16Then at the command of the LORD, at the blast of his breath, the
bottom of the sea could be seen, and the foundations of the earth
were laid bare.

17“He reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out
of deep waters.

18He rescued me from my powerful enemies, from those who hated
me and were too strong for me.

19They attacked me at a moment when I was in distress, but the
LORD supported me.

20He led me to a place of safety; he rescued me because he delights
in me.

21The LORD rewarded me for doing right; he restored me because of
my innocence.

22For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not turned from my
God to follow evil.

23I have followed all his regulations; I have never abandoned his
decrees.

24I am blameless before God; I have kept myself from sin.

25The LORD rewarded me for doing right.
He has seen my innocence.

26“To the faithful you show yourself faithful; to those with integrity
you show integrity.

27To the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show
yourself shrewd.

28You rescue the humble, but your eyes watch the proud and
humiliate them.

29O LORD, you are my lamp.
The LORD lights up my darkness.

30In your strength I can crush an army; with my God I can scale any wall.

31“God’s way is perfect.
All the LORD’s promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.

32For who is God except the LORD?
Who but our God is a solid rock?

33God is my strong fortress, and he makes my way perfect.

34He makes me as surefooted as a deer, enabling me to stand on mountain heights.

35He trains my hands for battle; he strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow.

36You have given me your shield of victory; your help* has made me great.

37You have made a wide path for my feet to keep them from slipping.

38“I chased my enemies and destroyed them; I did not stop until they were conquered.

39I consumed them; I struck them down so they did not get up; they fell beneath my feet.

40You have armed me with strength for the battle; you have subdued my enemies under my feet.

41You placed my foot on their necks.
I have destroyed all who hated me.

42They looked for help, but no one came to their rescue.
They even cried to the LORD, but he refused to answer.

43I ground them as fine as the dust of the earth; I trampled them* in

the gutter like dirt.

44“You gave me victory over my accusers.
You preserved me as the ruler over nations; people I don’t even
know now serve me.

45Foreign nations cringe before me; as soon as they hear of me, they
submit.

46They all lose their courage and come trembling* from their
strongholds.

47“The LORD lives! Praise to my Rock!
May God, the Rock of my salvation, be exalted!

48He is the God who pays back those who harm me; he brings down
the nations under me

49and delivers me from my enemies.
You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies; you save me
from violent opponents.

50For this, O LORD, I will praise you among the nations; I will sing
praises to your name.

51You give great victories to your king; you show unfailing love to
your anointed, to David and all his descendants forever.”

2 Samuel 23

DAVID’S LAST WORDS

1These are the last words of David: “David, the son of Jesse, speaks
— David, the man who was raised up so high, David, the man
anointed by the God of Jacob, David, the sweet psalmist of Israel.*

2“The Spirit of the LORD speaks through me; his words are upon my
tongue.

3The God of Israel spoke.
The Rock of Israel said to me: ‘The one who rules righteously, who rules in the fear of God,

4is like the light of morning at sunrise, like a morning without clouds, like the gleaming of the sun on new grass after rain.’

5“Is it not my family God has chosen?
Yes, he has made an everlasting covenant with me.
His agreement is arranged and guaranteed in every detail.
He will ensure my safety and success.

6But the godless are like thorns to be thrown away, for they tear the hand that touches them.

7One must use iron tools to chop them down; they will be totally consumed by fire.”

DAVID’S MIGHTIEST WARRIORS

8These are the names of David’s mightiest warriors. The first was Jashobeam the Hacmonite,* who was leader of the Three*—the three mightiest warriors among David’s men. He once used his spear to kill 800 enemy warriors in a single battle.*

9Next in rank among the Three was Eleazar son of Dodai, a descendant of Ahoah. Once Eleazar and David stood together against the Philistines when the entire Israelite army had fled. 10He killed Philistines until his hand was too tired to lift his sword, and the LORD gave him a great victory that day. The rest of the army did not return until it was time to collect the plunder!

11Next in rank was Shammah son of Agee from Harar. One time the Philistines gathered at Lehi and attacked the Israelites in a field full of lentils. The Israelite army fled, 12but Shammah* held his ground in the middle of the field and beat back the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

13Once during the harvest, when David was at the cave of Adullam,
the Philistine army was camped in the valley of Rephaim. The
Three (who were among the Thirty—an elite group among David's
fighting men) went down to meet him there. 14David was staying in
the stronghold at the time, and a Philistine detachment had
occupied the town of Bethlehem.

15David remarked longingly to his men, "Oh, how I would love
some of that good water from the well by the gate in Bethlehem."
16So the Three broke through the Philistine lines, drew some water
from the well by the gate in Bethlehem, and brought it back to
David. But he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out as an
offering to the LORD. 17"The LORD forbid that I should drink this!"
he exclaimed. "This water is as precious as the blood of these men*
who risked their lives to bring it to me." So David did not drink it.
These are examples of the exploits of the Three.

DAVID'S THIRTY MIGHTY MEN

18Abishai son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab, was the leader of the
Thirty.* He once used his spear to kill 300 enemy warriors in a
single battle. It was by such feats that he became as famous as the
Three. 19Abishai was the most famous of the Thirty* and was their
commander, though he was not one of the Three.

20There was also Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant warrior* from
Kabzeel. He did many heroic deeds, which included killing two
champions* of Moab. Another time, on a snowy day, he chased a
lion down into a pit and killed it. 21Once, armed only with a club,
he killed an imposing Egyptian warrior who was armed with a
spear. Benaiah wrenched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and
killed him with it. 22Deeds like these made Benaiah as famous as the
Three mightiest warriors. 23He was more honored than the other
members of the Thirty, though he was not one of the Three. And
David made him captain of his bodyguard.

24Other members of the Thirty included: Asahel, Joab's brother;
Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem;

25Shammah from Harod; Elika from Harod;

26Helez from Pelon*; Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa;

27Abiezer from Anathoth; Sibbecai* from Hushah;

28Zalmon from Ahoah; Maharai from Netophah;

29Heled* son of Baanah from Netophah; Ithai* son of Ribai from
Gibeah (in the land of Benjamin);

30Benaiah from Pirathon; Hurai* from Nahale-gaash*;

31Abi-albon from Arabah; Azmaveth from Bahurim;

32Eliahba from Shaalbon; the sons of Jashen; Jonathan 33son of
Shagee* from Harar; Ahiam son of Sharar from Harar;

34Eliphelet son of Ahasbai from Maacah; Eliam son of Ahithophel
from Giloh;

35Hezro from Carmel; Paarai from Arba;

36Igal son of Nathan from Zobah; Bani from Gad;

37Zelek from Ammon; Naharai from Beeroth, the armor bearer of
Joab son of Zeruiah;

38Ira from Jattir; Gareb from Jattir;

39Uriah the Hittite.

There were thirty-seven in all.

2 Samuel 24

DAVID TAKES A CENSUS

1Once again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he
caused David to harm them by taking a census. “Go and count the
people of Israel and Judah,” the LORD told him.

2So the king said to Joab and the commanders* of the army, “Take a
census of all the tribes of Israel—from Dan in the north to
Beersheba in the south—so I may know how many people there
are.”

3But Joab replied to the king, “May the LORD your God let you live
to see a hundred times as many people as there are now! But why,
my lord the king, do you want to do this?”

4But the king insisted that they take the census, so Joab and the
commanders of the army went out to count the people of Israel.
5First they crossed the Jordan and camped at Aroer, south of the

town in the valley, in the direction of Gad. Then they went on to Jazer, 6then to Gilead in the land of Tahtim-hodshi* and to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon. 7Then they came to the fortress of Tyre, and all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites. Finally, they went south to Judah* as far as Beersheba.

8Having gone through the entire land for nine months and twenty days, they returned to Jerusalem. 9Joab reported the number of people to the king. There were 800,000 capable warriors in Israel who could handle a sword, and 500,000 in Judah.

JUDGMENT FOR DAVID'S SIN

10But after he had taken the census, David's conscience began to bother him. And he said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly by taking this census. Please forgive my guilt, LORD, for doing this foolish thing."

11The next morning the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, who was David's seer. This was the message: 12"Go and say to David, 'This is what the LORD says: I will give you three choices. Choose one of these punishments, and I will inflict it on you.'"

13So Gad came to David and asked him, "Will you choose three* years of famine throughout your land, three months of fleeing from your enemies, or three days of severe plague throughout your land? Think this over and decide what answer I should give the LORD who sent me."

14"I'm in a desperate situation!" David replied to Gad. "But let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great. Do not let me fall into human hands."

15So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel that morning, and it lasted for three days.* A total of 70,000 people died throughout the nation, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. 16But as the angel was preparing to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD relented and said to the death angel, “Stop! That is enough!” At that moment the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

17When David saw the angel, he said to the LORD, “I am the one who has sinned and done wrong! But these people are as innocent as sheep—what have they done? Let your anger fall against me and my family.”

DAVID BUILDS AN ALTAR

18That day Gad came to David and said to him, “Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

19So David went up to do what the LORD had commanded him. 20When Araunah saw the king and his men coming toward him, he came and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. 21“Why have you come, my lord the king?” Araunah asked.

David replied, “I have come to buy your threshing floor and to build an altar to the LORD there, so that he will stop the plague.”

22“Take it, my lord the king, and use it as you wish,” Araunah said to David. “Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and you can use the threshing boards and ox yokes for wood to build a fire on the altar. 23I will give it all to you, Your Majesty, and may the LORD your God accept your sacrifice.”

24But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the LORD my God that have cost me nothing.” So David paid him fifty pieces of silver* for the threshing floor and the oxen.

25David built an altar there to the LORD and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the LORD answered his prayer for the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

1 Kings

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

WELCOME TO

1 KINGS

The book of 1 Kings covers some major transitions in the lives of God's people. We witness the construction of God's magnificent Temple, Solomon's great wisdom, and the prosperity of a united Israel under Solomon's leadership. Unfortunately, he strays far from God, and after his death the nation splinters into two competing kingdoms: Judah in the south and Israel in the north. The northern kingdom immediately strays even further from God, setting up their own pagan shrines and priests far away from the holy city of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Judah's kings, the descendants of David, provide a mix of good and evil leadership.

Although God is angry at the wickedness of the leaders who are supposed to represent him, he doesn't give up on his people. Rather, he pursues them by sending messengers called prophets to announce that the God of Israel is the one true God. Elijah, the greatest of these early prophets, encourages the people to return to

their covenant agreement with God and worship him alone.

3 STOPS

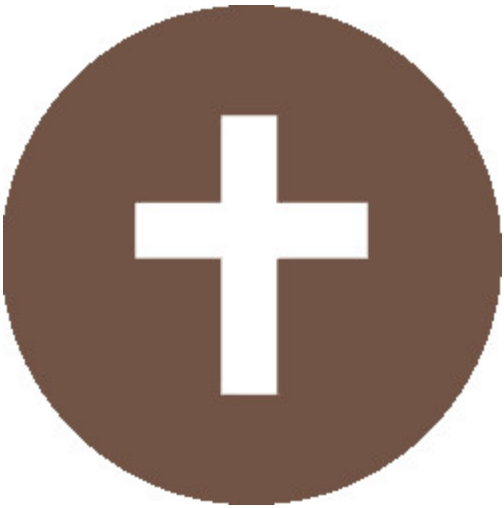
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Your three stops span a great deal of Israel's history: from King Solomon's united kingdom, to its split into two kingdoms, to the reign of King Ahab in the northern kingdom. Your next stop is at 1 Kings 3:1.

6 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your stops in 1 Kings provide a glimpse of decline in Israel. Your route begins with Solomon's glorious reign, chronicles the strife that splits the kingdom, and ends with idol worship in Israel. Your next stop is at 1 Kings 1:1.

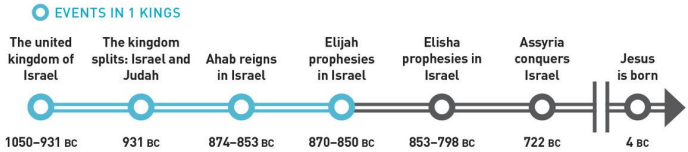
9 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your route will cover just over a hundred years of history. From the reigns of King David and King Solomon to the days of idol worship in the northern kingdom, Israel, you'll see some of the best and worst leaders of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Your next stop is at 1 Kings 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN 1 KINGS

The glorious Temple that Solomon built as an earthly place for the presence of God to dwell is a clear picture of Jesus. Jesus is the true Immanuel, "God with us," the ultimate fulfillment of the promise hinted at by the glory of God descending on the Temple (8:10-11).


EVENTS IN 1 KINGS
The united kingdom of Israel
1050–931 BC
The kingdom splits: Israel and Judah
931 BC
Ahab reigns in Israel
874–853 BC
Elijah prophesies in Israel
870–850 BC
Elisha prophesies in Israel
853–798 BC
Assyria conquers Israel
722 BC
Jesus is born
4 BC

1 Kings 1

DAVID IN HIS OLD AGE

1 King David was now very old, and no matter how many blankets
covered him, he could not keep warm. 2 So his advisers told him,
"Let us find a young virgin to wait on you and look after you, my
lord. She will lie in your arms and keep you warm."

3 So they searched throughout the land of Israel for a beautiful girl,
and they found Abishag from Shunem and brought her to the king.
4 The girl was very beautiful, and she looked after the king and took
care of him. But the king had no sexual relations with her.

ADONIJAH CLAIMS THE THRONE

5 About that time David's son Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith,
began boasting, "I will make myself king." So he provided himself
with chariots and charioteers and recruited fifty men to run in front
of him. 6 Now his father, King David, had never disciplined him at
any time, even by asking, "Why are you doing that?" Adonijah had
been born next after Absalom, and he was very handsome.

7 Adonijah took Joab son of Zeruiah and Abiathar the priest into his
confidence, and they agreed to help him become king. 8 But Zadok
the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei,
Rei, and David's personal bodyguard refused to support Adonijah.

9 Adonijah went to the Stone of Zoheleth* near the spring of En-
rogel, where he sacrificed sheep, cattle, and fattened calves. He
invited all his brothers—the other sons of King David—and all the
royal officials of Judah. 10 But he did not invite Nathan the prophet
or Benaiah or the king's bodyguard or his brother Solomon.

11 Then Nathan went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and asked
her, "Haven't you heard that Haggith's son, Adonijah, has made

himself king, and our lord David doesn't even know about it? 12If
you want to save your own life and the life of your son Solomon,
follow my advice. 13Go at once to King David and say to him, 'My
lord the king, didn't you make a vow and say to me, "Your son
Solomon will surely be the next king and will sit on my throne"?
Why then has Adonijah become king?' 14And while you are still
talking with him, I will come and confirm everything you have
said."

15So Bathsheba went into the king's bedroom. (He was very old
now, and Abishag was taking care of him.) 16Bathsheba bowed
down before the king.

"What can I do for you?" he asked her.

17She replied, "My lord, you made a vow before the LORD your God
when you said to me, 'Your son Solomon will surely be the next
king and will sit on my throne.' 18But instead, Adonijah has made
himself king, and my lord the king does not even know about it.
19He has sacrificed many cattle, fattened calves, and sheep, and he
has invited all the king's sons to attend the celebration. He also
invited Abiathar the priest and Joab, the commander of the army.
But he did not invite your servant Solomon. 20And now, my lord the
king, all Israel is waiting for you to announce who will become king
after you. 21If you do not act, my son Solomon and I will be treated
as criminals as soon as my lord the king has died."

22While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet
arrived. 23The king's officials told him, "Nathan the prophet is here
to see you."

Nathan went in and bowed before the king with his face to the
ground. 24Nathan asked, "My lord the king, have you decided that
Adonijah will be the next king and that he will sit on your throne?
25Today he has sacrificed many cattle, fattened calves, and sheep,
and he has invited all the king's sons to attend the celebration. He
also invited the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest.
They are feasting and drinking with him and shouting, 'Long live

King Adonijah!' 26But he did not invite me or Zadok the priest or Benaiah or your servant Solomon. 27Has my lord the king really done this without letting any of his officials know who should be the next king?"

DAVID MAKES SOLOMON KING

28King David responded, "Call Bathsheba!" So she came back in and stood before the king. 29And the king repeated his vow: "As surely as the LORD lives, who has rescued me from every danger, 30your son Solomon will be the next king and will sit on my throne this very day, just as I vowed to you before the LORD, the God of Israel."

31Then Bathsheba bowed down with her face to the ground before the king and exclaimed, "May my lord King David live forever!"

32Then King David ordered, "Call Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came into the king's presence, 33the king said to them, "Take Solomon and my officials down to Gihon Spring. Solomon is to ride on my own mule. 34There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet are to anoint him king over Israel. Blow the ram's horn and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' 35Then escort him back here, and he will sit on my throne. He will succeed me as king, for I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

36"Amen!" Benaiah son of Jehoiada replied. "May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, decree that it happen. 37And may the LORD be with Solomon as he has been with you, my lord the king, and may he make Solomon's reign even greater than yours!"

38So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and the king's bodyguard* took Solomon down to Gihon Spring, with Solomon riding on King David's own mule. 39There Zadok the priest took the flask of olive oil from the sacred tent and anointed

Solomon with the oil. Then they sounded the ram's horn and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" 40And all the people followed Solomon into Jerusalem, playing flutes and shouting for joy. The celebration was so joyous and noisy that the earth shook with the sound.

41Adonijah and his guests heard the celebrating and shouting just as they were finishing their banquet. When Joab heard the sound of the ram's horn, he asked, "What's going on? Why is the city in such an uproar?"

42And while he was still speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. "Come in," Adonijah said to him, "for you are a good man. You must have good news."

43"Not at all!" Jonathan replied. "Our lord King David has just declared Solomon king! 44The king sent him down to Gihon Spring with Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, protected by the king's bodyguard. They had him ride on the king's own mule, 45and Zadok and Nathan have anointed him at Gihon Spring as the new king. They have just returned, and the whole city is celebrating and rejoicing. That's what all the noise is about. 46What's more, Solomon is now sitting on the royal throne as king. 47And all the royal officials have gone to King David and congratulated him, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's fame even greater than your own, and may Solomon's reign be even greater than yours!' Then the king bowed his head in worship as he lay in his bed, 48and he said, 'Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who today has chosen a successor to sit on my throne while I am still alive to see it.'"

49Then all of Adonijah's guests jumped up in panic from the banquet table and quickly scattered. 50Adonijah was afraid of Solomon, so he rushed to the sacred tent and grabbed on to the horns of the altar. 51Word soon reached Solomon that Adonijah had seized the horns of the altar in fear, and that he was pleading, "Let King Solomon swear today that he will not kill me!"

52Solomon replied, “If he proves himself to be loyal, not a hair on
his head will be touched. But if he makes trouble, he will die.” 53So
King Solomon summoned Adonijah, and they brought him down
from the altar. He came and bowed respectfully before King
Solomon, who dismissed him, saying, “Go on home.”

1 Kings 2

DAVID’S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

1As the time of King David’s death approached, he gave this charge
to his son Solomon:

2“I am going where everyone on earth must someday go. Take
courage and be a man. 3Observe the requirements of the LORD your
God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands,
regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will
be successful in all you do and wherever you go. 4If you do this,
then the LORD will keep the promise he made to me. He told me, ‘If
your descendants live as they should and follow me faithfully with
all their heart and soul, one of them will always sit on the throne of
Israel.’

5“And there is something else. You know what Joab son of Zeruiah
did to me when he murdered my two army commanders, Abner son
of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He pretended that it was an act of
war, but it was done in a time of peace,* staining his belt and
sandals with innocent blood.*6Do with him what you think best, but

don’t let him grow old and go to his grave in peace.*

7“Be kind to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead. Make them permanent guests at your table, for they took care of me when I fled from your brother Absalom.

8“And remember Shimei son of Gera, the man from Bahurim in Benjamin. He cursed me with a terrible curse as I was fleeing to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, I swore by the LORD that I would not kill him. 9But that oath does not make him innocent. You are a wise man, and you will know how to arrange a bloody death for him.*”

10Then David died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. 11David had reigned over Israel for forty years, seven of them in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 12Solomon became king and sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established.

SOLOMON ESTABLISHES HIS RULE

13One day Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, came to see Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother. “Have you come with peaceful intentions?” she asked him.

“Yes,” he said, “I come in peace. 14In fact, I have a favor to ask of you.”

“What is it?” she asked.

15He replied, “As you know, the kingdom was rightfully mine; all Israel wanted me to be the next king. But the tables were turned, and the kingdom went to my brother instead; for that is the way the LORD wanted it. 16So now I have just one favor to ask of you. Please don’t turn me down.”

“What is it?” she asked.

17He replied, “Speak to King Solomon on my behalf, for I know he
will do anything you request. Ask him to let me marry Abishag, the
girl from Shunem.”

18“All right,” Bathsheba replied. “I will speak to the king for you.”

19So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak on Adonijah’s
behalf. The king rose from his throne to meet her, and he bowed
down before her. When he sat down on his throne again, the king
ordered that a throne be brought for his mother, and she sat at his
right hand.

20“I have one small request to make of you,” she said. “I hope you
won’t turn me down.”

“What is it, my mother?” he asked. “You know I won’t refuse you.”

21“Then let your brother Adonijah marry Abishag, the girl from
Shunem,” she replied.

22“How can you possibly ask me to give Abishag to Adonijah?” King
Solomon demanded. “You might as well ask me to give him the
kingdom! You know that he is my older brother, and that he has
Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah on his side.”

23Then King Solomon made a vow before the LORD: “May God
strike me and even kill me if Adonijah has not sealed his fate with
this request. 24The LORD has confirmed me and placed me on the
throne of my father, David; he has established my dynasty as he
promised. So as surely as the LORD lives, Adonijah will die this
very day!” 25So King Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada to
execute him, and Adonijah was put to death.

26Then the king said to Abiathar the priest, “Go back to your home
in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not kill you now, because

you carried the Ark of the Sovereign LORD for David my father and you shared all his hardships.” 27So Solomon deposed Abiathar from his position as priest of the LORD, thereby fulfilling the prophecy the LORD had given at Shiloh concerning the descendants of Eli.

28Joab had not joined Absalom’s earlier rebellion, but he had joined Adonijah’s rebellion. So when Joab heard about Adonijah’s death, he ran to the sacred tent of the LORD and grabbed on to the horns of the altar. 29When this was reported to King Solomon, he sent Benaiah son of Jehoiada to execute him.

30Benaiah went to the sacred tent of the LORD and said to Joab, “The king orders you to come out!”

But Joab answered, “No, I will die here.”

So Benaiah returned to the king and told him what Joab had said.

31“Do as he said,” the king replied. “Kill him there beside the altar and bury him. This will remove the guilt of Joab’s senseless murders from me and from my father’s family. 32The LORD will repay him* for the murders of two men who were more righteous and better than he. For my father knew nothing about the deaths of Abner son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and of Amasa son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah. 33May their blood be on Joab and his descendants forever, and may the LORD grant peace forever to David, his descendants, his dynasty, and his throne.”

34So Benaiah son of Jehoiada returned to the sacred tent and killed Joab, and he was buried at his home in the wilderness. 35Then the king appointed Benaiah to command the army in place of Joab, and he installed Zadok the priest to take the place of Abiathar.

36The king then sent for Shimei and told him, “Build a house here in Jerusalem and live there. But don’t step outside the city to go anywhere else. 37On the day you so much as cross the Kidron

Valley, you will surely die; and your blood will be on your own head."

38Shimei replied, "Your sentence is fair; I will do whatever my lord the king commands." So Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time.

39But three years later two of Shimei's slaves ran away to King Achish son of Maacah of Gath. When Shimei learned where they were, 40he saddled his donkey and went to Gath to search for them. When he found them, he brought them back to Jerusalem.

41Solomon heard that Shimei had left Jerusalem and had gone to Gath and returned. 42So the king sent for Shimei and demanded, "Didn't I make you swear by the LORD and warn you not to go anywhere else or you would surely die? And you replied, 'The sentence is fair; I will do as you say.' 43Then why haven't you kept your oath to the LORD and obeyed my command?"

44The king also said to Shimei, "You certainly remember all the wicked things you did to my father, David. May the LORD now bring that evil on your own head. 45But may I, King Solomon, receive the LORD's blessings, and may one of David's descendants always sit on this throne in the presence of the LORD." 46Then, at the king's command, Benaiah son of Jehoiada took Shimei outside and killed him.

So the kingdom was now firmly in Solomon's grip.

1 Kings 3

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM

1Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and married one of his daughters. He brought her to live in the City of David until he could finish building his palace and the Temple of the LORD and the wall around the city. 2At that time the people of Israel sacrificed their offerings at local places of worship, for a temple honoring the name of the LORD had not yet been built.

THE CITY OF GIBEON

3Solomon loved the LORD and followed all the decrees of his father, David, except that Solomon, too, offered sacrifices and burned incense at the local places of worship. 4The most important of these places of worship was at Gibeon, so the king went there and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings. 5That night the LORD appeared to

Solomon in a dream, and God said, “What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!”

6Solomon replied, “You showed great and faithful love to your servant my father, David, because he was honest and true and faithful to you. And you have continued to show this great and faithful love to him today by giving him a son to sit on his throne.

7“Now, O LORD my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn’t know his way around. 8And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! 9Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?”

10The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. 11So God replied, “Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies—12I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! 13And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! 14And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life.”

15Then Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem and stood before the Ark of the Lord’s Covenant, where he sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. Then he invited all his officials to a great banquet.

SOLOMON JUDGES WISELY

16Some time later two prostitutes came to the king to have an argument settled. 17“Please, my lord,” one of them began, “this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while

she was with me in the house. 18Three days later this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there were only two of us in the house.

19"But her baby died during the night when she rolled over on it. 20Then she got up in the night and took my son from beside me while I was asleep. She laid her dead child in my arms and took mine to sleep beside her. 21And in the morning when I tried to nurse my son, he was dead! But when I looked more closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't my son at all."

22Then the other woman interrupted, "It certainly was your son, and the living child is mine."

"No," the first woman said, "the living child is mine, and the dead one is yours." And so they argued back and forth before the king.

23Then the king said, "Let's get the facts straight. Both of you claim the living child is yours, and each says that the dead one belongs to the other. 24All right, bring me a sword." So a sword was brought to the king.

25Then he said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other!"

26Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child, and who loved him very much, cried out, "Oh no, my lord! Give her the child—please do not kill him!"

But the other woman said, "All right, he will be neither yours nor mine; divide him between us!"

27Then the king said, "Do not kill the child, but give him to the woman who wants him to live, for she is his mother!"

28When all Israel heard the king's decision, the people were in awe of the king, for they saw the wisdom God had given him for

rendering justice.

SKIP TO 4:29

1 Kings 4

SOLOMON'S OFFICIALS AND GOVERNORS

1King Solomon now ruled over all Israel, 2and these were his high officials: Azariah son of Zadok was the priest.

3Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, were court secretaries.
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the royal historian.

4Benaiah son of Jehoiada was commander of the army.
Zadok and Abiathar were priests.

5Azariah son of Nathan was in charge of the district governors.
Zabud son of Nathan, a priest, was a trusted adviser to the king.

6Ahishar was manager of the palace property.
Adoniram son of Abda was in charge of forced labor.

7Solomon also had twelve district governors who were over all Israel. They were responsible for providing food for the king's household. Each of them arranged provisions for one month of the year. 8These are the names of the twelve governors: Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim.

9Ben-deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth-shemesh, and Elon-

bethhanan.

10Ben-hesed, in Arubboth, including Socoh and all the land of Hepher.

11Ben-abinadab, in all of Naphoth-dor.* (He was married to Taphath, one of Solomon's daughters.)

12Baana son of Ahilud, in Taanach and Megiddo, all of Beth-shan* near Zarethan below Jezreel, and all the territory from Beth-shan to Abel-meholah and over to Jokmeam.

13Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead, including the Towns of Jair (named for Jair of the tribe of Manasseh*) in Gilead, and in the Argob region of Bashan, including sixty large fortified towns with bronze bars on their gates.

14Ahinadab son of Iddo, in Mahanaim.

15Ahimaaz, in Naphtali. (He was married to Basemath, another of Solomon's daughters.)

16Baana son of Hushai, in Asher and in Aloth.

17Jehoshaphat son of Paruah, in Issachar.

18Shimei son of Ela, in Benjamin.

19Geber son of Uri, in the land of Gilead,* including the territories of King Sihon of the Amorites and King Og of Bashan.
There was also one governor over the land of Judah.*

SOLOMON'S PROSPERITY AND WISDOM

20The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They were very contented, with plenty to eat and drink. 21*Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River* in the north to the land of the Philistines and the border of

Egypt in the south. The conquered peoples of those lands sent tribute money to Solomon and continued to serve him throughout his lifetime.

22The daily food requirements for Solomon's palace were 150 bushels of choice flour and 300 bushels of meal*; 23also 10 oxen from the fattening pens, 20 pasture-fed cattle, 100 sheep or goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roe deer, and choice poultry.*

24Solomon's dominion extended over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphsah to Gaza. And there was peace on all his borders. 25During the lifetime of Solomon, all of Judah and Israel lived in peace and safety. And from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south, each family had its own home and garden.*

26Solomon had 4,000* stalls for his chariot horses, and he had 12,000 horses.*

27The district governors faithfully provided food for King Solomon and his court; each made sure nothing was lacking during the month assigned to him. 28They also brought the necessary barley and straw for the royal horses in the stables.

29God gave Solomon very great wisdom and understanding, and knowledge as vast as the sands of the seashore. 30In fact, his wisdom exceeded that of all the wise men of the East and the wise men of Egypt. 31He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite and the sons of Mahol—Heman, Calcol, and Darda. His fame spread throughout all the surrounding nations. 32He composed some 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs. 33He could speak with authority about all kinds of plants, from the great cedar of Lebanon to the tiny hyssop that grows from cracks in a wall. He could also speak about animals, birds, small creatures, and fish. 34And kings from every nation sent their ambassadors to listen to the wisdom of

Solomon.

1 Kings 5

PREPARATIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

1*King Hiram of Tyre had always been a loyal friend of David.
When Hiram learned that David's son Solomon was the new king of
Israel, he sent ambassadors to congratulate him.

2Then Solomon sent this message back to Hiram:

3"You know that my father, David, was not able to build a Temple
to honor the name of the LORD his God because of the many wars
waged against him by surrounding nations. He could not build until
the LORD gave him victory over all his enemies. 4But now the LORD
my God has given me peace on every side; I have no enemies, and
all is well. 5So I am planning to build a Temple to honor the name
of the LORD my God, just as he had instructed my father, David.
For the LORD told him, 'Your son, whom I will place on your
throne, will build the Temple to honor my name.'

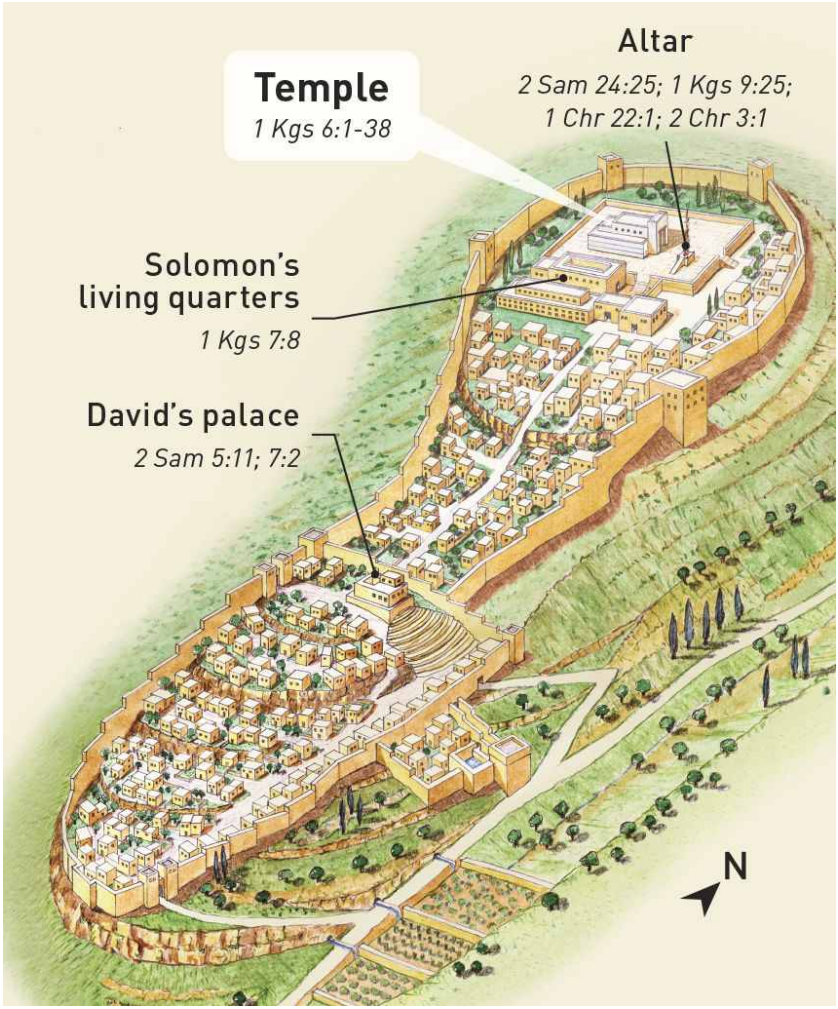
6"Therefore, please command that cedars from Lebanon be cut for
me. Let my men work alongside yours, and I will pay your men
whatever wages you ask. As you know, there is no one among us
who can cut timber like you Sidonians!"

7When Hiram received Solomon's message, he was very pleased and
said, "Praise the LORD today for giving David a wise son to be king
of the great nation of Israel." 8Then he sent this reply to Solomon:

“I have received your message, and I will supply all the cedar and
cypress timber you need. 9My servants will bring the logs from the
Lebanon mountains to the Mediterranean Sea* and make them into
rafts and float them along the coast to whatever place you choose.
Then we will break the rafts apart so you can carry the logs away.
You can pay me by supplying me with food for my household.”

10So Hiram supplied as much cedar and cypress timber as Solomon
desired. 11In return, Solomon sent him an annual payment of
100,000 bushels* of wheat for his household and 110,000 gallons*
of pure olive oil. 12So the LORD gave wisdom to Solomon, just as he
had promised. And Hiram and Solomon made a formal alliance of
peace.

13Then King Solomon conscripted a labor force of 30,000 men from
all Israel. 14He sent them to Lebanon in shifts, 10,000 every month,
so that each man would be one month in Lebanon and two months
at home. Adoniram was in charge of this labor force. 15Solomon also
had 70,000 common laborers, 80,000 quarry workers in the hill
country, 16and 3,600* foremen to supervise the work. 17At the king’s
command, they quarried large blocks of high-quality stone and
shaped them to make the foundation of the Temple. 18Men from the
city of Gebal helped Solomon’s and Hiram’s builders prepare the
timber and stone for the Temple.



THE TEMPLE

1 Kings 6

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

1It was in midspring, in the month of Ziv,* during the fourth year of
Solomon's reign, that he began to construct the Temple of the
LORD. This was 480 years after the people of Israel were rescued
from their slavery in the land of Egypt.

2The Temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was 90 feet
long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high.*3The entry room at the front of
the Temple was 30 feet* wide, running across the entire width of
the Temple. It projected outward 15 feet* from the front of the
Temple. 4Solomon also made narrow recessed windows throughout
the Temple.

5He built a complex of rooms against the outer walls of the Temple,
all the way around the sides and rear of the building. 6The complex
was three stories high, the bottom floor being 7*1/2* feet wide, the
second floor 9 feet wide, and the top floor 10*1/2* feet wide.* The
rooms were connected to the walls of the Temple by beams resting
on ledges built out from the wall. So the beams were not inserted
into the walls themselves.

7The stones used in the construction of the Temple were finished at
the quarry, so there was no sound of hammer, ax, or any other iron
tool at the building site.

8The entrance to the bottom floor* was on the south side of the
Temple. There were winding stairs going up to the second floor,
and another flight of stairs between the second and third floors.
9After completing the Temple structure, Solomon put in a ceiling
made of cedar beams and planks. 10As already stated, he built a
complex of rooms along the sides of the building, attached to the
Temple walls by cedar timbers. Each story of the complex was 7*1/2*
feet* high.

11Then the LORD gave this message to Solomon: 12"Concerning this
Temple you are building, if you keep all my decrees and regulations

and obey all my commands, I will fulfill through you the promise I made to your father, David. 13I will live among the Israelites and will never abandon my people Israel."

THE TEMPLE'S INTERIOR

14So Solomon finished building the Temple. 15The entire inside, from floor to ceiling, was paneled with wood. He paneled the walls and ceilings with cedar, and he used planks of cypress for the floors. 16He partitioned off an inner sanctuary—the Most Holy Place—at the far end of the Temple. It was 30 feet deep and was paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling. 17The main room of the Temple, outside the Most Holy Place, was 60 feet* long. 18Cedar paneling completely covered the stone walls throughout the Temple, and the paneling was decorated with carvings of gourds and open flowers.

19He prepared the inner sanctuary at the far end of the Temple, where the Ark of the LORD's Covenant would be placed. 20This inner sanctuary was 30 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 30 feet high. He overlaid the inside with solid gold. He also overlaid the altar made of cedar.*21Then Solomon overlaid the rest of the Temple's interior with solid gold, and he made gold chains to protect the entrance* to the Most Holy Place. 22So he finished overlaying the entire Temple with gold, including the altar that belonged to the Most Holy Place.

23He made two cherubim of wild olive* wood, each 15 feet* tall, and placed them in the inner sanctuary. 24The wingspan of each of the cherubim was 15 feet, each wing being 7 1/2 feet* long. 25The two cherubim were identical in shape and size; 26each was 15 feet tall. 27He placed them side by side in the inner sanctuary of the Temple. Their outspread wings reached from wall to wall, while their inner wings touched at the center of the room. 28He overlaid the two cherubim with gold.

29He decorated all the walls of the inner sanctuary and the main room with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. 30He

overlaid the floor in both rooms with gold.

31For the entrance to the inner sanctuary, he made double doors of
wild olive wood with five-sided doorposts.*32These double doors
were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open
flowers. The doors, including the decorations of cherubim and palm
trees, were overlaid with gold.

33Then he made four-sided doorposts of wild olive wood for the
entrance to the Temple. 34There were two folding doors of cypress
wood, and each door was hinged to fold back upon itself. 35These
doors were decorated with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and
open flowers—all overlaid evenly with gold.

36The walls of the inner courtyard were built so that there was one
layer of cedar beams between every three layers of finished stone.

37The foundation of the LORD's Temple was laid in midspring, in
the month of Ziv,* during the fourth year of Solomon's reign. 38The
entire building was completed in every detail by midautumn, in the
month of Bul,* during the eleventh year of his reign. So it took
seven years to build the Temple.

1 Kings 7

SOLOMON BUILDS HIS PALACE

1Solomon also built a palace for himself, and it took him thirteen
years to complete the construction.

2One of Solomon's buildings was called the Palace of the Forest of
Lebanon. It was 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high.*

There were four rows of cedar pillars, and great cedar beams rested on the pillars. 3The hall had a cedar roof. Above the beams on the pillars were forty-five side rooms,* arranged in three tiers of fifteen each. 4On each end of the long hall were three rows of windows facing each other. 5All the doorways and doorposts* had rectangular frames and were arranged in sets of three, facing each other.

6Solomon also built the Hall of Pillars, which was 75 feet long and 45 feet wide.* There was a porch in front, along with a canopy supported by pillars.

7Solomon also built the throne room, known as the Hall of Justice, where he sat to hear legal matters. It was paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling.*8Solomon's living quarters surrounded a courtyard behind this hall, and they were constructed the same way. He also built similar living quarters for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.

9From foundation to eaves, all these buildings were built from huge blocks of high-quality stone, cut with saws and trimmed to exact measure on all sides. 10Some of the huge foundation stones were 15 feet long, and some were 12 feet* long. 11The blocks of high-quality stone used in the walls were also cut to measure, and cedar beams were also used. 12The walls of the great courtyard were built so that there was one layer of cedar beams between every three layers of finished stone, just like the walls of the inner courtyard of the LORD's Temple with its entry room.

FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE

13King Solomon then asked for a man named Huram* to come from
Tyre. 14He was half Israelite, since his mother was a widow from the
tribe of Naphtali, and his father had been a craftsman in bronze
from Tyre. Huram was extremely skillful and talented in any work
in bronze, and he came to do all the metal work for King Solomon.

15Huram cast two bronze pillars, each 27 feet tall and 18 feet in
circumference.*16For the tops of the pillars he cast bronze capitals,
each 7*1/2* feet* tall. 17Each capital was decorated with seven sets of
latticework and interwoven chains. 18He also encircled the
latticework with two rows of pomegranates to decorate the capitals
over the pillars. 19The capitals on the columns inside the entry room
were shaped like water lilies, and they were six feet* tall. 20The
capitals on the two pillars had 200 pomegranates in two rows
around them, beside the rounded surface next to the latticework.
21Huram set the pillars at the entrance of the Temple, one toward
the south and one toward the north. He named the one on the south
Jakin, and the one on the north Boaz.*22The capitals on the pillars
were shaped like water lilies. And so the work on the pillars was
finished.

23Then Huram cast a great round basin, 15 feet across from rim to
rim, called the Sea. It was 7*1/2* feet deep and about 45 feet in
circumference.*24It was encircled just below its rim by two rows of
decorative gourds. There were about six gourds per foot* all the
way around, and they were cast as part of the basin.

25The Sea was placed on a base of twelve bronze oxen,* all facing
outward. Three faced north, three faced west, three faced south,
and three faced east, and the Sea rested on them. 26The walls of the
Sea were about three inches* thick, and its rim flared out like a cup
and resembled a water lily blossom. It could hold about 11,000
gallons* of water.

27Huram also made ten bronze water carts, each 6 feet long, 6 feet
wide, and 4 1/2 feet tall.* 28They were constructed with side panels
braced with crossbars. 29Both the panels and the crossbars were
decorated with carved lions, oxen, and cherubim. Above and below
the lions and oxen were wreath decorations. 30Each of these carts
had four bronze wheels and bronze axles. There were supporting
posts for the bronze basins at the corners of the carts; these
supports were decorated on each side with carvings of wreaths.
31The top of each cart had a rounded frame for the basin. It
projected 1 1/2 feet* above the cart's top like a round pedestal, and
its opening was 2 1/4 feet* across; it was decorated on the outside
with carvings of wreaths. The panels of the carts were square, not
round. 32Under the panels were four wheels that were connected to
axles that had been cast as one unit with the cart. The wheels were
2 1/4 feet in diameter 33and were similar to chariot wheels. The
axles, spokes, rims, and hubs were all cast from molten bronze.

34There were handles at each of the four corners of the carts, and
these, too, were cast as one unit with the cart. 35Around the top of
each cart was a rim nine inches wide.* The corner supports and side
panels were cast as one unit with the cart. 36Carvings of cherubim,
lions, and palm trees decorated the panels and corner supports
wherever there was room, and there were wreaths all around. 37All
ten water carts were the same size and were made alike, for each
was cast from the same mold.

38Huram also made ten smaller bronze basins, one for each cart.
Each basin was six feet across and could hold 220 gallons* of water.
39He set five water carts on the south side of the Temple and five on
the north side. The great bronze basin called the Sea was placed
near the southeast corner of the Temple. 40He also made the
necessary washbasins, shovels, and bowls.

So at last Huram completed everything King Solomon had assigned
him to make for the Temple of the LORD:

41the two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;
the two networks of interwoven chains that decorated the capitals;

42the 400 pomegranates that hung from the chains on the capitals
(two rows of pomegranates for each of the chain networks that
decorated the capitals on top of the pillars);

43the ten water carts holding the ten basins;

44the Sea and the twelve oxen under it;

45the ash buckets, the shovels, and the bowls.

Huram made all these things of burnished bronze for the Temple of
the LORD, just as King Solomon had directed. 46The king had them
cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between Succoth and
Zarethan. 47Solomon did not weigh all these things because there
were so many; the weight of the bronze could not be measured.

48Solomon also made all the furnishings of the Temple of the LORD:
the gold altar; the gold table for the Bread of the Presence;

49the lampstands of solid gold, five on the south and five on the
north, in front of the Most Holy Place; the flower decorations,
lamps, and tongs—all of gold;

50the small bowls, lamp snuffers, bowls, ladles, and incense burners
—all of solid gold; the doors for the entrances to the Most Holy
Place and the main room of the Temple, with their fronts overlaid
with gold.

51So King Solomon finished all his work on the Temple of the
LORD. Then he brought all the gifts his father, David, had dedicated
—the silver, the gold, and the various articles—and he stored them
in the treasuries of the LORD's Temple.

1 Kings 8

THE ARK BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE

1Solomon then summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all
the heads of the tribes—the leaders of the ancestral families of the
Israelites. They were to bring the Ark of the LORD's Covenant to the
Temple from its location in the City of David, also known as Zion.
2So all the men of Israel assembled before King Solomon at the
annual Festival of Shelters, which is held in early autumn in the
month of Ethanim.*

3When all the elders of Israel arrived, the priests picked up the Ark.
4The priests and Levites brought up the Ark of the LORD along with
the special tent* and all the sacred items that had been in it. 5There,
before the Ark, King Solomon and the entire community of Israel
sacrificed so many sheep, goats, and cattle that no one could keep
count!

6Then the priests carried the Ark of the LORD's Covenant into the
inner sanctuary of the Temple—the Most Holy Place—and placed it
beneath the wings of the cherubim. 7The cherubim spread their

wings over the Ark, forming a canopy over the Ark and its carrying poles. 8These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place, which is in front of the Most Holy Place, but not from the outside. They are still there to this day. 9Nothing was in the Ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Mount Sinai,* where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel when they left the land of Egypt.

10When the priests came out of the Holy Place, a thick cloud filled the Temple of the LORD. 11The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple of the LORD.

SOLOMON PRAISES THE LORD

12Then Solomon prayed, "O LORD, you have said that you would live in a thick cloud of darkness. 13Now I have built a glorious Temple for you, a place where you can live forever!*"

14Then the king turned around to the entire community of Israel standing before him and gave this blessing: 15"Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has kept the promise he made to my father, David. For he told my father, 16'From the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have never chosen a city among any of the tribes of Israel as the place where a Temple should be built to honor my name. But I have chosen David to be king over my people Israel.'"

17Then Solomon said, "My father, David, wanted to build this Temple to honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 18But the LORD told him, 'You wanted to build the Temple to honor my name. Your intention is good, 19but you are not the one to do it. One of your own sons will build the Temple to honor me.'

20"And now the LORD has fulfilled the promise he made, for I have become king in my father's place, and now I sit on the throne of

Israel, just as the LORD promised. I have built this Temple to honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 21And I have prepared a place there for the Ark, which contains the covenant that the LORD made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt."

SKIP TO 8:54

SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

22Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire community of Israel. He lifted his hands toward heaven, 23and he prayed,

"O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven above or on the earth below. You keep your covenant and show unfailing love to all who walk before you in wholehearted devotion. 24You have kept your promise to your servant David, my father. You made that promise with your own mouth, and with your own hands you have fulfilled it today.

25"And now, O LORD, God of Israel, carry out the additional promise you made to your servant David, my father. For you said to him, 'If your descendants guard their behavior and faithfully follow me as you have done, one of them will always sit on the throne of Israel.' 26Now, O God of Israel, fulfill this promise to your servant David, my father.

27"But will God really live on earth? Why, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this Temple I have built! 28Nevertheless, listen to my prayer and my plea, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is making to you today. 29May you watch over this Temple night and day, this place where you have said, 'My name will be there.' May you always hear the prayers I make toward this place. 30May you hear the humble and earnest requests from me and your people Israel when we pray toward this place. Yes, hear us from heaven where you live, and when you hear, forgive.

31"If someone wrongs another person and is required to take an

oath of innocence in front of your altar in this Temple, 32then hear from heaven and judge between your servants—the accuser and the accused. Punish the guilty as they deserve. Acquit the innocent because of their innocence.

33"If your people Israel are defeated by their enemies because they have sinned against you, and if they turn to you and acknowledge your name and pray to you here in this Temple, 34then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and return them to this land you gave their ancestors.

35"If the skies are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and if they pray toward this Temple and acknowledge your name and turn from their sins because you have punished them, 36then hear from heaven and forgive the sins of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them to follow the right path, and send rain on your land that you have given to your people as their special possession.

37"If there is a famine in the land or a plague or crop disease or attacks of locusts or caterpillars, or if your people's enemies are in the land besieging their towns—whatever disaster or disease there is—38and if your people Israel pray about their troubles, raising their hands toward this Temple, 39then hear from heaven where you live, and forgive. Give your people what their actions deserve, for you alone know each human heart. 40Then they will fear you as long as they live in the land you gave to our ancestors.

41"In the future, foreigners who do not belong to your people Israel will hear of you. They will come from distant lands because of your name, 42for they will hear of your great name and your strong hand and your powerful arm. And when they pray toward this Temple, 43then hear from heaven where you live, and grant what they ask of you. In this way, all the people of the earth will come to know and fear you, just as your own people Israel do. They, too, will know that this Temple I have built honors your name.

44"If your people go out where you send them to fight their enemies, and if they pray to the LORD by turning toward this city you have chosen and toward this Temple I have built to honor your name, 45then hear their prayers from heaven and uphold their

cause.

46“If they sin against you—and who has never sinned?—you might
become angry with them and let their enemies conquer them and
take them captive to their land far away or near. 47But in that land
of exile, they might turn to you in repentance and pray, ‘We have
sinned, done evil, and acted wickedly.’ 48If they turn to you with
their whole heart and soul in the land of their enemies and pray
toward the land you gave to their ancestors—toward this city you
have chosen, and toward this Temple I have built to honor your
name—49then hear their prayers and their petition from heaven
where you live, and uphold their cause. 50Forgive your people who
have sinned against you. Forgive all the offenses they have
committed against you. Make their captors merciful to them, 51for
they are your people—your special possession—whom you brought
out of the iron-smelting furnace of Egypt.

52“May your eyes be open to my requests and to the requests of
your people Israel. May you hear and answer them whenever they
cry out to you. 53For when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt,
O Sovereign LORD, you told your servant Moses that you had set
Israel apart from all the nations of the earth to be your own special
possession.”

THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

54When Solomon finished making these prayers and petitions to the
LORD, he stood up in front of the altar of the LORD, where he had
been kneeling with his hands raised toward heaven. 55He stood and
in a loud voice blessed the entire congregation of Israel:

BLESSINGS 1 KINGS 8:56-61

56“Praise the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, just as
he promised. Not one word has failed of all the wonderful promises
he gave through his servant Moses. 57May the LORD our God be
with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us or
abandon us. 58May he give us the desire to do his will in everything
and to obey all the commands, decrees, and regulations that he
gave our ancestors. 59And may these words that I have prayed in the
presence of the LORD be before him constantly, day and night, so
that the LORD our God may give justice to me and to his people
Israel, according to each day’s needs. 60Then people all over the
earth will know that the LORD alone is God and there is no other.
61And may you be completely faithful to the LORD our God. May
you always obey his decrees and commands, just as you are doing
today.”

62Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices to the
LORD. 63Solomon offered to the LORD a peace offering of 22,000
cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats. And so the king and all the
people of Israel dedicated the Temple of the LORD.

64That same day the king consecrated the central area of the
courtyard in front of the LORD’s Temple. He offered burnt offerings,
grain offerings, and the fat of peace offerings there, because the
bronze altar in the LORD’s presence was too small to hold all the
burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

65Then Solomon and all Israel celebrated the Festival of Shelters* in the presence of the LORD our God. A large congregation had gathered from as far away as Lebo-hamath in the north and the Brook of Egypt in the south. The celebration went on for fourteen days in all—seven days for the dedication of the altar and seven days for the Festival of Shelters.*66After the festival was over,* Solomon sent the people home. They blessed the king and went to their homes joyful and glad because the LORD had been good to his servant David and to his people Israel.

1 Kings 9

THE LORD'S RESPONSE TO SOLOMON

1So Solomon finished building the Temple of the LORD, as well as the royal palace. He completed everything he had planned to do. 2Then the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had done before at Gibeon. 3The LORD said to him,

"I have heard your prayer and your petition. I have set this Temple apart to be holy—this place you have built where my name will be honored forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to my heart.

4"As for you, if you will follow me with integrity and godliness, as David your father did, obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, 5then I will establish the throne of your dynasty over Israel forever. For I made this promise to your father, David: 'One of your descendants will always sit on the throne of Israel.'

6"But if you or your descendants abandon me and disobey the commands and decrees I have given you, and if you serve and

worship other gods, 7then I will uproot Israel from this land that I have given them. I will reject this Temple that I have made holy to honor my name. I will make Israel an object of mockery and ridicule among the nations. 8And though this Temple is impressive now, all who pass by will be appalled and will gasp in horror. They will ask, 'Why did the LORD do such terrible things to this land and to this Temple?'

9"And the answer will be, 'Because his people abandoned the LORD their God, who brought their ancestors out of Egypt, and they worshiped other gods instead and bowed down to them. That is why the LORD has brought all these disasters on them.'"

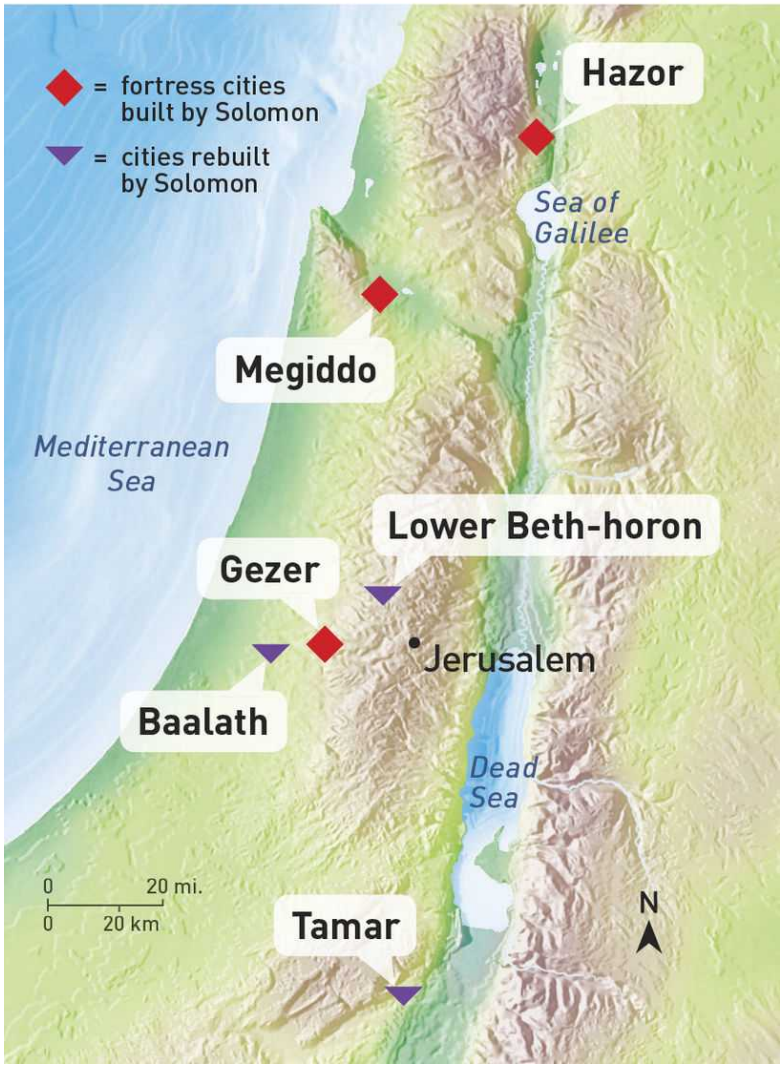
SOLOMON'S AGREEMENT WITH HIRAM

10It took Solomon twenty years to build the LORD's Temple and his own royal palace. At the end of that time, 11he gave twenty towns in the land of Galilee to King Hiram of Tyre. (Hiram had previously provided all the cedar and cypress timber and gold that Solomon had requested.) 12But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the towns Solomon had given him, he was not at all pleased with them. 13"What kind of towns are these, my brother?" he asked. So Hiram called that area Cabul (which means "worthless"), as it is still known today. 14Nevertheless, Hiram paid* Solomon 9,000 pounds* of gold.

SOLOMON'S BUILDING PROJECTS

Solomon was the first of Israel's leaders to build cities. Others had rebuilt conquered cities, but Solomon made cities into fortresses.

1 Kgs 9:15-19



SOLOMON'S BUILDING PROJECTS

SOLOMON'S MANY ACHIEVEMENTS

15This is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon
conscripted to build the LORD's Temple, the royal palace, the
supporting terraces,* the wall of Jerusalem, and the cities of Hazor,
Megiddo, and Gezer. 16(Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had attacked
and captured Gezer, killing the Canaanite population and burning it
down. He gave the city to his daughter as a wedding gift when she
married Solomon. 17So Solomon rebuilt the city of Gezer.) He also
built up the towns of Lower Beth-horon, 18Baalath, and Tamar* in
the wilderness within his land. 19He built towns as supply centers
and constructed towns where his chariots and horses* could be
stationed. He built everything he desired in Jerusalem and Lebanon
and throughout his entire realm.

20There were still some people living in the land who were not
Israelites, including Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and
Jebusites. 21These were descendants of the nations whom the people
of Israel had not completely destroyed.* So Solomon conscripted
them as slaves, and they serve as forced laborers to this day. 22But
Solomon did not conscript any of the Israelites for forced labor.
Instead, he assigned them to serve as fighting men, government
officials, officers and captains in his army, commanders of his
chariots, and charioteers. 23Solomon appointed 550 of them to
supervise the people working on his various projects.

24Solomon moved his wife, Pharaoh's daughter, from the City of
David to the new palace he had built for her. Then he constructed
the supporting terraces.

25Three times each year Solomon presented burnt offerings and
peace offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD. He also
burned incense to the LORD. And so he finished the work of
building the Temple.

26King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, a port near
Elath* in the land of Edom, along the shore of the Red Sea.*27Hiram
sent experienced crews of sailors to sail the ships with Solomon's
men. 28They sailed to Ophir and brought back to Solomon some
sixteen tons* of gold.

SHEBA

1 Kings 10

VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA 1WHEN THE QUEEN OF SHEBA HEARD OF SOLOMON'S FAME, WHICH BROUGHT HONOR TO THE NAME OF THE LORD,* SHE CAME TO TEST HIM WITH HARD QUESTIONS. 2SHE ARRIVED IN JERUSALEM WITH A LARGE GROUP OF ATTENDANTS AND A GREAT CARAVAN OF CAMELS LOADED WITH SPICES, LARGE QUANTITIES OF GOLD, AND PRECIOUS JEWELS. WHEN SHE MET WITH SOLOMON, SHE TALKED WITH HIM ABOUT EVERYTHING SHE HAD ON HER MIND. 3SOLOMON HAD ANSWERS FOR ALL HER QUESTIONS; NOTHING WAS TOO HARD FOR THE KING TO EXPLAIN TO HER. 4WHEN THE QUEEN OF SHEBA REALIZED HOW VERY WISE SOLOMON WAS, AND WHEN SHE SAW THE PALACE HE HAD BUILT, 5SHE WAS OVERWHELMED. SHE WAS ALSO AMAZED AT THE FOOD ON HIS TABLES, THE ORGANIZATION OF HIS OFFICIALS AND THEIR SPLENDID CLOTHING, THE CUP-BEARERS, AND THE BURNT OFFERINGS SOLOMON MADE AT THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD.

6She exclaimed to the king, "Everything I heard in my country about your achievements* and wisdom is true! 7I didn't believe what was said until I arrived here and saw it with my own eyes. In fact, I had not heard the half of it! Your wisdom and prosperity are far beyond what I was told. 8How happy your people* must be! What a privilege for your officials to stand here day after day, listening to your wisdom! 9Praise the LORD your God, who delights in you and has placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king so you can rule with justice and righteousness."

10Then she gave the king a gift of 9,000 pounds* of gold, great quantities of spices, and precious jewels. Never again were so many

spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

11(In addition, Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir, and they also brought rich cargoes of red sandalwood* and precious jewels. 12The king used the sandalwood to make railings for the Temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and to construct lyres and harps for the musicians. Never before or since has there been such a supply of sandalwood.)

13King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba whatever she asked for, besides all the customary gifts he had so generously given. Then she and all her attendants returned to their own land.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND SPLENDOR

14Each year Solomon received about 25 tons* of gold. 15This did not include the additional revenue he received from merchants and traders, all the kings of Arabia, and the governors of the land.

16King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold, each weighing more than fifteen pounds.*17He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold, each weighing nearly four pounds.* The king placed these shields in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

18Then the king made a huge throne, decorated with ivory and overlaid with fine gold. 19The throne had six steps and a rounded back. There were armrests on both sides of the seat, and the figure of a lion stood on each side of the throne. 20There were also twelve other lions, one standing on each end of the six steps. No other throne in all the world could be compared with it!

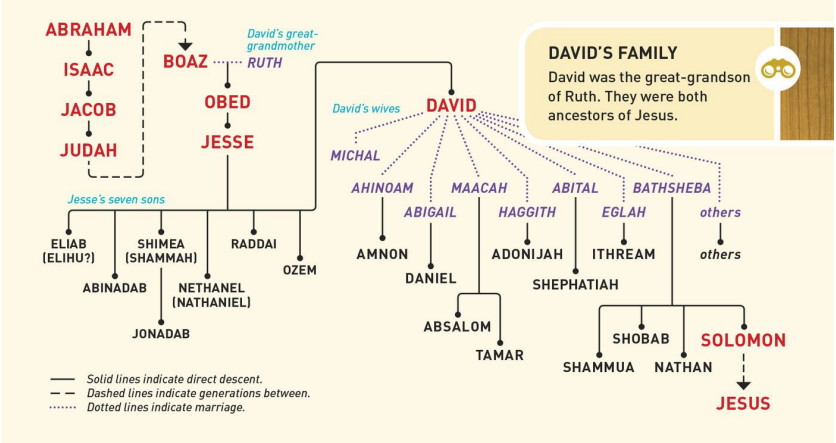
21All of King Solomon's drinking cups were solid gold, as were all

the utensils in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. They were not made of silver, for silver was considered worthless in Solomon's day!

22The king had a fleet of trading ships of Tarshish that sailed with Hiram's fleet. Once every three years the ships returned, loaded with gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.*

23So King Solomon became richer and wiser than any other king on earth. 24People from every nation came to consult him and to hear the wisdom God had given him. 25Year after year everyone who visited brought him gifts of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

26Solomon built up a huge force of chariots and horses.* He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. He stationed some of them in the chariot cities and some near him in Jerusalem. 27The king made silver as plentiful in Jerusalem as stone. And valuable cedar timber was as common as the sycamore-fig trees that grow in the foothills of Judah.*28Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt* and from Cilicia*; the king's traders acquired them from Cilicia at the standard price. 29At that time chariots from Egypt could be purchased for 600 pieces of silver,* and horses for 150 pieces of silver.* They were then exported to the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.



DAVID'S FAMILY

1 Kings 11

SOLOMON'S MANY WIVES

1 Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's
daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon,
and from among the Hittites. 2 The LORD had clearly instructed the
people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn
your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them
anyway. 3 He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And
in fact, they did turn his heart away from the LORD.

4 In Solomon's old age, they turned his heart to worship other gods
instead of being completely faithful to the LORD his God, as his
father, David, had been. 5 Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the
goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech,* the detestable god of the
Ammonites. 6 In this way, Solomon did what was evil in the LORD's
sight; he refused to follow the LORD completely, as his father,
David, had done.

7On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem,* he even built a pagan
shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and another for
Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8Solomon built such
shrines for all his foreign wives to use for burning incense and
sacrificing to their gods.

9The LORD was very angry with Solomon, for his heart had turned
away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him
twice. 10He had warned Solomon specifically about worshiping
other gods, but Solomon did not listen to the LORD's command.
11So now the LORD said to him, "Since you have not kept my
covenant and have disobeyed my decrees, I will surely tear the
kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants. 12But
for the sake of your father, David, I will not do this while you are
still alive. I will take the kingdom away from your son. 13And even
so, I will not take away the entire kingdom; I will let him be king of
one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of
Jerusalem, my chosen city."

SOLOMON'S ADVERSARIES

14Then the LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite, a member of
Edom's royal family, to be Solomon's adversary. 15Years before,
David had defeated Edom. Joab, his army commander, had stayed
to bury some of the Israelite soldiers who had died in battle. While
there, they killed every male in Edom. 16Joab and the army of Israel
had stayed there for six months, killing them.

17But Hadad and a few of his father's royal officials escaped and

headed for Egypt. (Hadad was just a boy at the time.) 18They set out from Midian and went to Paran, where others joined them. Then they traveled to Egypt and went to Pharaoh, who gave them a home, food, and some land. 19Pharaoh grew very fond of Hadad, and he gave him his wife's sister in marriage—the sister of Queen Tahpenes. 20She bore him a son named Genubath. Tahpenes raised him* in Pharaoh's palace among Pharaoh's own sons.

21When the news reached Hadad in Egypt that David and his commander Joab were both dead, he said to Pharaoh, "Let me return to my own country."

22"Why?" Pharaoh asked him. "What do you lack here that makes you want to go home?"

"Nothing," he replied. "But even so, please let me return home."

23God also raised up Rezon son of Eliada as Solomon's adversary. Rezon had fled from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah, 24and had become the leader of a gang of rebels. After David conquered Hadadezer, Rezon and his men fled to Damascus, where he became king. 25Rezon was Israel's bitter adversary for the rest of Solomon's reign, and he made trouble, just as Hadad did. Rezon hated Israel intensely and continued to reign in Aram.

JEROBOAM REBELS AGAINST SOLOMON

26Another rebel leader was Jeroboam son of Nebat, one of Solomon's own officials. He came from the town of Zeredah in Ephraim, and his mother was Zeruah, a widow.

27This is the story behind his rebellion. Solomon was rebuilding the supporting terraces* and repairing the walls of the city of his father, David. 28Jeroboam was a very capable young man, and when Solomon saw how industrious he was, he put him in charge of the labor force from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the

descendants of Joseph.

29One day as Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah
from Shiloh met him along the way. Ahijah was wearing a new
cloak. The two of them were alone in a field, 30and Ahijah took hold
of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces.
31Then he said to Jeroboam, “Take ten of these pieces, for this is
what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I am about to tear the
kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and I will give ten of the tribes
to you! 32But I will leave him one tribe for the sake of my servant
David and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all
the tribes of Israel. 33For Solomon has* abandoned me and
worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians; Chemosh, the
god of Moab; and Molech, the god of the Ammonites. He has not
followed my ways and done what is pleasing in my sight. He has
not obeyed my decrees and regulations as David his father did.

34“‘But I will not take the entire kingdom from Solomon at this
time. For the sake of my servant David, the one whom I chose and
who obeyed my commands and decrees, I will keep Solomon as
leader for the rest of his life. 35But I will take the kingdom away
from his son and give ten of the tribes to you. 36His son will have
one tribe so that the descendants of David my servant will continue
to reign, shining like a lamp in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen to
be the place for my name. 37And I will place you on the throne of
Israel, and you will rule over all that your heart desires. 38If you
listen to what I tell you and follow my ways and do whatever I
consider to be right, and if you obey my decrees and commands, as
my servant David did, then I will always be with you. I will
establish an enduring dynasty for you as I did for David, and I will
give Israel to you. 39Because of Solomon’s sin I will punish the
descendants of David—though not forever.’”

40Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to King Shishak of
Egypt and stayed there until Solomon died.

SUMMARY OF SOLOMON'S REIGN

41 The rest of the events in Solomon's reign, including all his deeds
and his wisdom, are recorded in *The Book of the Acts of Solomon.*
42 Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years. 43 When
he died, he was buried in the City of David, named for his father.
Then his son Rehoboam became the next king.

1 Kings 12

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

1Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all Israel had gathered to
make him king. 2When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard of this, he
returned from Egypt,* for he had fled to Egypt to escape from King
Solomon. 3The leaders of Israel summoned him, and Jeroboam and
the whole assembly of Israel went to speak with Rehoboam. 4"Your
father was a hard master," they said. "Lighten the harsh labor
demands and heavy taxes that your father imposed on us. Then we
will be your loyal subjects."

5Rehoboam replied, "Give me three days to think this over. Then
come back for my answer." So the people went away.

6Then King Rehoboam discussed the matter with the older men who
had counseled his father, Solomon. "What is your advice?" he
asked. "How should I answer these people?"

7The older counselors replied, "If you are willing to be a servant to

these people today and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your loyal subjects.”

8But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and instead asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him and were now his advisers. 9“What is your advice?” he asked them. “How should I answer these people who want me to lighten the burdens imposed by my father?”

10The young men replied, “This is what you should tell those complainers who want a lighter burden: ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist! 11Yes, my father laid heavy burdens on you, but I’m going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!’”

12Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to hear Rehoboam’s decision, just as the king had ordered. 13But Rehoboam spoke harshly to the people, for he rejected the advice of the older counselors 14and followed the counsel of his younger advisers. He told the people, “My father laid heavy burdens on you, but I’m going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!”

15So the king paid no attention to the people. This turn of events was the will of the LORD, for it fulfilled the LORD’s message to Jeroboam son of Nebat through the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh.

16When all Israel realized that the king had refused to listen to them, they responded, “Down with the dynasty of David!

We have no interest in the son of Jesse.
Back to your homes, O Israel!
Look out for your own house, O David!”

So the people of Israel returned home. 17But Rehoboam continued to rule over the Israelites who lived in the towns of Judah.

18King Rehoboam sent Adoniram,* who was in charge of forced
labor, to restore order, but the people of Israel stoned him to death.
When this news reached King Rehoboam, he quickly jumped into
his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. 19And to this day the northern
tribes of Israel have refused to be ruled by a descendant of David.

20When the people of Israel learned of Jeroboam's return from
Egypt, they called an assembly and made him king over all Israel.
So only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the family of David.

SHEMAIAH'S PROPHECY

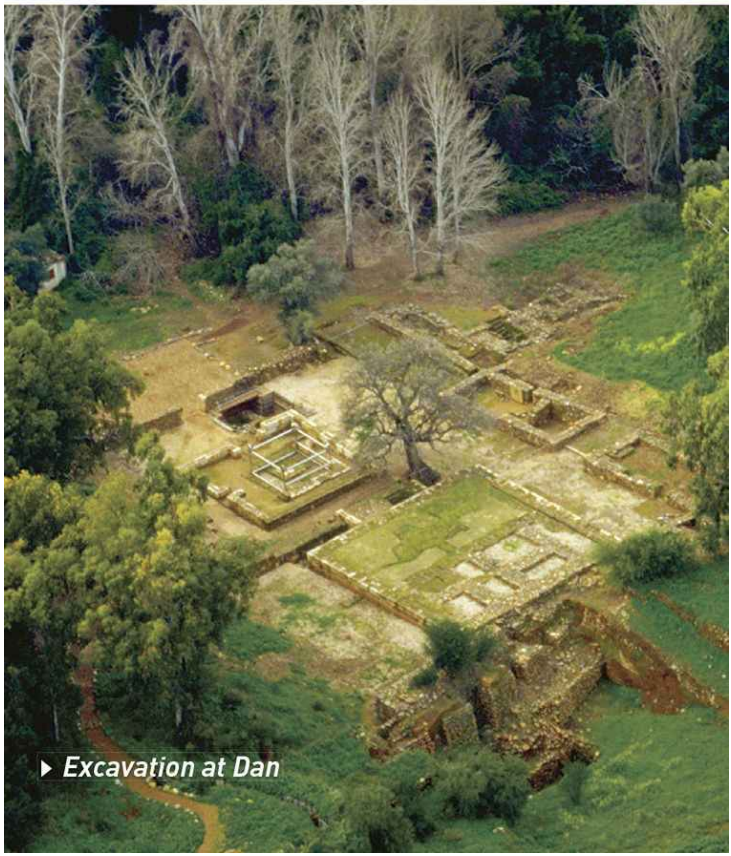
21When Rehoboam arrived at Jerusalem, he mobilized the men of
Judah and the tribe of Benjamin—180,000 select troops—to fight
against the men of Israel and to restore the kingdom to himself.

22But God said to Shemaiah, the man of God, 23"Say to Rehoboam
son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the people of Judah and
Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, 24'This is what the LORD
says: Do not fight against your relatives, the Israelites. Go back
home, for what has happened is my doing!'" So they obeyed the
message of the LORD and went home, as the LORD had
commanded.

WORSHIP IN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

1 Kgs 12:25-33

Jeroboam set up two new worship centers in the cities of Bethel and Dan so that the people from the northern tribes could worship there rather than needing to travel all the way to Jerusalem. Bethel was only ten miles north of Jerusalem and thus convenient for anyone heading to Jerusalem out of habit. Dan was far north in the land of Naphtali, convenient to the northernmost people of Israel.



▸ *Excavation at Dan*

WORSHIP IN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

JEROBOAM MAKES GOLD CALVES

25Jeroboam then built up the city of Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and it became his capital. Later he went and built up the town of Peniel.*

26Jeroboam thought to himself, “Unless I am careful, the kingdom will return to the dynasty of David. 27When these people go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at the Temple of the LORD, they will again give their allegiance to King Rehoboam of Judah. They will kill me and make him their king instead.”

28So on the advice of his counselors, the king made two gold calves. He said to the people,* “It is too much trouble for you to worship in Jerusalem. Look, Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of Egypt!”

29He placed these calf idols in Bethel and in Dan—at either end of his kingdom. 30But this became a great sin, for the people worshiped the idols, traveling as far north as Dan to worship the one there.

31Jeroboam also erected buildings at the pagan shrines and ordained priests from the common people—those who were not from the priestly tribe of Levi. 32And Jeroboam instituted a religious festival in Bethel, held on the fifteenth day of the eighth month,* in imitation of the annual Festival of Shelters in Judah. There at Bethel he himself offered sacrifices to the calves he had made, and he appointed priests for the pagan shrines he had made. 33So on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a day that he himself had designated, Jeroboam offered sacrifices on the altar at Bethel. He instituted a religious festival for Israel, and he went up to the altar to burn incense.

1 Kings 13

A PROPHET DENOUNCES JEROBOAM

1At the LORD's command, a man of God from Judah went to Bethel,
arriving there just as Jeroboam was approaching the altar to burn
incense. 2Then at the LORD's command, he shouted, "O altar, altar!
This is what the LORD says: A child named Josiah will be born into
the dynasty of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests from the
pagan shrines who come here to burn incense, and human bones
will be burned on you." 3That same day the man of God gave a sign
to prove his message. He said, "The LORD has promised to give this
sign: This altar will split apart, and its ashes will be poured out on
the ground."

4When King Jeroboam heard the man of God speaking against the
altar at Bethel, he pointed at him and shouted, "Seize that man!"
But instantly the king's hand became paralyzed in that position, and
he couldn't pull it back. 5At the same time a wide crack appeared in
the altar, and the ashes poured out, just as the man of God had
predicted in his message from the LORD.

6The king cried out to the man of God, “Please ask the LORD your God to restore my hand again!” So the man of God prayed to the LORD, and the king’s hand was restored and he could move it again.

7Then the king said to the man of God, “Come to the palace with me and have something to eat, and I will give you a gift.”

8But the man of God said to the king, “Even if you gave me half of everything you own, I would not go with you. I would not eat or drink anything in this place. 9For the LORD gave me this command: ‘You must not eat or drink anything while you are there, and do not return to Judah by the same way you came.’” 10So he left Bethel and went home another way.

11As it happened, there was an old prophet living in Bethel, and his sons* came home and told him what the man of God had done in Bethel that day. They also told their father what the man had said to the king. 12The old prophet asked them, “Which way did he go?” So they showed their father* which road the man of God had taken. 13“Quick, saddle the donkey,” the old man said. So they saddled the donkey for him, and he mounted it.

14Then he rode after the man of God and found him sitting under a great tree. The old prophet asked him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?”

“Yes, I am,” he replied.

15Then he said to the man of God, “Come home with me and eat some food.”

16“No, I cannot,” he replied. “I am not allowed to eat or drink anything here in this place. 17For the LORD gave me this command: ‘You must not eat or drink anything while you are there, and do not

return to Judah by the same way you came.'"

18But the old prophet answered, "I am a prophet, too, just as you
are. And an angel gave me this command from the LORD: 'Bring
him home with you so he can have something to eat and drink.'"
But the old man was lying to him. 19So they went back together,
and the man of God ate and drank at the prophet's home.

20Then while they were sitting at the table, a command from the
LORD came to the old prophet. 21He cried out to the man of God
from Judah, "This is what the LORD says: You have defied the word
of the LORD and have disobeyed the command the LORD your God
gave you. 22You came back to this place and ate and drank where
he told you not to eat or drink. Because of this, your body will not
be buried in the grave of your ancestors."

23After the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the old
prophet saddled his own donkey for him, 24and the man of God
started off again. But as he was traveling along, a lion came out and
killed him. His body lay there on the road, with the donkey and the
lion standing beside it. 25People who passed by saw the body lying
in the road and the lion standing beside it, and they went and
reported it in Bethel, where the old prophet lived.

26When the prophet heard the report, he said, "It is the man of God
who disobeyed the LORD's command. The LORD has fulfilled his
word by causing the lion to attack and kill him."

27Then the prophet said to his sons, "Saddle a donkey for me." So
they saddled a donkey, 28and he went out and found the body lying
in the road. The donkey and lion were still standing there beside it,
for the lion had not eaten the body nor attacked the donkey. 29So
the prophet laid the body of the man of God on the donkey and
took it back to the town to mourn over him and bury him. 30He laid
the body in his own grave, crying out in grief, "Oh, my brother!"

31Afterward the prophet said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in
the grave where the man of God is buried. Lay my bones beside his
bones. 32For the message the LORD told him to proclaim against the
altar in Bethel and against the pagan shrines in the towns of
Samaria will certainly come true.”

33But even after this, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil ways. He
continued to choose priests from the common people. He appointed
anyone who wanted to become a priest for the pagan shrines. 34This
became a great sin and resulted in the utter destruction of
Jeroboam’s dynasty from the face of the earth.

1 Kings 14

AHIJAH’S PROPHECY AGAINST JEROBOAM

1At that time Jeroboam’s son Abijah became very sick. 2So
Jeroboam told his wife, “Disguise yourself so that no one will
recognize you as my wife. Then go to the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh
—the man who told me I would become king. 3Take him a gift of
ten loaves of bread, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and ask him
what will happen to the boy.”

4So Jeroboam’s wife went to Ahijah’s home at Shiloh. He was an old
man now and could no longer see. 5But the LORD had told Ahijah,
“Jeroboam’s wife will come here, pretending to be someone else.
She will ask you about her son, for he is very sick. Give her the
answer I give you.”

6So when Ahijah heard her footsteps at the door, he called out,
“Come in, wife of Jeroboam! Why are you pretending to be
someone else?” Then he told her, “I have bad news for you. 7Give
your husband, Jeroboam, this message from the LORD, the God of
Israel: ‘I promoted you from the ranks of the common people and
made you ruler over my people Israel. 8I ripped the kingdom away
from the family of David and gave it to you. But you have not been
like my servant David, who obeyed my commands and followed me

with all his heart and always did whatever I wanted. 9You have
done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made other
gods for yourself and have made me furious with your gold calves.
And since you have turned your back on me, 10I will bring disaster
on your dynasty and will destroy every one of your male
descendants, slave and free alike, anywhere in Israel. I will burn up
your royal dynasty as one burns up trash until it is all gone. 11The
members of Jeroboam's family who die in the city will be eaten by
dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures. I, the
LORD, have spoken.'"

12Then Ahijah said to Jeroboam's wife, "Go on home, and when you
enter the city, the child will die. 13All Israel will mourn for him and
bury him. He is the only member of your family who will have a
proper burial, for this child is the only good thing that the LORD,
the God of Israel, sees in the entire family of Jeroboam.

14"In addition, the LORD will raise up a king over Israel who will
destroy the family of Jeroboam. This will happen today, even now!
15Then the LORD will shake Israel like a reed whipped about in a
stream. He will uproot the people of Israel from this good land that
he gave their ancestors and will scatter them beyond the Euphrates
River,* for they have angered the LORD with the Asherah poles they
have set up for worship. 16He will abandon Israel because Jeroboam
sinned and made Israel sin along with him."

17So Jeroboam's wife returned to Tirzah, and the child died just as
she walked through the door of her home. 18And all Israel buried
him and mourned for him, as the LORD had promised through the
prophet Ahijah.

19The rest of the events in Jeroboam's reign, including all his wars
and how he ruled, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the
Kings of Israel.* 20Jeroboam reigned in Israel twenty-two years. When
Jeroboam died, his son Nadab became the next king.

REHOBOAM RULES IN JUDAH

21Meanwhile, Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah. He was
forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen
years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen from among all
the tribes of Israel as the place to honor his name. Rehoboam's
mother was Naamah, an Ammonite woman.

22During Rehoboam's reign, the people of Judah did what was evil
in the LORD's sight, provoking his anger with their sin, for it was
even worse than that of their ancestors. 23For they also built for
themselves pagan shrines and set up sacred pillars and Asherah
poles on every high hill and under every green tree. 24There were
even male and female shrine prostitutes throughout the land. The
people imitated the detestable practices of the pagan nations the
LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites.

25In the fifth year of King Rehoboam's reign, King Shishak of Egypt
came up and attacked Jerusalem. 26He ransacked the treasuries of
the LORD's Temple and the royal palace; he stole everything,
including all the gold shields Solomon had made. 27King Rehoboam
later replaced them with bronze shields as substitutes, and he
entrusted them to the care of the commanders of the guard who
protected the entrance to the royal palace. 28Whenever the king
went to the Temple of the LORD, the guards would also take the
shields and then return them to the guardroom.

29The rest of the events in Rehoboam's reign and everything he did
are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.* 30There
was constant war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 31When
Rehoboam died, he was buried among his ancestors in the City of
David. His mother was Naamah, an Ammonite woman. Then his son
Abijam* became the next king.

ABIJAM RULES IN JUDAH

1Abijam* began to rule over Judah in the eighteenth year of
Jeroboam's reign in Israel. 2He reigned in Jerusalem three years. His
mother was Maacah, the granddaughter of Absalom.*

3He committed the same sins as his father before him, and he was
not faithful to the LORD his God, as his ancestor David had been.
4But for David's sake, the LORD his God allowed his descendants to
continue ruling, shining like a lamp, and he gave Abijam a son to
rule after him in Jerusalem. 5For David had done what was pleasing
in the LORD's sight and had obeyed the LORD's commands
throughout his life, except in the affair concerning Uriah the Hittite.

6There was war between Abijam and Jeroboam* throughout
Abijam's reign. 7The rest of the events in Abijam's reign and
everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings
of Judah.* There was constant war between Abijam and Jeroboam.
8When Abijam died, he was buried in the City of David. Then his
son Asa became the next king.

ASA RULES IN JUDAH

9Asa began to rule over Judah in the twentieth year of Jeroboam's
reign in Israel. 10He reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. His
grandmother* was Maacah, the granddaughter of Absalom.

11Asa did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, as his ancestor
David had done. 12He banished the male and female shrine
prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols* his ancestors
had made. 13He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her
position as queen mother because she had made an obscene
Asherah pole. He cut down her obscene pole and burned it in the
Kidron Valley. 14Although the pagan shrines were not removed,
Asa's heart remained completely faithful to the LORD throughout
his life. 15He brought into the Temple of the LORD the silver and
gold and the various items that he and his father had dedicated.

16There was constant war between King Asa of Judah and King
Baasha of Israel. 17King Baasha of Israel invaded Judah and fortified
Ramah in order to prevent anyone from entering or leaving King
Asa's territory in Judah.

18Asa responded by removing all the silver and gold that was left in
the treasuries of the Temple of the LORD and the royal palace. He
sent it with some of his officials to Ben-hadad son of Tabrimmon,
son of Hezion, the king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus,
along with this message:

19"Let there be a treaty* between you and me like the one between
your father and my father. See, I am sending you a gift of silver and
gold. Break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel so that he will
leave me alone."

20Ben-hadad agreed to King Asa's request and sent the commanders
of his army to attack the towns of Israel. They conquered the towns
of Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, and all Kinnereth, and all the land
of Naphtali. 21As soon as Baasha of Israel heard what was
happening, he abandoned his project of fortifying Ramah and
withdrew to Tirzah. 22Then King Asa sent an order throughout
Judah, requiring that everyone, without exception, help to carry
away the building stones and timbers that Baasha had been using to
fortify Ramah. Asa used these materials to fortify the town of Geba
in Benjamin and the town of Mizpah.

23The rest of the events in Asa's reign—the extent of his power,
everything he did, and the names of the cities he built—are
recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.* In his old
age his feet became diseased. 24When Asa died, he was buried with
his ancestors in the City of David.

Then Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, became the next king.

NADAB RULES IN ISRAEL

25Nadab son of Jeroboam began to rule over Israel in the second
year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned in Israel two years.
26But he did what was evil in the LORD's sight and followed the
example of his father, continuing the sins that Jeroboam had led
Israel to commit.

27Then Baasha son of Ahijah, from the tribe of Issachar, plotted
against Nadab and assassinated him while he and the Israelite army
were laying siege to the Philistine town of Gibbethon. 28Baasha
killed Nadab in the third year of King Asa's reign in Judah, and he
became the next king of Israel.

29He immediately slaughtered all the descendants of King
Jeroboam, so that not one of the royal family was left, just as the
LORD had promised concerning Jeroboam by the prophet Ahijah
from Shiloh. 30This was done because Jeroboam had provoked the
anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, by the sins he had committed
and the sins he had led Israel to commit.

31The rest of the events in Nadab's reign and everything he did are
recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

BAASHA RULES IN ISRAEL

32There was constant war between King Asa of Judah and King
Baasha of Israel. 33Baasha son of Ahijah began to rule over all Israel
in the third year of King Asa's reign in Judah. Baasha reigned in
Tirzah twenty-four years. 34But he did what was evil in the LORD's
sight and followed the example of Jeroboam, continuing the sins
that Jeroboam had led Israel to commit.

1 Kings 16

1This message from the LORD was delivered to King Baasha by the

prophet Jehu son of Hanani: 2“I lifted you out of the dust to make
you ruler of my people Israel, but you have followed the evil
example of Jeroboam. You have provoked my anger by causing my
people Israel to sin. 3So now I will destroy you and your family, just
as I destroyed the descendants of Jeroboam son of Nebat. 4The
members of Baasha’s family who die in the city will be eaten by
dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures.”

5The rest of the events in Baasha’s reign and the extent of his power
are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.* 6When
Baasha died, he was buried in Tirzah. Then his son Elah became the
next king.

7The message from the LORD against Baasha and his family came
through the prophet Jehu son of Hanani. It was delivered because
Baasha had done what was evil in the LORD’s sight (just as the
family of Jeroboam had done), and also because Baasha had
destroyed the family of Jeroboam. The LORD’s anger was provoked
by Baasha’s sins.

ELAH RULES IN ISRAEL

8Elah son of Baasha began to rule over Israel in the twenty-sixth
year of King Asa’s reign in Judah. He reigned in the city of Tirzah
for two years.

9Then Zimri, who commanded half of the royal chariots, made plans
to kill him. One day in Tirzah, Elah was getting drunk at the home
of Arza, the supervisor of the palace. 10Zimri walked in and struck
him down and killed him. This happened in the twenty-seventh
year of King Asa’s reign in Judah. Then Zimri became the next king.

11Zimri immediately killed the entire royal family of Baasha,
leaving him not even a single male child. He even destroyed distant
relatives and friends. 12So Zimri destroyed the dynasty of Baasha as
the LORD had promised through the prophet Jehu. 13This happened
because of all the sins Baasha and his son Elah had committed, and

because of the sins they led Israel to commit. They provoked the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, with their worthless idols.

14The rest of the events in Elah's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

ZIMRI RULES IN ISRAEL

15Zimri began to rule over Israel in the twenty-seventh year of King Asa's reign in Judah, but his reign in Tirzah lasted only seven days. The army of Israel was then attacking the Philistine town of Gibbethon. 16When they heard that Zimri had committed treason and had assassinated the king, that very day they chose Omri, commander of the army, as the new king of Israel. 17So Omri led the entire army of Israel up from Gibbethon to attack Tirzah, Israel's capital. 18When Zimri saw that the city had been taken, he went into the citadel of the palace and burned it down over himself and died in the flames. 19For he, too, had done what was evil in the LORD's sight. He followed the example of Jeroboam in all the sins he had committed and led Israel to commit.

20The rest of the events in Zimri's reign and his conspiracy are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

OMRI RULES IN ISRAEL

21But now the people of Israel were split into two factions. Half the people tried to make Tibni son of Ginath their king, while the other half supported Omri. 22But Omri's supporters defeated the supporters of Tibni. So Tibni was killed, and Omri became the next king.

23Omri began to rule over Israel in the thirty-first year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned twelve years in all, six of them in Tirzah. 24Then Omri bought the hill now known as Samaria from its owner, Shemer, for 150 pounds of silver.* He built a city on it and called the city Samaria in honor of Shemer.

25But Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight, even more than
any of the kings before him. 26He followed the example of Jeroboam
son of Nebat in all the sins he had committed and led Israel to
commit. The people provoked the anger of the LORD, the God of
Israel, with their worthless idols.

27The rest of the events in Omri's reign, the extent of his power, and
everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings
of Israel.* 28When Omri died, he was buried in Samaria. Then his son
Ahab became the next king.

SAMARIA

AHAB RULES IN ISRAEL

29Ahab son of Omri began to rule over Israel in the thirty-eighth
year of King Asa's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria twenty-
two years. 30But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD's
sight, even more than any of the kings before him. 31And as though
it were not enough to follow the sinful example of Jeroboam, he
married Jezebel, the daughter of King Ethbaal of the Sidonians, and
he began to bow down in worship of Baal. 32First Ahab built a
temple and an altar for Baal in Samaria. 33Then he set up an
Asherah pole. He did more to provoke the anger of the LORD, the
God of Israel, than any of the other kings of Israel before him.

34It was during his reign that Hiel, a man from Bethel, rebuilt
Jericho. When he laid its foundations, it cost him the life of his
oldest son, Abiram. And when he completed it and set up its gates,
it cost him the life of his youngest son, Segub.* This all happened
according to the message from the LORD concerning Jericho spoken
by Joshua son of Nun.

1 Kings 17

ELIJAH FED BY RAVENS

1Now Elijah, who was from Tishbe in Gilead, told King Ahab, “As
surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives—the God I serve—there
will be no dew or rain during the next few years until I give the
word!”

2Then the LORD said to Elijah, 3“Go to the east and hide by Kerith
Brook, near where it enters the Jordan River. 4Drink from the brook
and eat what the ravens bring you, for I have commanded them to
bring you food.”

5So Elijah did as the LORD told him and camped beside Kerith
Brook, east of the Jordan. 6The ravens brought him bread and meat
each morning and evening, and he drank from the brook. 7But after
a while the brook dried up, for there was no rainfall anywhere in
the land.

THE WIDOW AT ZAREPHATH

8Then the LORD said to Elijah, 9“Go and live in the village of
Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there
to feed you.”

10So he went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village,
he saw a widow gathering sticks, and he asked her, “Would you
please bring me a little water in a cup?” 11As she was going to get it,
he called to her, “Bring me a bite of bread, too.”

12But she said, “I swear by the LORD your God that I don’t have a
single piece of bread in the house. And I have only a handful of
flour left in the jar and a little cooking oil in the bottom of the jug. I
was just gathering a few sticks to cook this last meal, and then my

son and I will die.”

13But Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid! Go ahead and do just what
you’ve said, but make a little bread for me first. Then use what’s left
to prepare a meal for yourself and your son. 14For this is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says: There will always be flour and olive
oil left in your containers until the time when the LORD sends rain
and the crops grow again!”

15So she did as Elijah said, and she and Elijah and her family
continued to eat for many days. 16There was always enough flour
and olive oil left in the containers, just as the LORD had promised
through Elijah.

HEALING 1 KINGS 17:17-24

17Some time later the woman’s son became sick. He grew worse and
worse, and finally he died. 18Then she said to Elijah, “O man of
God, what have you done to me? Have you come here to point out
my sins and kill my son?”

19But Elijah replied, “Give me your son.” And he took the child’s
body from her arms, carried him up the stairs to the room where he
was staying, and laid the body on his bed. 20Then Elijah cried out to
the LORD, “O LORD my God, why have you brought tragedy to this
widow who has opened her home to me, causing her son to die?”

21And he stretched himself out over the child three times and cried
out to the LORD, “O LORD my God, please let this child’s life return
to him.” 22The LORD heard Elijah’s prayer, and the life of the child
returned, and he revived! 23Then Elijah brought him down from the
upper room and gave him to his mother. “Look!” he said. “Your son
is alive!”

24Then the woman told Elijah, “Now I know for sure that you are a
man of God, and that the LORD truly speaks through you.”

MOUNT CARMEL

1 Kings 18

THE CONTEST ON MOUNT CARMEL

1Later on, in the third year of the drought, the LORD said to Elijah,
“Go and present yourself to King Ahab. Tell him that I will soon
send rain!” 2So Elijah went to appear before Ahab.

Meanwhile, the famine had become very severe in Samaria. 3So
Ahab summoned Obadiah, who was in charge of the palace.
(Obadiah was a devoted follower of the LORD. 4Once when Jezebel
had tried to kill all the LORD’s prophets, Obadiah had hidden 100
of them in two caves. He put fifty prophets in each cave and
supplied them with food and water.) 5Ahab said to Obadiah, “We
must check every spring and valley in the land to see if we can find
enough grass to save at least some of my horses and mules.” 6So
they divided the land between them. Ahab went one way by
himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7As Obadiah was walking along, he suddenly saw Elijah coming
toward him. Obadiah recognized him at once and bowed low to the
ground before him. “Is it really you, my lord Elijah?” he asked.

8“Yes, it is,” Elijah replied. “Now go and tell your master, ‘Elijah is
here.’”

9“Oh, sir,” Obadiah protested, “what harm have I done to you that
you are sending me to my death at the hands of Ahab? 10For I swear
by the LORD your God that the king has searched every nation and
kingdom on earth from end to end to find you. And each time he
was told, ‘Elijah isn’t here,’ King Ahab forced the king of that nation
to swear to the truth of his claim. 11And now you say, ‘Go and tell
your master, “Elijah is here.”’ 12But as soon as I leave you, the Spirit
of the LORD will carry you away to who knows where. When Ahab
comes and cannot find you, he will kill me. Yet I have been a true
servant of the LORD all my life. 13Has no one told you, my lord,
about the time when Jezebel was trying to kill the LORD’s
prophets? I hid 100 of them in two caves and supplied them with
food and water. 14And now you say, ‘Go and tell your master,
“Elijah is here.”’ Sir, if I do that, Ahab will certainly kill me.”

15But Elijah said, “I swear by the LORD Almighty, in whose
presence I stand, that I will present myself to Ahab this very day.”

16So Obadiah went to tell Ahab that Elijah had come, and Ahab
went out to meet Elijah. 17When Ahab saw him, he exclaimed, “So,
is it really you, you troublemaker of Israel?”

18“I have made no trouble for Israel,” Elijah replied. “You and your
family are the troublemakers, for you have refused to obey the
commands of the LORD and have worshiped the images of Baal
instead. 19Now summon all Israel to join me at Mount Carmel, along
with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah who
are supported by Jezebel.*”

20So Ahab summoned all the people of Israel and the prophets to
Mount Carmel. 21Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, “How
much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the
LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!” But
the people were completely silent.

22Then Elijah said to them, “I am the only prophet of the LORD who
is left, but Baal has 450 prophets. 23Now bring two bulls. The
prophets of Baal may choose whichever one they wish and cut it
into pieces and lay it on the wood of their altar, but without setting
fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood on the
altar, but not set fire to it. 24Then call on the name of your god, and
I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by
setting fire to the wood is the true God!” And all the people agreed.

25Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “You go first, for there
are many of you. Choose one of the bulls, and prepare it and call on
the name of your god. But do not set fire to the wood.”

26So they prepared one of the bulls and placed it on the altar. Then
they called on the name of Baal from morning until noontime,
shouting, “O Baal, answer us!” But there was no reply of any kind.

Then they danced, hobbling around the altar they had made.

27About noontime Elijah began mocking them. “You’ll have to shout
louder,” he scoffed, “for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is
daydreaming, or is relieving himself.* Or maybe he is away on a
trip, or is asleep and needs to be wakened!”

28So they shouted louder, and following their normal custom, they
cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out.
29They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice,
but still there was no sound, no reply, no response.

30Then Elijah called to the people, “Come over here!” They all
crowded around him as he repaired the altar of the LORD that had
been torn down. 31He took twelve stones, one to represent each of
the tribes of Israel,*32and he used the stones to rebuild the altar in
the name of the LORD. Then he dug a trench around the altar large
enough to hold about three gallons.*33He piled wood on the altar,
cut the bull into pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood.*

Then he said, “Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water
over the offering and the wood.”

34After they had done this, he said, “Do the same thing again!” And
when they were finished, he said, “Now do it a third time!” So they
did as he said, 35and the water ran around the altar and even filled
the trench.

36At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the
prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, “O LORD, God of
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,* prove today that you are God in Israel
and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your
command. 37O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will
know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have brought them
back to yourself.”

38Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven and
burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It
even licked up all the water in the trench! 39And when all the
people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, “The
LORD—he is God! Yes, the LORD is God!”

40Then Elijah commanded, “Seize all the prophets of Baal. Don’t let
a single one escape!” So the people seized them all, and Elijah took
them down to the Kishon Valley and killed them there.

ELIJAH PRAYS FOR RAIN

41Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go get something to eat and drink, for I
hear a mighty rainstorm coming!”

42So Ahab went to eat and drink. But Elijah climbed to the top of
Mount Carmel and bowed low to the ground and prayed with his
face between his knees.

43Then he said to his servant, “Go and look out toward the sea.”

The servant went and looked, then returned to Elijah and said, “I
didn’t see anything.”

Seven times Elijah told him to go and look. 44Finally the seventh
time, his servant told him, “I saw a little cloud about the size of a
man’s hand rising from the sea.”

Then Elijah shouted, “Hurry to Ahab and tell him, ‘Climb into your
chariot and go back home. If you don’t hurry, the rain will stop
you!’”

45And soon the sky was black with clouds. A heavy wind brought a
terrific rainstorm, and Ahab left quickly for Jezreel. 46Then the
LORD gave special strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his
belt* and ran ahead of Ahab’s chariot all the way to the entrance of

Jezreel.

1 Kings 19

ELIJAH FLEES TO SINAI

1When Ahab got home, he told Jezebel everything Elijah had done,
including the way he had killed all the prophets of Baal. 2So Jezebel
sent this message to Elijah: “May the gods strike me and even kill
me if by this time tomorrow I have not killed you just as you killed
them.”

3Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a
town in Judah, and he left his servant there. 4Then he went on

alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, LORD,” he said. “Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died.”

5Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree. But as he was sleeping, an angel touched him and told him, “Get up and eat!” 6He looked around and there beside his head was some bread baked on hot stones and a jar of water! So he ate and drank and lay down again.

7Then the angel of the LORD came again and touched him and said, “Get up and eat some more, or the journey ahead will be too much for you.”

8So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai,* the mountain of God. 9There he came to a cave, where he spent the night.

THE LORD SPEAKS TO ELIJAH

But the LORD said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

10Elijah replied, “I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.”

11“Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of

a gentle whisper. 13When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

And a voice said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

14He replied again, “I have zealously served the LORD God Almighty. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed every one of your prophets. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me, too.”

15Then the LORD told him, “Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive there, anoint Hazael to be king of Aram. 16Then anoint Jehu grandson of Nimshi* to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from the town of Abel-meholah to replace you as my prophet. 17Anyone who escapes from Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and those who escape Jehu will be killed by Elisha! 18Yet I will preserve 7,000 others in Israel who have never bowed down to Baal or kissed him!”

THE CALL OF ELISHA

19So Elijah went and found Elisha son of Shaphat plowing a field. There were twelve teams of oxen in the field, and Elisha was plowing with the twelfth team. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak across his shoulders and then walked away. 20Elisha left the oxen standing there, ran after Elijah, and said to him, “First let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and then I will go with you!”

Elijah replied, “Go on back, but think about what I have done to you.”

21So Elisha returned to his oxen and slaughtered them. He used the wood from the plow to build a fire to roast their flesh. He passed around the meat to the townspeople, and they all ate. Then he went with Elijah as his assistant.

1 Kings 20

BEN-HADAD ATTACKS SAMARIA

1About that time King Ben-hadad of Aram mobilized his army,
supported by the chariots and horses of thirty-two allied kings.
They went to besiege Samaria, the capital of Israel, and launched
attacks against it. 2Ben-hadad sent messengers into the city to relay
this message to King Ahab of Israel: “This is what Ben-hadad says:
3‘Your silver and gold are mine, and so are your wives and the best
of your children!’”

4“All right, my lord the king,” Israel’s king replied. “All that I have
is yours!”

5Soon Ben-hadad’s messengers returned again and said, “This is
what Ben-hadad says: ‘I have already demanded that you give me
your silver, gold, wives, and children. 6But about this time
tomorrow I will send my officials to search your palace and the
homes of your officials. They will take away everything you
consider valuable!’”

7Then Ahab summoned all the elders of the land and said to them,
“Look how this man is stirring up trouble! I already agreed with his
demand that I give him my wives and children and silver and gold.”

8“Don’t give in to any more demands,” all the elders and the people
advised.

9So Ahab told the messengers from Ben-hadad, “Say this to my lord the king: ‘I will give you everything you asked for the first time, but I cannot accept this last demand of yours.’” So the messengers returned to Ben-hadad with that response.

10Then Ben-hadad sent this message to Ahab: “May the gods strike me and even kill me if there remains enough dust from Samaria to provide even a handful for each of my soldiers.”

11The king of Israel sent back this answer: “A warrior putting on his sword for battle should not boast like a warrior who has already won.”

12Ahab’s reply reached Ben-hadad and the other kings as they were drinking in their tents.* “Prepare to attack!” Ben-hadad commanded his officers. So they prepared to attack the city.

AHAB’S VICTORY OVER BEN-HADAD

13Then a certain prophet came to see King Ahab of Israel and told him, “This is what the LORD says: Do you see all these enemy forces? Today I will hand them all over to you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

14Ahab asked, “How will he do it?”

And the prophet replied, “This is what the LORD says: The troops of the provincial commanders will do it.”

“Should we attack first?” Ahab asked.

“Yes,” the prophet answered.

15So Ahab mustered the troops of the 232 provincial commanders. Then he called out the rest of the army of Israel, some 7,000 men.
16About noontime, as Ben-hadad and the thirty-two allied kings

were still in their tents drinking themselves into a stupor, 17the troops of the provincial commanders marched out of the city as the first contingent.

As they approached, Ben-hadad's scouts reported to him, "Some troops are coming from Samaria."

18"Take them alive," Ben-hadad commanded, "whether they have come for peace or for war."

19But Ahab's provincial commanders and the entire army had now come out to fight. 20Each Israelite soldier killed his Aramean opponent, and suddenly the entire Aramean army panicked and fled. The Israelites chased them, but King Ben-hadad and a few of his charioteers escaped on horses. 21However, the king of Israel destroyed the other horses and chariots and slaughtered the Arameans.

22Afterward the prophet said to King Ahab, "Get ready for another attack. Begin making plans now, for the king of Aram will come back next spring.* "

BEN-HADAD'S SECOND ATTACK

23After their defeat, Ben-hadad's officers said to him, "The Israelite gods are gods of the hills; that is why they won. But we can beat them easily on the plains. 24Only this time replace the kings with field commanders! 25Recruit another army like the one you lost. Give us the same number of horses, chariots, and men, and we will fight against them on the plains. There's no doubt that we will beat them." So King Ben-hadad did as they suggested.

26The following spring he called up the Aramean army and marched out against Israel, this time at Aphek. 27Israel then mustered its army, set up supply lines, and marched out for battle. But the Israelite army looked like two little flocks of goats in comparison to

the vast Aramean forces that filled the countryside!

28Then the man of God went to the king of Israel and said, “This is what the LORD says: The Arameans have said, ‘The LORD is a god of the hills and not of the plains.’ So I will defeat this vast army for you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.”

29The two armies camped opposite each other for seven days, and on the seventh day the battle began. The Israelites killed 100,000 Aramean foot soldiers in one day. 30The rest fled into the town of Aphek, but the wall fell on them and killed another 27,000. Ben-hadad fled into the town and hid in a secret room.

31Ben-hadad’s officers said to him, “Sir, we have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. So let’s humble ourselves by wearing burlap around our waists and putting ropes on our heads, and surrender to the king of Israel. Then perhaps he will let you live.”

32So they put on burlap and ropes, and they went to the king of Israel and begged, “Your servant Ben-hadad says, ‘Please let me live!’”

The king of Israel responded, “Is he still alive? He is my brother!”

33The men took this as a good sign and quickly picked up on his words. “Yes,” they said, “your brother Ben-hadad!”

“Go and get him,” the king of Israel told them. And when Ben-hadad arrived, Ahab invited him up into his chariot.

34Ben-hadad told him, “I will give back the towns my father took from your father, and you may establish places of trade in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria.”

Then Ahab said, “I will release you under these conditions.” So they made a new treaty, and Ben-hadad was set free.

A PROPHET CONDEMNS AHAB

35Meanwhile, the LORD instructed one of the group of prophets to
say to another man, “Hit me!” But the man refused to hit the
prophet. 36Then the prophet told him, “Because you have not
obeyed the voice of the LORD, a lion will kill you as soon as you
leave me.” And when he had gone, a lion did attack and kill him.

37Then the prophet turned to another man and said, “Hit me!” So he
struck the prophet and wounded him.

38The prophet placed a bandage over his eyes to disguise himself
and then waited beside the road for the king. 39As the king passed
by, the prophet called out to him, “Sir, I was in the thick of battle,
and suddenly a man brought me a prisoner. He said, ‘Guard this
man; if for any reason he gets away, you will either die or pay a
fine of seventy-five pounds* of silver!’ 40But while I was busy doing
something else, the prisoner disappeared!”

“Well, it’s your own fault,” the king replied. “You have brought the
judgment on yourself.”

41Then the prophet quickly pulled the bandage from his eyes, and
the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. 42The
prophet said to him, “This is what the LORD says: Because you have
spared the man I said must be destroyed,* now you must die in his
place, and your people will die instead of his people.” 43So the king
of Israel went home to Samaria angry and sullen.

1 Kings 21

NABOTH’S VINEYARD

1Now there was a man named Naboth, from Jezreel, who owned a
vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. 2One
day Ahab said to Naboth, “Since your vineyard is so convenient to
my palace, I would like to buy it to use as a vegetable garden. I will

give you a better vineyard in exchange, or if you prefer, I will pay you for it."

3But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance that was passed down by my ancestors."

4So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth's answer. The king went to bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat!

5"What's the matter?" his wife Jezebel asked him. "What's made you so upset that you're not eating?"

6"I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or trade it, but he refused!" Ahab told her.

7"Are you the king of Israel or not?" Jezebel demanded. "Get up and eat something, and don't worry about it. I'll get you Naboth's vineyard!"

8So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and other leaders of the town where Naboth lived. 9In her letters she commanded: "Call the citizens together for a time of fasting, and give Naboth a place of honor. 10And then seat two scoundrels across from him who will accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death."

11So the elders and other town leaders followed the instructions Jezebel had written in the letters. 12They called for a fast and put Naboth at a prominent place before the people. 13Then the two scoundrels came and sat down across from him. And they accused Naboth before all the people, saying, "He cursed God and the king." So he was dragged outside the town and stoned to death. 14The town leaders then sent word to Jezebel, "Naboth has been stoned to death."

15When Jezebel heard the news, she said to Ahab, “You know the
vineyard Naboth wouldn’t sell you? Well, you can have it now! He’s
dead!” 16So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth
to claim it.

17But the LORD said to Elijah,*18“Go down to meet King Ahab of
Israel, who rules in Samaria. He will be at Naboth’s vineyard in
Jezreel, claiming it for himself. 19Give him this message: ‘This is
what the LORD says: Wasn’t it enough that you killed Naboth? Must
you rob him, too? Because you have done this, dogs will lick your
blood at the very place where they licked the blood of Naboth!’”

20“So, my enemy, you have found me!” Ahab exclaimed to Elijah.

“Yes,” Elijah answered, “I have come because you have sold
yourself to what is evil in the LORD’s sight. 21So now the LORD
says,* ‘I will bring disaster on you and consume you. I will destroy
every one of your male descendants, slave and free alike, anywhere
in Israel! 22I am going to destroy your family as I did the family of
Jeroboam son of Nebat and the family of Baasha son of Ahijah, for
you have made me very angry and have led Israel into sin.’

23“And regarding Jezebel, the LORD says, ‘Dogs will eat Jezebel’s
body at the plot of land in Jezreel.*’

24“The members of Ahab’s family who die in the city will be eaten
by dogs, and those who die in the field will be eaten by vultures.”

25(No one else so completely sold himself to what was evil in the
LORD’s sight as Ahab did under the influence of his wife Jezebel.
26His worst outrage was worshiping idols* just as the Amorites had
done—the people whom the LORD had driven out from the land
ahead of the Israelites.)

27But when Ahab heard this message, he tore his clothing, dressed
in burlap, and fasted. He even slept in burlap and went about in
deep mourning.

28Then another message from the LORD came to Elijah: 29“Do you
see how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has done
this, I will not do what I promised during his lifetime. It will
happen to his sons; I will destroy his dynasty.”

1 Kings 22

JEHOSHAPHAT AND AHAB

1For three years there was no war between Aram and Israel. 2Then
during the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit King
Ahab of Israel. 3During the visit, the king of Israel said to his
officials, “Do you realize that the town of Ramoth-gilead belongs to
us? And yet we’ve done nothing to recapture it from the king of
Aram!”

4Then he turned to Jehoshaphat and asked, “Will you join me in
battle to recover Ramoth-gilead?”

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, “Why, of course! You and
I are as one. My troops are your troops, and my horses are your
horses.” 5Then Jehoshaphat added, “But first let’s find out what the
LORD says.”

6So the king of Israel summoned the prophets, about 400 of them,
and asked them, “Should I go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or
should I hold back?”

They all replied, “Yes, go right ahead! The Lord will give the king
victory.”

7But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there not also a prophet of the LORD

here? We should ask him the same question."

8The king of Israel replied to Jehoshaphat, "There is one more man who could consult the LORD for us, but I hate him. He never prophesies anything but trouble for me! His name is Micaiah son of Imlah."

Jehoshaphat replied, "That's not the way a king should talk! Let's hear what he has to say."

9So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Quick! Bring Micaiah son of Imlah."

MICAIAH PROPHESIES AGAINST AHAB

10King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, dressed in their royal robes, were sitting on thrones at the threshing floor near the gate of Samaria. All of Ahab's prophets were prophesying there in front of them. 11One of them, Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, made some iron horns and proclaimed, "This is what the LORD says: With these horns you will gore the Arameans to death!"

12All the other prophets agreed. "Yes," they said, "go up to Ramoth-gilead and be victorious, for the LORD will give the king victory!"

13Meanwhile, the messenger who went to get Micaiah said to him, "Look, all the prophets are promising victory for the king. Be sure that you agree with them and promise success."

14But Micaiah replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, I will say only what the LORD tells me to say."

15When Micaiah arrived before the king, Ahab asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should we hold back?"

Micaiah replied sarcastically, “Yes, go up and be victorious, for the LORD will give the king victory!”

16But the king replied sharply, “How many times must I demand that you speak only the truth to me when you speak for the LORD?”

17Then Micaiah told him, “In a vision I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, ‘Their master has been killed.* Send them home in peace.’”

18“Didn’t I tell you?” the king of Israel exclaimed to Jehoshaphat. “He never prophesies anything but trouble for me.”

19Then Micaiah continued, “Listen to what the LORD says! I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the armies of heaven around him, on his right and on his left. 20And the LORD said, ‘Who can entice Ahab to go into battle against Ramoth-gilead so he can be killed?’

“There were many suggestions, 21and finally a spirit approached the LORD and said, ‘I can do it!’

22“‘How will you do this?’ the LORD asked.

“And the spirit replied, ‘I will go out and inspire all of Ahab’s prophets to speak lies.’

“‘You will succeed,’ said the LORD. ‘Go ahead and do it.’

23“So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all your prophets. For the LORD has pronounced your doom.”

24Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah walked up to Micaiah and slapped him across the face. “Since when did the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you?” he demanded.

25And Micaiah replied, “You will find out soon enough when you
are trying to hide in some secret room!”

26“Arrest him!” the king of Israel ordered. “Take him back to Amon,
the governor of the city, and to my son Joash. 27Give them this
order from the king: ‘Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing
but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!’”

28But Micaiah replied, “If you return safely, it will mean that the
LORD has not spoken through me!” Then he added to those
standing around, “Everyone mark my words!”

THE DEATH OF AHAB

29So King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah led their
armies against Ramoth-gilead. 30The king of Israel said to
Jehoshaphat, “As we go into battle, I will disguise myself so no one
will recognize me, but you wear your royal robes.” So the king of
Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

31Meanwhile, the king of Aram had issued these orders to his thirty-
two chariot commanders: “Attack only the king of Israel. Don’t
bother with anyone else!” 32So when the Aramean chariot
commanders saw Jehoshaphat in his royal robes, they went after
him. “There is the king of Israel!” they shouted. But when
Jehoshaphat called out, 33the chariot commanders realized he was
not the king of Israel, and they stopped chasing him.

34An Aramean soldier, however, randomly shot an arrow at the
Israelite troops and hit the king of Israel between the joints of his
armor. “Turn the horses* and get me out of here!” Ahab groaned to
the driver of his chariot. “I’m badly wounded!”

35The battle raged all that day, and the king remained propped up

in his chariot facing the Arameans. The blood from his wound ran down to the floor of his chariot, and as evening arrived he died.
36Just as the sun was setting, the cry ran through his troops: “We’re done for! Run for your lives!”

37So the king died, and his body was taken to Samaria and buried there. 38Then his chariot was washed beside the pool of Samaria, and dogs came and licked his blood at the place where the prostitutes bathed,* just as the LORD had promised.

39The rest of the events in Ahab’s reign and everything he did, including the story of the ivory palace and the towns he built, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.* 40So Ahab died, and his son Ahaziah became the next king.

JESUS’ FAMILY 1 KINGS 22:41-50

JEHOSHAPHAT RULES IN JUDAH

41Jehoshaphat son of Asa began to rule over Judah in the fourth year of King Ahab’s reign in Israel. 42Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

43Jehoshaphat was a good king, following the example of his father,

Asa. He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight. *During his
reign, however, he failed to remove all the pagan shrines, and the
people still offered sacrifices and burned incense there.
44Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel.

45The rest of the events in Jehoshaphat's reign, the extent of his
power, and the wars he waged are recorded in *The Book of the
History of the Kings of Judah.* 46He banished from the land the rest of
the male and female shrine prostitutes, who still continued their
practices from the days of his father, Asa.

47(There was no king in Edom at that time, only a deputy.)

48Jehoshaphat also built a fleet of trading ships* to sail to Ophir for
gold. But the ships never set sail, for they met with disaster in their
home port of Ezion-geber. 49At one time Ahaziah son of Ahab had
proposed to Jehoshaphat, "Let my men sail with your men in the
ships." But Jehoshaphat refused the request.

50When Jehoshaphat died, he was buried with his ancestors in the
City of David. Then his son Jehoram became the next king.

AHAZIAH RULES IN ISRAEL

51Ahaziah son of Ahab began to rule over Israel in the seventeenth
year of King Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria
two years. 52But he did what was evil in the LORD's sight, following
the example of his father and mother and the example of Jeroboam
son of Nebat, who had led Israel to sin. 53He served Baal and
worshiped him, provoking the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel,
just as his father had done.

2 Kings

WELCOME TO

2 KINGS

Second Kings recounts the history of both the northern and southern kingdoms. Reading about the kings of this period will reveal the wickedness and moral decay that will lead to the downfall of both kingdoms. Through his prophets, God warns his people that if they don't confess their sins and turn away from worshiping idols, God will severely punish them. But they don't listen, and the northern kingdom is the first to experience the consequences. The Assyrian Empire swoops down on the nation; devastates the land; seizes the capital, Samaria; and hauls the people off to distant locations. Because of their continual sin and disregard for God, the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel vanish forever.

The southern kingdom, Judah, enjoys some periods of revival under a few good kings who lead the people back to God, but ultimately they, too, reject God and are sent into exile by the powerful Babylonian Empire. Exile, however, will not be the end of God's story for his chosen people.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll touch down for one brief but important stop. You will witness the downfall of the northern kingdom of Israel, when God's judgment sweeps down on them in the form of the mighty Assyrian army. Your next stop is at 2 Kings 17:1.

4 STOPS

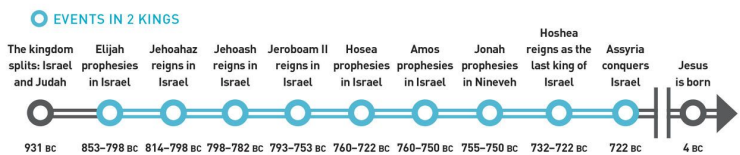
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: On your route, you will read about two great prophets—Elijah and Elisha—and one of the most wicked kings of Israel—Jeroboam II, who contributes to the kingdom's decline and fall. Your next stop is at 2 Kings 2:1.

10 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: This route will give you a detailed overview not only of the wickedness in Israel that brings God's judgment but also of the ministry of the great prophet Elisha. Your next stop is at 2 Kings 2:1.

FINDING JESUS IN 2 KINGS

In 2 Kings, the prophet Elisha performs many miracles that give us a glimpse of the miracles Jesus will perform while on earth. Elisha restored life to a woman's only son and multiplied loaves of bread to feed a crowd of people. Similarly, Jesus showed compassion on a widow whose only son had died and brought him back to life. While Elisha used twenty loaves to feed a hundred people, Jesus multiplied much less to feed many more—and he did it twice (Matthew 14:15-21; 15:32-38). Elisha's compassion and provision were a foretaste of what Jesus would be like when he came.



2 Kings 1

ELIJAH CONFRONTS KING AHAZIAH

1After King Ahab's death, the land of Moab rebelled against Israel.

2One day Israel's new king, Ahaziah, fell through the latticework of an upper room at his palace in Samaria and was seriously injured. So he sent messengers to the temple of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether he would recover.

3But the angel of the LORD told Elijah, who was from Tishbe, "Go and confront the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is there no God in Israel? Why are you going to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether the king will recover? 4Now, therefore, this is what the LORD says: You will never leave the bed you are lying on; you will surely die.'" So Elijah went to deliver the message.

5When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you returned so soon?"

6They replied, "A man came up to us and told us to go back to the king and give him this message. 'This is what the LORD says: Is there no God in Israel? Why are you sending men to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask whether you will recover? Therefore, because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on; you will surely die.'"

7"What sort of man was he?" the king demanded. "What did he look like?"

8They replied, "He was a hairy man,* and he wore a leather belt around his waist."

"Elijah from Tishbe!" the king exclaimed.

9Then he sent an army captain with fifty soldiers to arrest him.
They found him sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to him,
“Man of God, the king has commanded you to come down with us.”

10But Elijah replied to the captain, “If I am a man of God, let fire
come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!” Then
fire fell from heaven and killed them all.

11So the king sent another captain with fifty men. The captain said
to him, “Man of God, the king demands that you come down at
once.”

12Elijah replied, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from
heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!” And again the fire of
God fell from heaven and killed them all.

13Once more the king sent a third captain with fifty men. But this
time the captain went up the hill and fell to his knees before Elijah.
He pleaded with him, “O man of God, please spare my life and the
lives of these, your fifty servants. 14See how the fire from heaven
came down and destroyed the first two groups. But now please
spare my life!”

15Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him,
and don’t be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went with him to
the king.

16And Elijah said to the king, “This is what the LORD says: Why did
you send messengers to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to ask
whether you will recover? Is there no God in Israel to answer your
question? Therefore, because you have done this, you will never
leave the bed you are lying on; you will surely die.”

17So Ahaziah died, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

Since Ahaziah did not have a son to succeed him, his brother Joram* became the next king. This took place in the second year of the reign of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

18The rest of the events in Ahaziah's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

ELIJAH TAKEN INTO HEAVEN

1When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a
whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal. 2And Elijah
said to Elisha, “Stay here, for the LORD has told me to go to
Bethel.”

But Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and you yourself
live, I will never leave you!” So they went down together to Bethel.

3The group of prophets from Bethel came to Elisha and asked him,
“Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master away
from you today?”

“Of course I know,” Elisha answered. “But be quiet about it.”

4Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here, for the LORD has told me to
go to Jericho.”

But Elisha replied again, “As surely as the LORD lives and you
yourself live, I will never leave you.” So they went on together to
Jericho.

5Then the group of prophets from Jericho came to Elisha and asked
him, “Did you know that the LORD is going to take your master
away from you today?”

“Of course I know,” Elisha answered. “But be quiet about it.”

6Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here, for the LORD has told me to
go to the Jordan River.”

But again Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and you
yourself live, I will never leave you.” So they went on together.

7Fifty men from the group of prophets also went and watched from
a distance as Elijah and Elisha stopped beside the Jordan River.
8Then Elijah folded his cloak together and struck the water with it.

The river divided, and the two of them went across on dry ground!

9When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away.”

And Elisha replied, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit and become your successor.”

10“You have asked a difficult thing,” Elijah replied. “If you see me when I am taken from you, then you will get your request. But if not, then you won’t.”

11As they were walking along and talking, suddenly a chariot of fire appeared, drawn by horses of fire. It drove between the two men, separating them, and Elijah was carried by a whirlwind into heaven. 12Elisha saw it and cried out, “My father! My father! I see the chariots and charioteers of Israel!” And as they disappeared from sight, Elisha tore his clothes in distress.

13Elisha picked up Elijah’s cloak, which had fallen when he was taken up. Then Elisha returned to the bank of the Jordan River. 14He struck the water with Elijah’s cloak and cried out, “Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” Then the river divided, and Elisha went across.

15When the group of prophets from Jericho saw from a distance what happened, they exclaimed, “Elijah’s spirit rests upon Elisha!” And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. 16“Sir,” they said, “just say the word and fifty of our strongest men will search the wilderness for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has left him on some mountain or in some valley.”

“No,” Elisha said, “don’t send them.” 17But they kept urging him until they shamed him into agreeing, and he finally said, “All right, send them.” So fifty men searched for three days but did not find Elijah. 18Elisha was still at Jericho when they returned. “Didn’t I tell you not to go?” he asked.

ELISHA'S FIRST MIRACLES

19One day the leaders of the town of Jericho visited Elisha. "We
have a problem, my lord," they told him. "This town is located in
pleasant surroundings, as you can see. But the water is bad, and the
land is unproductive."

20Elisha said, "Bring me a new bowl with salt in it." So they brought
it to him. 21Then he went out to the spring that supplied the town
with water and threw the salt into it. And he said, "This is what the
LORD says: I have purified this water. It will no longer cause death
or infertility.*" 22And the water has remained pure ever since, just
as Elisha said.

23Elisha left Jericho and went up to Bethel. As he was walking along
the road, a group of boys from the town began mocking and making
fun of him. "Go away, baldy!" they chanted. "Go away, baldy!"
24Elisha turned around and looked at them, and he cursed them in
the name of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the woods and
mauled forty-two of them. 25From there Elisha went to Mount
Carmel and finally returned to Samaria.

2 Kings 3

WAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND MOAB

1Ahab's son Joram* began to rule over Israel in the eighteenth year
of King Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria twelve
years. 2He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, but not to the
same extent as his father and mother. He at least tore down the
sacred pillar of Baal that his father had set up. 3Nevertheless, he
continued in the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had committed
and led the people of Israel to commit.

4King Mesha of Moab was a sheep breeder. He used to pay the king
of Israel an annual tribute of 100,000 lambs and the wool of
100,000 rams. 5But after Ahab's death, the king of Moab rebelled
against the king of Israel. 6So King Joram promptly mustered the
army of Israel and marched from Samaria. 7On the way, he sent this
message to King Jehoshaphat of Judah: "The king of Moab has
rebelled against me. Will you join me in battle against him?"

And Jehoshaphat replied, "Why, of course! You and I are as one.
My troops are your troops, and my horses are your horses." 8Then
Jehoshaphat asked, "What route will we take?"

"We will attack from the wilderness of Edom," Joram replied.

9The king of Edom and his troops joined them, and all three armies
traveled along a roundabout route through the wilderness for seven
days. But there was no water for the men or their animals.

10"What should we do?" the king of Israel cried out. "The LORD has
brought the three of us here to let the king of Moab defeat us."

11But King Jehoshaphat of Judah asked, "Is there no prophet of the
LORD with us? If there is, we can ask the LORD what to do through
him."

One of King Joram's officers replied, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to be Elijah's personal assistant.*"

12Jehoshaphat said, "Yes, the LORD speaks through him." So the king of Israel, King Jehoshaphat of Judah, and the king of Edom went to consult with Elisha.

13"Why are you coming to me?"* Elisha asked the king of Israel. "Go to the pagan prophets of your father and mother!"

But King Joram of Israel said, "No! For it was the LORD who called us three kings here—only to be defeated by the king of Moab!"

14Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, I wouldn't even bother with you except for my respect for King Jehoshaphat of Judah. 15Now bring me someone who can play the harp."

While the harp was being played, the power* of the LORD came upon Elisha, 16and he said, "This is what the LORD says: This dry valley will be filled with pools of water! 17You will see neither wind nor rain, says the LORD, but this valley will be filled with water. You will have plenty for yourselves and your cattle and other animals. 18But this is only a simple thing for the LORD, for he will make you victorious over the army of Moab! 19You will conquer the best of their towns, even the fortified ones. You will cut down all their good trees, stop up all their springs, and ruin all their good land with stones."

20The next day at about the time when the morning sacrifice was offered, water suddenly appeared! It was flowing from the direction of Edom, and soon there was water everywhere.

21Meanwhile, when the people of Moab heard about the three armies marching against them, they mobilized every man who was old enough to strap on a sword, and they stationed themselves

along their border. 22But when they got up the next morning, the sun was shining across the water, making it appear red to the Moabites—like blood. 23“It’s blood!” the Moabites exclaimed. “The three armies must have attacked and killed each other! Let’s go, men of Moab, and collect the plunder!”

24But when the Moabites arrived at the Israelite camp, the army of Israel rushed out and attacked them until they turned and ran. The army of Israel chased them into the land of Moab, destroying everything as they went.* 25They destroyed the towns, covered their good land with stones, stopped up all the springs, and cut down all the good trees. Finally, only Kir-hareseth and its stone walls were left, but men with slings surrounded and attacked it.

26When the king of Moab saw that he was losing the battle, he led 700 of his swordsmen in a desperate attempt to break through the enemy lines near the king of Edom, but they failed. 27Then the king of Moab took his oldest son, who would have been the next king, and sacrificed him as a burnt offering on the wall. So there was great anger against Israel,* and the Israelites withdrew and returned to their own land.

2 Kings 4

ELISHA HELPS A POOR WIDOW

1One day the widow of a member of the group of prophets came to
Elisha and cried out, “My husband who served you is dead, and you
know how he feared the LORD. But now a creditor has come,
threatening to take my two sons as slaves.”

2“What can I do to help you?” Elisha asked. “Tell me, what do you
have in the house?”

“Nothing at all, except a flask of olive oil,” she replied.

3And Elisha said, “Borrow as many empty jars as you can from your
friends and neighbors. 4Then go into your house with your sons and
shut the door behind you. Pour olive oil from your flask into the
jars, setting each one aside when it is filled.”

5So she did as she was told. Her sons kept bringing jars to her, and
she filled one after another. 6Soon every container was full to the
brim!

“Bring me another jar,” she said to one of her sons.

“There aren’t any more!” he told her. And then the olive oil stopped flowing.

7When she told the man of God what had happened, he said to her, “Now sell the olive oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on what is left over.”

ELISHA AND THE WOMAN FROM SHUNEM

8One day Elisha went to the town of Shunem. A wealthy woman lived there, and she urged him to come to her home for a meal. After that, whenever he passed that way, he would stop there for something to eat.

9She said to her husband, “I am sure this man who stops in from time to time is a holy man of God. 10Let’s build a small room for him on the roof and furnish it with a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp. Then he will have a place to stay whenever he comes by.”

11One day Elisha returned to Shunem, and he went up to this upper room to rest. 12He said to his servant Gehazi, “Tell the woman from Shunem I want to speak to her.” When she appeared, 13Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tell her, ‘We appreciate the kind concern you have shown us. What can we do for you? Can we put in a good word for you to the king or to the commander of the army?’”

“No,” she replied, “my family takes good care of me.”

14Later Elisha asked Gehazi, “What can we do for her?”

Gehazi replied, “She doesn’t have a son, and her husband is an old man.”

15“Call her back again,” Elisha told him. When the woman returned, Elisha said to her as she stood in the doorway, 16“Next year at this

time you will be holding a son in your arms!”

“No, my lord!” she cried. “O man of God, don’t deceive me and get my hopes up like that.”

17But sure enough, the woman soon became pregnant. And at that time the following year she had a son, just as Elisha had said.

18One day when her child was older, he went out to help his father, who was working with the harvesters. 19Suddenly he cried out, “My head hurts! My head hurts!”

His father said to one of the servants, “Carry him home to his mother.”

20So the servant took him home, and his mother held him on her lap. But around noontime he died. 21She carried him up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and left him there. 22She sent a message to her husband: “Send one of the servants and a donkey so that I can hurry to the man of God and come right back.”

23“Why go today?” he asked. “It is neither a new moon festival nor a Sabbath.”

But she said, “It will be all right.”

24So she saddled the donkey and said to the servant, “Hurry! Don’t slow down unless I tell you to.”

25As she approached the man of God at Mount Carmel, Elisha saw her in the distance. He said to Gehazi, “Look, the woman from Shunem is coming. 26Run out to meet her and ask her, ‘Is everything all right with you, your husband, and your child?’”

“Yes,” the woman told Gehazi, “everything is fine.”

27But when she came to the man of God at the mountain, she fell to
the ground before him and caught hold of his feet. Gehazi began to
push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone. She is
deeply troubled, but the LORD has not told me what it is.”

28Then she said, “Did I ask you for a son, my lord? And didn’t I say,
‘Don’t deceive me and get my hopes up’?”

29Then Elisha said to Gehazi, “Get ready to travel*; take my staff
and go! Don’t talk to anyone along the way. Go quickly and lay the
staff on the child’s face.”

30But the boy’s mother said, “As surely as the LORD lives and you
yourself live, I won’t go home unless you go with me.” So Elisha
returned with her.

31Gehazi hurried on ahead and laid the staff on the child’s face, but
nothing happened. There was no sign of life. He returned to meet
Elisha and told him, “The child is still dead.”

32When Elisha arrived, the child was indeed dead, lying there on
the prophet’s bed. 33He went in alone and shut the door behind him
and prayed to the LORD. 34Then he lay down on the child’s body,
placing his mouth on the child’s mouth, his eyes on the child’s eyes,
and his hands on the child’s hands. And as he stretched out on him,
the child’s body began to grow warm again! 35Elisha got up, walked
back and forth across the room once, and then stretched himself out
again on the child. This time the boy sneezed seven times and
opened his eyes!

36Then Elisha summoned Gehazi. “Call the child’s mother!” he said.
And when she came in, Elisha said, “Here, take your son!” 37She fell
at his feet and bowed before him, overwhelmed with gratitude.
Then she took her son in her arms and carried him downstairs.

MIRACLES DURING A FAMINE

38Elisha now returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land.
One day as the group of prophets was seated before him, he said to
his servant, “Put a large pot on the fire, and make some stew for the
rest of the group.”

39One of the young men went out into the field to gather herbs and
came back with a pocketful of wild gourds. He shredded them and
put them into the pot without realizing they were poisonous.
40Some of the stew was served to the men. But after they had eaten
a bite or two they cried out, “Man of God, there’s poison in this
stew!” So they would not eat it.

41Elisha said, “Bring me some flour.” Then he threw it into the pot
and said, “Now it’s all right; go ahead and eat.” And then it did not
harm them.

42One day a man from Baal-shalishah brought the man of God a
sack of fresh grain and twenty loaves of barley bread made from the
first grain of his harvest. Elisha said, “Give it to the people so they
can eat.”

43“What?” his servant exclaimed. “Feed a hundred people with only
this?”

But Elisha repeated, “Give it to the people so they can eat, for this is
what the LORD says: Everyone will eat, and there will even be some
left over!” 44And when they gave it to the people, there was plenty

for all and some left over, just as the LORD had promised.

HEALING 2 KINGS 5:1-19

THE LAND OF ARAM

2 Kings 5

THE HEALING OF NAAMAN

1The king of Aram had great admiration for Naaman, the
commander of his army, because through him the LORD had given
Aram great victories. But though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he
suffered from leprosy.*

2At this time Aramean raiders had invaded the land of Israel, and
among their captives was a young girl who had been given to
Naaman's wife as a maid. 3One day the girl said to her mistress, "I
wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would
heal him of his leprosy."

4So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said.

5“Go and visit the prophet,” the king of Aram told him. “I will send
a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel.” So
Naaman started out, carrying as gifts 750 pounds of silver, 150
pounds of gold,* and ten sets of clothing. 6The letter to the king of
Israel said: “With this letter I present my servant Naaman. I want
you to heal him of his leprosy.”

7When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in
dismay and said, “This man sends me a leper to heal! Am I God,
that I can give life and take it away? I can see that he’s just trying
to pick a fight with me.”

8But when Elisha, the man of God, heard that the king of Israel had
torn his clothes in dismay, he sent this message to him: “Why are
you so upset? Send Naaman to me, and he will learn that there is a
true prophet here in Israel.”

9So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the
door of Elisha’s house. 10But Elisha sent a messenger out to him
with this message: “Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan
River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of
your leprosy.”

11But Naaman became angry and stalked away. “I thought he would
certainly come out to meet me!” he said. “I expected him to wave
his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the LORD his God
and heal me! 12Aren’t the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the
Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn’t I
wash in them and be healed?” So Naaman turned and went away in
a rage.

13But his officers tried to reason with him and said, “Sir,* if the
prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn’t you
have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says
simply, ‘Go and wash and be cured!’” 14So Naaman went down to
the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God

had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed!

15Then Naaman and his entire party went back to find the man of God. They stood before him, and Naaman said, “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant.”

16But Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept any gifts.” And though Naaman urged him to take the gift, Elisha refused.

17Then Naaman said, “All right, but please allow me to load two of my mules with earth from this place, and I will take it back home with me. From now on I will never again offer burnt offerings or sacrifices to any other god except the LORD. 18However, may the LORD pardon me in this one thing: When my master the king goes into the temple of the god Rimmon to worship there and leans on my arm, may the LORD pardon me when I bow, too.”

19“Go in peace,” Elisha said. So Naaman started home again.

THE GREED OF GEHAZI

20But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said to himself, “My master should not have let this Aramean get away without accepting any of his gifts. As surely as the LORD lives, I will chase after him and get something from him.” 21So Gehazi set off after Naaman.

When Naaman saw Gehazi running after him, he climbed down from his chariot and went to meet him. “Is everything all right?” Naaman asked.

22“Yes,” Gehazi said, “but my master has sent me to tell you that

two young prophets from the hill country of Ephraim have just arrived. He would like 75 pounds* of silver and two sets of clothing to give to them."

23"By all means, take twice as much* silver," Naaman insisted. He gave him two sets of clothing, tied up the money in two bags, and sent two of his servants to carry the gifts for Gehazi. 24But when they arrived at the citadel,* Gehazi took the gifts from the servants and sent the men back. Then he went and hid the gifts inside the house.

25When he went in to his master, Elisha asked him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?"

"I haven't been anywhere," he replied.

26But Elisha asked him, "Don't you realize that I was there in spirit when Naaman stepped down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to receive money and clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and cattle, and male and female servants? 27Because you have done this, you and your descendants will suffer from Naaman's leprosy forever." When Gehazi left the room, he was covered with leprosy; his skin was white as snow.

2 Kings 6

THE FLOATING AX HEAD

1One day the group of prophets came to Elisha and told him, “As
you can see, this place where we meet with you is too small. 2Let’s
go down to the Jordan River, where there are plenty of logs. There
we can build a new place for us to meet.”

“All right,” he told them, “go ahead.”

3“Please come with us,” someone suggested.

“I will,” he said. 4So he went with them.

When they arrived at the Jordan, they began cutting down trees.
5But as one of them was cutting a tree, his ax head fell into the
river. “Oh, sir!” he cried. “It was a borrowed ax!”

6“Where did it fall?” the man of God asked. When he showed him
the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it into the water at that spot.
Then the ax head floated to the surface. 7“Grab it,” Elisha said. And
the man reached out and grabbed it.

ELISHA TRAPS THE ARAMEANS

8When the king of Aram was at war with Israel, he would confer
with his officers and say, “We will mobilize our forces at such and
such a place.”

9But immediately Elisha, the man of God, would warn the king of
Israel, “Do not go near that place, for the Arameans are planning to
mobilize their troops there.” 10So the king of Israel would send word
to the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha
warned the king, so that he would be on the alert there.

11The king of Aram became very upset over this. He called his
officers together and demanded, “Which of you is the traitor? Who
has been informing the king of Israel of my plans?”

12“It’s not us, my lord the king,” one of the officers replied. “Elisha,

the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in the privacy of your bedroom!”

13“Go and find out where he is,” the king commanded, “so I can send troops to seize him.”

And the report came back: “Elisha is at Dothan.” 14So one night the king of Aram sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the city.

15When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. “Oh, sir, what will we do now?” the young man cried to Elisha.

16“Don’t be afraid!” Elisha told him. “For there are more on our side than on theirs!” 17Then Elisha prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes and let him see!” The LORD opened the young man’s eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

18As the Aramean army advanced toward him, Elisha prayed, “O LORD, please make them blind.” So the LORD struck them with blindness as Elisha had asked.

19Then Elisha went out and told them, “You have come the wrong way! This isn’t the right city! Follow me, and I will take you to the man you are looking for.” And he led them to the city of Samaria.

20As soon as they had entered Samaria, Elisha prayed, “O LORD, now open their eyes and let them see.” So the LORD opened their eyes, and they discovered that they were in the middle of Samaria.

21When the king of Israel saw them, he shouted to Elisha, “My father, should I kill them? Should I kill them?”

22“Of course not!” Elisha replied. “Do we kill prisoners of war? Give them food and drink and send them home again to their master.”

23So the king made a great feast for them and then sent them home to their master. After that, the Aramean raiders stayed away from the land of Israel.

BEN-HADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA

24Some time later, however, King Ben-hadad of Aram mustered his entire army and besieged Samaria. 25As a result, there was a great famine in the city. The siege lasted so long that a donkey’s head sold for eighty pieces of silver, and a cup of dove’s dung sold for five pieces* of silver.

26One day as the king of Israel was walking along the wall of the city, a woman called to him, “Please help me, my lord the king!”

27He answered, “If the LORD doesn’t help you, what can I do? I have neither food from the threshing floor nor wine from the press to give you.” 28But then the king asked, “What is the matter?”

She replied, “This woman said to me: ‘Come on, let’s eat your son today, then we will eat my son tomorrow.’ 29So we cooked my son and ate him. Then the next day I said to her, ‘Kill your son so we can eat him,’ but she has hidden her son.”

30When the king heard this, he tore his clothes in despair. And as the king walked along the wall, the people could see that he was wearing burlap under his robe next to his skin. 31“May God strike me and even kill me if I don’t separate Elisha’s head from his shoulders this very day,” the king vowed.

32Elisha was sitting in his house with the elders of Israel when the king sent a messenger to summon him. But before the messenger arrived, Elisha said to the elders, “A murderer has sent a man to cut

off my head. When he arrives, shut the door and keep him out. We will soon hear his master's steps following him."

33While Elisha was still saying this, the messenger arrived. And the king* said, "All this misery is from the LORD! Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

2 Kings 7

1Elisha replied, "Listen to this message from the LORD! This is what the LORD says: By this time tomorrow in the markets of Samaria, six quarts of choice flour will cost only one piece of silver,* and twelve quarts of barley grain will cost only one piece of silver.*"

2The officer assisting the king said to the man of God, "That couldn't happen even if the LORD opened the windows of heaven!"

But Elisha replied, "You will see it happen with your own eyes, but you won't be able to eat any of it!"

LEPERS VISIT THE ENEMY CAMP

3Now there were four men with leprosy* sitting at the entrance of the city gates. "Why should we sit here waiting to die?" they asked each other. 4"We will starve if we stay here, but with the famine in the city, we will starve if we go back there. So we might as well go out and surrender to the Aramean army. If they let us live, so much the better. But if they kill us, we would have died anyway."

5So at twilight they set out for the camp of the Arameans. But when they came to the edge of the camp, no one was there! 6For the Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the clatter of speeding chariots and the galloping of horses and the sounds of a great army approaching. "The king of Israel has hired the Hittites and

Egyptians* to attack us!" they cried to one another. 7So they panicked and ran into the night, abandoning their tents, horses, donkeys, and everything else, as they fled for their lives.

8When the lepers arrived at the edge of the camp, they went into one tent after another, eating and drinking wine; and they carried off silver and gold and clothing and hid it. 9Finally, they said to each other, "This is not right. This is a day of good news, and we aren't sharing it with anyone! If we wait until morning, some calamity will certainly fall upon us. Come on, let's go back and tell the people at the palace."

10So they went back to the city and told the gatekeepers what had happened. "We went out to the Aramean camp," they said, "and no one was there! The horses and donkeys were tethered and the tents were all in order, but there wasn't a single person around!" 11Then the gatekeepers shouted the news to the people in the palace.

ISRAEL PLUNDERS THE CAMP

12The king got out of bed in the middle of the night and told his officers, "I know what has happened. The Arameans know we are starving, so they have left their camp and have hidden in the fields. They are expecting us to leave the city, and then they will take us alive and capture the city."

13One of his officers replied, "We had better send out scouts to check into this. Let them take five of the remaining horses. If something happens to them, it will be no worse than if they stay here and die with the rest of us."

14So two chariots with horses were prepared, and the king sent scouts to see what had happened to the Aramean army. 15They went all the way to the Jordan River, following a trail of clothing and equipment that the Arameans had thrown away in their mad rush to escape. The scouts returned and told the king about it. 16Then the people of Samaria rushed out and plundered the Aramean camp. So

it was true that six quarts of choice flour were sold that day for one piece of silver, and twelve quarts of barley grain were sold for one piece of silver, just as the LORD had promised. 17The king appointed his officer to control the traffic at the gate, but he was knocked down and trampled to death as the people rushed out.

So everything happened exactly as the man of God had predicted when the king came to his house. 18The man of God had said to the king, “By this time tomorrow in the markets of Samaria, six quarts of choice flour will cost one piece of silver, and twelve quarts of barley grain will cost one piece of silver.”

19The king’s officer had replied, “That couldn’t happen even if the LORD opened the windows of heaven!” And the man of God had said, “You will see it happen with your own eyes, but you won’t be able to eat any of it!” 20And so it was, for the people trampled him to death at the gate!

2 Kings 8

THE WOMAN FROM SHUNEM RETURNS HOME

1Elisha had told the woman whose son he had brought back to life, “Take your family and move to some other place, for the LORD has called for a famine on Israel that will last for seven years.” 2So the woman did as the man of God instructed. She took her family and settled in the land of the Philistines for seven years.

3After the famine ended she returned from the land of the Philistines, and she went to see the king about getting back her house and land. 4As she came in, the king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God. The king had just said, “Tell me some stories about the great things Elisha has done.” 5And Gehazi was telling the king about the time Elisha had brought a boy back to life. At that very moment, the mother of the boy walked in to make her appeal to the king about her house and land.

“Look, my lord the king!” Gehazi exclaimed. “Here is the woman

now, and this is her son—the very one Elisha brought back to life!”

6“Is this true?” the king asked her. And she told him the story. So he directed one of his officials to see that everything she had lost was restored to her, including the value of any crops that had been harvested during her absence.

HAZAEL MURDERS BEN-HADAD

7Elisha went to Damascus, the capital of Aram, where King Ben-hadad lay sick. When someone told the king that the man of God had come, 8the king said to Hazael, “Take a gift to the man of God. Then tell him to ask the LORD, ‘Will I recover from this illness?’”

9So Hazael loaded down forty camels with the finest products of Damascus as a gift for Elisha. He went to him and said, “Your servant Ben-hadad, the king of Aram, has sent me to ask, ‘Will I recover from this illness?’”

10And Elisha replied, “Go and tell him, ‘You will surely recover.’ But actually the LORD has shown me that he will surely die!” 11Elisha stared at Hazael* with a fixed gaze until Hazael became uneasy.* Then the man of God started weeping.

12“What’s the matter, my lord?” Hazael asked him.

Elisha replied, “I know the terrible things you will do to the people of Israel. You will burn their fortified cities, kill their young men with the sword, dash their little children to the ground, and rip open their pregnant women!”

13Hazael responded, “How could a nobody like me* ever accomplish such great things?”

Elisha answered, “The LORD has shown me that you are going to be

the king of Aram.”

14When Hazael left Elisha and went back, the king asked him,
“What did Elisha tell you?”

And Hazael replied, “He told me that you will surely recover.”

15But the next day Hazael took a blanket, soaked it in water, and
held it over the king’s face until he died. Then Hazael became the
next king of Aram.

JEHORAM RULES IN JUDAH

16Jehoram son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah began to rule over
Judah in the fifth year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab, king of
Israel. 17Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king,
and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. 18But Jehoram followed
the example of the kings of Israel and was as wicked as King Ahab,
for he had married one of Ahab’s daughters. So Jehoram did what
was evil in the LORD’s sight. 19But the LORD did not want to
destroy Judah, for he had promised his servant David that his
descendants would continue to rule, shining like a lamp forever.

20During Jehoram’s reign, the Edomites revolted against Judah and
crowned their own king. 21So Jehoram* went with all his chariots to
attack the town of Zair.* The Edomites surrounded him and his
chariot commanders, but he went out at night and attacked them*
under cover of darkness. But Jehoram’s army deserted him and fled
to their homes. 22So Edom has been independent from Judah to this
day. The town of Libnah also revolted about that same time.

23The rest of the events in Jehoram’s reign and everything he did
are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.* 24When
Jehoram died, he was buried with his ancestors in the City of
David. Then his son Ahaziah became the next king.

AHAZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

25Ahaziah son of Jehoram began to rule over Judah in the twelfth
year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel.

26Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother was Athaliah, a
granddaughter of King Omri of Israel. 27Ahaziah followed the evil
example of King Ahab's family. He did what was evil in the LORD's
sight, just as Ahab's family had done, for he was related by
marriage to the family of Ahab.

28Ahaziah joined Joram son of Ahab in his war against King Hazael
of Aram at Ramoth-gilead. When the Arameans wounded King
Joram in the battle, 29he returned to Jezreel to recover from the
wounds he had received at Ramoth.* Because Joram was wounded,
King Ahaziah of Judah went to Jezreel to visit him.

2 Kings 9

JEHU ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL

1Meanwhile, Elisha the prophet had summoned a member of the
group of prophets. “Get ready to travel,”* he told him, “and take
this flask of olive oil with you. Go to Ramoth-gilead, 2and find Jehu
son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi. Call him into a private room
away from his friends, 3and pour the oil over his head. Say to him,
‘This is what the LORD says: I anoint you to be the king over Israel.’
Then open the door and run for your life!”

4So the young prophet did as he was told and went to Ramoth-
gilead. 5When he arrived there, he found Jehu sitting around with
the other army officers. “I have a message for you, Commander,” he
said.

“For which one of us?” Jehu asked.

“For you, Commander,” he replied.

6So Jehu left the others and went into the house. Then the young
prophet poured the oil over Jehu’s head and said, “This is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says: I anoint you king over the LORD’s
people, Israel. 7You are to destroy the family of Ahab, your master.
In this way, I will avenge the murder of my prophets and all the
LORD’s servants who were killed by Jezebel. 8The entire family of
Ahab must be wiped out. I will destroy every one of his male
descendants, slave and free alike, anywhere in Israel. 9I will destroy
the family of Ahab as I destroyed the families of Jeroboam son of
Nebat and of Baasha son of Ahijah. 10Dogs will eat Ahab’s wife
Jezebel at the plot of land in Jezreel, and no one will bury her.”
Then the young prophet opened the door and ran.

11Jehu went back to his fellow officers, and one of them asked him,
“What did that madman want? Is everything all right?”

“You know how a man like that babbles on,” Jehu replied.

12“You’re hiding something,” they said. “Tell us.”

So Jehu told them, “He said to me, ‘This is what the LORD says: I

have anointed you to be king over Israel.'"

13Then they quickly spread out their cloaks on the bare steps and blew the ram's horn, shouting, "Jehu is king!"

SKIP TO 9:30

JEHU KILLS JORAM AND AHAZIAH

14So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, led a conspiracy against King Joram. (Now Joram had been with the army at Ramoth-gilead, defending Israel against the forces of King Hazael of Aram. 15But King Joram* was wounded in the fighting and returned to Jezreel to recover from his wounds.) So Jehu told the men with him, "If you want me to be king, don't let anyone leave town and go to Jezreel to report what we have done."

16Then Jehu got into a chariot and rode to Jezreel to find King Joram, who was lying there wounded. King Ahaziah of Judah was there, too, for he had gone to visit him. 17The watchman on the tower of Jezreel saw Jehu and his company approaching, so he shouted to Joram, "I see a company of troops coming!"

"Send out a rider to ask if they are coming in peace," King Joram ordered.

18So a horseman went out to meet Jehu and said, "The king wants to know if you are coming in peace."

Jehu replied, "What do you know about peace? Fall in behind me!"

The watchman called out to the king, "The messenger has met them, but he's not returning."

19So the king sent out a second horseman. He rode up to them and said, "The king wants to know if you come in peace."

Again Jehu answered, “What do you know about peace? Fall in behind me!”

20The watchman exclaimed, “The messenger has met them, but he isn’t returning either! It must be Jehu son of Nimshi, for he’s driving like a madman.”

21“Quick! Get my chariot ready!” King Joram commanded.

Then King Joram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah rode out in their chariots to meet Jehu. They met him at the plot of land that had belonged to Naboth of Jezreel. 22King Joram demanded, “Do you come in peace, Jehu?”

Jehu replied, “How can there be peace as long as the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother, Jezebel, are all around us?”

23Then King Joram turned the horses around* and fled, shouting to King Ahaziah, “Treason, Ahaziah!” 24But Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart, and he sank down dead in his chariot.

25Jehu said to Bidkar, his officer, “Throw him into the plot of land that belonged to Naboth of Jezreel. Do you remember when you and I were riding along behind his father, Ahab? The LORD pronounced this message against him: 26‘I solemnly swear that I will repay him here on this plot of land, says the LORD, for the murder of Naboth and his sons that I saw yesterday.’ So throw him out on Naboth’s property, just as the LORD said.”

27When King Ahaziah of Judah saw what was happening, he fled along the road to Beth-haggan. Jehu rode after him, shouting, “Shoot him, too!” So they shot Ahaziah* in his chariot at the Ascent of Gur, near Ibleam. He was able to go on as far as Megiddo, but he died there. 28His servants took him by chariot to Jerusalem, where

they buried him with his ancestors in the City of David. 29Ahaziah had become king over Judah in the eleventh year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab.

THE DEATH OF JEZEBEL

30When Jezebel, the queen mother, heard that Jehu had come to Jezreel, she painted her eyelids and fixed her hair and sat at a window. 31When Jehu entered the gate of the palace, she shouted at him, “Have you come in peace, you murderer? You’re just like Zimri, who murdered his master!”*

32Jehu looked up and saw her at the window and shouted, “Who is on my side?” And two or three eunuchs looked out at him. 33“Throw her down!” Jehu yelled. So they threw her out the window, and her blood spattered against the wall and on the horses. And Jehu trampled her body under his horses’ hooves.

34Then Jehu went into the palace and ate and drank. Afterward he said, “Someone go and bury this cursed woman, for she is the daughter of a king.” 35But when they went out to bury her, they found only her skull, her feet, and her hands.

36When they returned and told Jehu, he stated, “This fulfills the message from the LORD, which he spoke through his servant Elijah from Tishbe: ‘At the plot of land in Jezreel, dogs will eat Jezebel’s body. 37Her remains will be scattered like dung on the plot of land in Jezreel, so that no one will be able to recognize her.’”

SKIP TO 10:1

2 Kings 10

JEHU KILLS AHAB’S FAMILY

1Ahab had seventy sons living in the city of Samaria. So Jehu wrote
letters and sent them to Samaria, to the elders and officials of the
city,* and to the guardians of King Ahab's sons. He said, 2"The king's
sons are with you, and you have at your disposal chariots, horses, a
fortified city, and weapons. As soon as you receive this letter, 3select
the best qualified of your master's sons to be your king, and prepare
to fight for Ahab's dynasty."

4But they were paralyzed with fear and said, "We've seen that two
kings couldn't stand against this man! What can we do?"

5So the palace and city administrators, together with the elders and
the guardians of the king's sons, sent this message to Jehu: "We are
your servants and will do anything you tell us. We will not make
anyone king; do whatever you think is best."

6Jehu responded with a second letter: "If you are on my side and
are going to obey me, bring the heads of your master's sons to me
at Jezreel by this time tomorrow." Now the seventy sons of the king
were being cared for by the leaders of Samaria, where they had
been raised since childhood. 7When the letter arrived, the leaders
killed all seventy of the king's sons. They placed their heads in
baskets and presented them to Jehu at Jezreel.

SKIP TO 10:18

8A messenger went to Jehu and said, "They have brought the heads
of the king's sons."

So Jehu ordered, "Pile them in two heaps at the entrance of the city
gate, and leave them there until morning."

9In the morning he went out and spoke to the crowd that had
gathered around them. "You are not to blame," he told them. "I am
the one who conspired against my master and killed him. But who
killed all these? 10You can be sure that the message of the LORD
that was spoken concerning Ahab's family will not fail. The LORD

declared through his servant Elijah that this would happen.” 11Then Jehu killed all who were left of Ahab’s relatives living in Jezreel and all his important officials, his personal friends, and his priests. So Ahab was left without a single survivor.

12Then Jehu set out for Samaria. Along the way, while he was at Beth-eked of the Shepherds, 13he met some relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah. “Who are you?” he asked them.

And they replied, “We are relatives of King Ahaziah. We are going to visit the sons of King Ahab and the sons of the queen mother.”

14“Take them alive!” Jehu shouted to his men. And they captured all forty-two of them and killed them at the well of Beth-eked. None of them escaped.

15When Jehu left there, he met Jehonadab son of Recab, who was coming to meet him. After they had greeted each other, Jehu said to him, “Are you as loyal to me as I am to you?”

“Yes, I am,” Jehonadab replied.

“If you are,” Jehu said, “then give me your hand.” So Jehonadab put out his hand, and Jehu helped him into the chariot. 16Then Jehu said, “Now come with me, and see how devoted I am to the LORD.” So Jehonadab rode along with him.

17When Jehu arrived in Samaria, he killed everyone who was left there from Ahab’s family, just as the LORD had promised through Elijah.

JEHU KILLS THE PRIESTS OF BAAL

18Then Jehu called a meeting of all the people of the city and said to them, “Ahab’s worship of Baal was nothing compared to the way I will worship him! 19Therefore, summon all the prophets and

worshipers of Baal, and call together all his priests. See to it that every one of them comes, for I am going to offer a great sacrifice to Baal. Anyone who fails to come will be put to death." But Jehu's cunning plan was to destroy all the worshipers of Baal.

20Then Jehu ordered, "Prepare a solemn assembly to worship Baal!" So they did. 21He sent messengers throughout all Israel summoning those who worshiped Baal. They all came—not a single one remained behind—and they filled the temple of Baal from one end to the other. 22And Jehu instructed the keeper of the wardrobe, "Be sure that every worshiper of Baal wears one of these robes." So robes were given to them.

23Then Jehu went into the temple of Baal with Jehonadab son of Recab. Jehu said to the worshipers of Baal, "Make sure no one who worships the LORD is here—only those who worship Baal." 24So they were all inside the temple to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had stationed eighty of his men outside the building and had warned them, "If you let anyone escape, you will pay for it with your own life."

25As soon as Jehu had finished sacrificing the burnt offering, he commanded his guards and officers, "Go in and kill all of them. Don't let a single one escape!" So they killed them all with their swords, and the guards and officers dragged their bodies outside.* Then Jehu's men went into the innermost fortress* of the temple of Baal. 26They dragged out the sacred pillar* used in the worship of Baal and burned it. 27They smashed the sacred pillar and wrecked the temple of Baal, converting it into a public toilet, as it remains to this day.

28In this way, Jehu destroyed every trace of Baal worship from Israel. 29He did not, however, destroy the gold calves at Bethel and Dan, with which Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to sin.

30Nonetheless the LORD said to Jehu, "You have done well in

following my instructions to destroy the family of Ahab. Therefore, your descendants will be kings of Israel down to the fourth generation.” 31But Jehu did not obey the Law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He refused to turn from the sins that Jeroboam had led Israel to commit.

THE DEATH OF JEHU

32At about that time the LORD began to cut down the size of Israel’s territory. King Hazael conquered several sections of the country 33east of the Jordan River, including all of Gilead, Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh. He conquered the area from the town of Aroer by the Arnon Gorge to as far north as Gilead and Bashan.

34The rest of the events in Jehu’s reign—everything he did and all his achievements—are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

35When Jehu died, he was buried in Samaria. Then his son Jehoahaz became the next king. 36In all, Jehu reigned over Israel from Samaria for twenty-eight years.

WHO, ME? 2 KINGS 11–12

2 Kings 11

QUEEN ATHALIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1When Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah of Judah, learned that
her son was dead, she began to destroy the rest of the royal family.
2But Ahaziah's sister Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram,*
took Ahaziah's infant son, Joash, and stole him away from among
the rest of the king's children, who were about to be killed. She put
Joash and his nurse in a bedroom, and they hid him from Athaliah,
so the child was not murdered. 3Joash remained hidden in the
Temple of the LORD for six years while Athaliah ruled over the
land.

REVOLT AGAINST ATHALIAH

4In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada the priest
summoned the commanders, the Carite mercenaries, and the palace
guards to come to the Temple of the LORD. He made a solemn pact
with them and made them swear an oath of loyalty there in the
LORD's Temple; then he showed them the king's son.

5Jehoiada told them, "This is what you must do. A third of you who
are on duty on the Sabbath are to guard the royal palace itself.
6Another third of you are to stand guard at the Sur Gate. And the
final third must stand guard behind the palace guard. These three
groups will all guard the palace. 7The other two units who are off
duty on the Sabbath must stand guard for the king at the LORD's
Temple. 8Form a bodyguard around the king and keep your

weapons in hand. Kill anyone who tries to break through. Stay with the king wherever he goes."

9So the commanders did everything as Jehoiada the priest ordered. The commanders took charge of the men reporting for duty that Sabbath, as well as those who were going off duty. They brought them all to Jehoiada the priest, 10and he supplied them with the spears and small shields that had once belonged to King David and were stored in the Temple of the LORD. 11The palace guards stationed themselves around the king, with their weapons ready. They formed a line from the south side of the Temple around to the north side and all around the altar.

12Then Jehoiada brought out Joash, the king's son, placed the crown on his head, and presented him with a copy of God's laws.* They anointed him and proclaimed him king, and everyone clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

THE DEATH OF ATHALIAH

13When Athaliah heard the noise made by the palace guards and the people, she hurried to the LORD's Temple to see what was happening. 14When she arrived, she saw the newly crowned king standing in his place of authority by the pillar, as was the custom at times of coronation. The commanders and trumpeters were surrounding him, and people from all over the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. When Athaliah saw all this, she tore her clothes in despair and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"

15Then Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders who were in charge of the troops, "Take her to the soldiers in front of the Temple,* and kill anyone who tries to rescue her." For the priest had said, "She must not be killed in the Temple of the LORD." 16So they seized her and led her out to the gate where horses enter the palace grounds, and she was killed there.

JEHOIADA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

17Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king
and the people that they would be the LORD's people. He also made
a covenant between the king and the people. 18And all the people of
the land went over to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They
demolished the altars and smashed the idols to pieces, and they
killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

Jehoiada the priest stationed guards at the Temple of the LORD.
19Then the commanders, the Carite mercenaries, the palace guards,
and all the people of the land escorted the king from the Temple of
the LORD. They went through the gate of the guards and into the
palace, and the king took his seat on the royal throne. 20So all the
people of the land rejoiced, and the city was peaceful because
Athaliah had been killed at the king's palace.

21*Joash* was seven years old when he became king.

2 Kings 12

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

1*Joash* began to rule over Judah in the seventh year of King Jehu's
reign in Israel. He reigned in Jerusalem forty years. His mother was
Zibiah from Beersheba. 2All his life Joash did what was pleasing in
the LORD's sight because Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 3Yet
even so, he did not destroy the pagan shrines, and the people still
offered sacrifices and burned incense there.

4One day King Joash said to the priests, "Collect all the money
brought as a sacred offering to the LORD's Temple, whether it is a
regular assessment, a payment of vows, or a voluntary gift. 5Let the
priests take some of that money to pay for whatever repairs are
needed at the Temple."

6But by the twenty-third year of Joash's reign, the priests still had
not repaired the Temple. 7So King Joash called for Jehoiada and the
other priests and asked them, "Why haven't you repaired the
Temple? Don't use any more money for your own needs. From now
on, it must all be spent on Temple repairs." 8So the priests agreed
not to accept any more money from the people, and they also
agreed to let others take responsibility for repairing the Temple.

9Then Jehoiada the priest bored a hole in the lid of a large chest
and set it on the right-hand side of the altar at the entrance of the
Temple of the LORD. The priests guarding the entrance put all of
the people's contributions into the chest. 10Whenever the chest
became full, the court secretary and the high priest counted the
money that had been brought to the LORD's Temple and put it into
bags. 11Then they gave the money to the construction supervisors,
who used it to pay the people working on the LORD's Temple—the
carpenters, the builders, 12the masons, and the stonecutters. They
also used the money to buy the timber and the finished stone
needed for repairing the LORD's Temple, and they paid any other
expenses related to the Temple's restoration.

13The money brought to the Temple was not used for making silver
bowls, lamp snuffers, basins, trumpets, or other articles of gold or
silver for the Temple of the LORD. 14It was paid to the workmen,
who used it for the Temple repairs. 15No accounting of this money
was required from the construction supervisors, because they were
honest and trustworthy men. 16However, the money that was
contributed for guilt offerings and sin offerings was not brought
into the LORD's Temple. It was given to the priests for their own
use.

THE END OF JOASH'S REIGN

17About this time King Hazael of Aram went to war against Gath
and captured it. Then he turned to attack Jerusalem. 18King Joash
collected all the sacred objects that Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and
Ahaziah, the previous kings of Judah, had dedicated, along with
what he himself had dedicated. He sent them all to Hazael, along

with all the gold in the treasuries of the LORD's Temple and the royal palace. So Hazael called off his attack on Jerusalem.

19The rest of the events in Joash's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.*

20Joash's officers plotted against him and assassinated him at Beth-millo on the road to Silla. 21The assassins were Jozacar* son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer—both trusted advisers. Joash was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son Amaziah became the next king.

2 Kings 13

JEHOAHAZ RULES IN ISRAEL

1Jehoahaz son of Jehu began to rule over Israel in the twenty-third year of King Joash's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria seventeen years. 2But he did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He followed the example of Jeroboam son of Nebat, continuing the sins that Jeroboam had led Israel to commit. 3So the LORD was very

angry with Israel, and he allowed King Hazael of Aram and his son Ben-hadad to defeat them repeatedly.

4Then Jehoahaz prayed for the LORD's help, and the LORD heard his prayer, for he could see how severely the king of Aram was oppressing Israel. 5So the LORD provided someone to rescue the Israelites from the tyranny of the Arameans. Then Israel lived in safety again as they had in former days.

6But they continued to sin, following the evil example of Jeroboam. They also allowed the Asherah pole in Samaria to remain standing. 7Finally, Jehoahaz's army was reduced to 50 charioteers, 10 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers. The king of Aram had killed the others, trampling them like dust under his feet.

8The rest of the events in Jehoahaz's reign—everything he did and the extent of his power—are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.* 9When Jehoahaz died, he was buried in Samaria. Then his son Jehoash* became the next king.

JEHOASH RULES IN ISRAEL

10Jehoash son of Jehoahaz began to rule over Israel in the thirty-seventh year of King Joash's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria sixteen years. 11But he did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He refused to turn from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel to commit.

12The rest of the events in Jehoash's reign and everything he did, including the extent of his power and his war with King Amaziah of Judah, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.* 13When Jehoash died, he was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Then his son Jeroboam II became the next king.

ELISHA'S FINAL PROPHECY

14When Elisha was in his last illness, King Jehoash of Israel visited
him and wept over him. “My father! My father! I see the chariots
and charioteers of Israel!” he cried.

15Elisha told him, “Get a bow and some arrows.” And the king did
as he was told. 16Elisha told him, “Put your hand on the bow,” and
Elisha laid his own hands on the king’s hands.

17Then he commanded, “Open that eastern window,” and he opened
it. Then he said, “Shoot!” So he shot an arrow. Elisha proclaimed,
“This is the LORD’s arrow, an arrow of victory over Aram, for you
will completely conquer the Arameans at Aphek.”

18Then he said, “Now pick up the other arrows and strike them
against the ground.” So the king picked them up and struck the
ground three times. 19But the man of God was angry with him. “You
should have struck the ground five or six times!” he exclaimed.
“Then you would have beaten Aram until it was entirely destroyed.
Now you will be victorious only three times.”

20Then Elisha died and was buried.

Groups of Moabite raiders used to invade the land each spring.
21Once when some Israelites were burying a man, they spied a band
of these raiders. So they hastily threw the corpse into the tomb of
Elisha and fled. But as soon as the body touched Elisha’s bones, the
dead man revived and jumped to his feet!

22King Hazael of Aram had oppressed Israel during the entire reign
of King Jehoahaz. 23But the LORD was gracious and merciful to the
people of Israel, and they were not totally destroyed. He pitied
them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And
to this day he still has not completely destroyed them or banished
them from his presence.

24King Hazael of Aram died, and his son Ben-hadad became the next

king. 25Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz recaptured from Ben-hadad
son of Hazael the towns that had been taken from Jehoash's father,
Jehoahaz. Jehoash defeated Ben-hadad on three occasions, and he
recovered the Israelite towns.

2 Kings 14

AMAZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1Amaziah son of Joash began to rule over Judah in the second year
of the reign of King Jehoash* of Israel. 2Amaziah was twenty-five
years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem
twenty-nine years. His mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem.
3Amaziah did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, but not like
his ancestor David. Instead, he followed the example of his father,
Joash. 4Amaziah did not destroy the pagan shrines, and the people
still offered sacrifices and burned incense there.

5When Amaziah was well established as king, he executed the
officials who had assassinated his father. 6However, he did not kill
the children of the assassins, for he obeyed the command of the
LORD as written by Moses in the Book of the Law: "Parents must
not be put to death for the sins of their children, nor children for
the sins of their parents. Those deserving to die must be put to
death for their own crimes."*

7Amaziah also killed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. He also
conquered Sela and changed its name to Joktheel, as it is called to
this day.

8One day Amaziah sent messengers with this challenge to Israel's
king Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz and grandson of Jehu: "Come
and meet me in battle!"*

9But King Jehoash of Israel replied to King Amaziah of Judah with
this story: "Out in the Lebanon mountains, a thistle sent a message
to a mighty cedar tree: 'Give your daughter in marriage to my son.'
But just then a wild animal of Lebanon came by and stepped on the
thistle, crushing it!

10"You have indeed defeated Edom, and you are proud of it. But be
content with your victory and stay at home! Why stir up trouble
that will only bring disaster on you and the people of Judah?"

11But Amaziah refused to listen, so King Jehoash of Israel mobilized
his army against King Amaziah of Judah. The two armies drew up
their battle lines at Beth-shemesh in Judah. 12Judah was routed by
the army of Israel, and its army scattered and fled for home. 13King
Jehoash of Israel captured Judah's king, Amaziah son of Joash and
grandson of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh. Then he marched to
Jerusalem, where he demolished 600 feet* of Jerusalem's wall, from
the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. 14He carried off all the gold
and silver and all the articles from the Temple of the LORD. He also
seized the treasures from the royal palace, along with hostages, and
then returned to Samaria.

15The rest of the events in Jehoash's reign and everything he did,
including the extent of his power and his war with King Amaziah of
Judah, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*
16When Jehoash died, he was buried in Samaria with the kings of
Israel. And his son Jeroboam II became the next king.

17King Amaziah of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of
King Jehoash of Israel. 18The rest of the events in Amaziah's reign
are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.*

19There was a conspiracy against Amaziah's life in Jerusalem, and
he fled to Lachish. But his enemies sent assassins after him, and
they killed him there. 20They brought his body back to Jerusalem on
a horse, and he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David.

21All the people of Judah had crowned Amaziah's sixteen-year-old
son, Uzziah,* as king in place of his father, Amaziah. 22After his
father's death, Uzziah rebuilt the town of Elath and restored it to
Judah.

JEROBOAM II RULES IN ISRAEL

23Jeroboam II, the son of Jehoash, began to rule over Israel in the
fifteenth year of King Amaziah's reign in Judah. He reigned in
Samaria forty-one years. 24He did what was evil in the LORD's sight.
He refused to turn from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had led
Israel to commit. 25Jeroboam II recovered the territories of Israel
between Lebo-hamath and the Dead Sea,* just as the LORD, the God
of Israel, had promised through Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet
from Gath-hepher.

26For the LORD saw the bitter suffering of everyone in Israel, and
that there was no one in Israel, slave or free, to help them. 27And
because the LORD had not said he would blot out the name of Israel
completely, he used Jeroboam II, the son of Jehoash, to save them.

28The rest of the events in the reign of Jeroboam II and everything
he did—including the extent of his power, his wars, and how he
recovered for Israel both Damascus and Hamath, which had
belonged to Judah*—are recorded in *The Book of the History of the
Kings of Israel.* 29When Jeroboam II died, he was buried in Samaria*
with the kings of Israel. Then his son Zechariah became the next
king.

JESUS' FAMILY 2 KINGS 15:1-7

2 Kings 15

UZZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1Uzziah* son of Amaziah began to rule over Judah in the twenty-
seventh year of the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel. 2He was
sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in
Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother was Jecoliah from Jerusalem.

3He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, just as his father,
Amaziah, had done. 4But he did not destroy the pagan shrines, and
the people still offered sacrifices and burned incense there. 5The
LORD struck the king with leprosy,* which lasted until the day he
died. He lived in isolation in a separate house. The king's son
Jotham was put in charge of the royal palace, and he governed the
people of the land.

6The rest of the events in Uzziah's reign and everything he did are
recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.* 7When
Uzziah died, he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David.
And his son Jotham became the next king.

ZECHARIAH RULES IN ISRAEL

8Zechariah son of Jeroboam II began to rule over Israel in the
thirty-eighth year of King Uzziah's reign in Judah. He reigned in
Samaria six months. 9Zechariah did what was evil in the LORD's
sight, as his ancestors had done. He refused to turn from the sins
that Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel to commit. 10Then
Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against Zechariah, assassinated
him in public,* and became the next king.

11The rest of the events in Zechariah's reign are recorded in *The
Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.* 12So the LORD's message to
Jehu came true: "Your descendants will be kings of Israel down to
the fourth generation."

SHALLUM RULES IN ISRAEL

13Shallum son of Jabesh began to rule over Israel in the thirty-ninth
year of King Uzziah's reign in Judah. Shallum reigned in Samaria
only one month. 14Then Menahem son of Gadi went to Samaria
from Tirzah and assassinated him, and he became the next king.

15The rest of the events in Shallum's reign, including his conspiracy,
are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

MENAHEM RULES IN ISRAEL

16At that time Menahem destroyed the town of Tappuah* and all the
surrounding countryside as far as Tirzah, because its citizens
refused to surrender the town. He killed the entire population and
ripped open the pregnant women.

17Menahem son of Gadi began to rule over Israel in the thirty-ninth
year of King Uzziah's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria ten
years. 18But Menahem did what was evil in the LORD's sight. During
his entire reign, he refused to turn from the sins that Jeroboam son
of Nebat had led Israel to commit.

19Then King Tiglath-pileser* of Assyria invaded the land. But
Menahem paid him thirty-seven tons* of silver to gain his support in
tightening his grip on royal power. 20Menahem extorted the money
from the rich of Israel, demanding that each of them pay fifty
pieces* of silver to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned
from attacking Israel and did not stay in the land.

21The rest of the events in Menahem's reign and everything he did
are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.* 22When
Menahem died, his son Pekahiah became the next king.

PEKAHIAH RULES IN ISRAEL

23Pekahiah son of Menahem began to rule over Israel in the fiftieth
year of King Uzziah's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria two
years. 24But Pekahiah did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He
refused to turn from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had led
Israel to commit.

25Then Pekah son of Remaliah, the commander of Pekahiah's army,
conspired against him. With fifty men from Gilead, Pekah
assassinated the king, along with Argob and Arieh, in the citadel of
the palace at Samaria. And Pekah reigned in his place.

26The rest of the events in Pekahiah's reign and everything he did
are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

PEKAH RULES IN ISRAEL

27Pekah son of Remaliah began to rule over Israel in the fifty-second
year of King Uzziah's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria twenty
years. 28But Pekah did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He refused
to turn from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had led Israel to
commit.

29During Pekah's reign, King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria attacked
Israel again, and he captured the towns of Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah,
Janoah, Kedesh, and Hazor. He also conquered the regions of
Gilead, Galilee, and all of Naphtali, and he took the people to
Assyria as captives. 30Then Hoshea son of Elah conspired against
Pekah and assassinated him. He began to rule over Israel in the
twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah.

31The rest of the events in Pekah's reign and everything he did are
recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

JOTHAM RULES IN JUDAH

32Jotham son of Uzziah began to rule over Judah in the second year
of King Pekah's reign in Israel. 33He was twenty-five years old when
he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His
mother was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

34Jotham did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight. He did
everything his father, Uzziah, had done. 35But he did not destroy the
pagan shrines, and the people still offered sacrifices and burned
incense there. He rebuilt the upper gate of the Temple of the LORD.

36The rest of the events in Jotham's reign and everything he did are
recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.* 37In those
days the LORD began to send King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah
of Israel to attack Judah. 38When Jotham died, he was buried with
his ancestors in the City of David. And his son Ahaz became the
next king.

JESUS' FAMILY 2 KINGS 16:1-20

2 Kings 16

AHAZ RULES IN JUDAH

1Ahaz son of Jotham began to rule over Judah in the seventeenth
year of King Pekah's reign in Israel. 2Ahaz was twenty years old
when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years.
He did not do what was pleasing in the sight of the LORD his God,
as his ancestor David had done. 3Instead, he followed the example
of the kings of Israel, even sacrificing his own son in the fire.* In
this way, he followed the detestable practices of the pagan nations
the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. 4He
offered sacrifices and burned incense at the pagan shrines and on
the hills and under every green tree.

5Then King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah of Israel came up to
attack Jerusalem. They besieged Ahaz but could not conquer him.
6At that time the king of Edom* recovered the town of Elath for
Edom.* He drove out the people of Judah and sent Edomites* to live
there, as they do to this day.

7King Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria with
this message: "I am your servant and your vassal.* Come up and
rescue me from the attacking armies of Aram and Israel." 8Then
Ahaz took the silver and gold from the Temple of the LORD and the
palace treasury and sent it as a payment to the Assyrian king. 9So
the king of Assyria attacked the Aramean capital of Damascus and
led its population away as captives, resettling them in Kir. He also
killed King Rezin.

10King Ahaz then went to Damascus to meet with King Tiglath-
pileser of Assyria. While he was there, he took special note of the
altar. Then he sent a model of the altar to Uriah the priest, along
with its design in full detail. 11Uriah followed the king's instructions

and built an altar just like it, and it was ready before the king returned from Damascus. 12When the king returned, he inspected the altar and made offerings on it. 13He presented a burnt offering and a grain offering, he poured out a liquid offering, and he sprinkled the blood of peace offerings on the altar.

14Then King Ahaz removed the old bronze altar from its place in front of the LORD's Temple, between the entrance and the new altar, and placed it on the north side of the new altar. 15He told Uriah the priest, "Use the new altar* for the morning sacrifices of burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offering and grain offering, and the burnt offerings of all the people, as well as their grain offerings and liquid offerings. Sprinkle the blood from all the burnt offerings and sacrifices on the new altar. The bronze altar will be for my personal use only." 16Uriah the priest did just as King Ahaz commanded him.

17Then the king removed the side panels and basins from the portable water carts. He also removed the great bronze basin called the Sea from the backs of the bronze oxen and placed it on the stone pavement. 18In deference to the king of Assyria, he also removed the canopy that had been constructed inside the palace for use on the Sabbath day,* as well as the king's outer entrance to the Temple of the LORD.

19The rest of the events in Ahaz's reign and everything he did are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah*. 20When Ahaz died, he was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son Hezekiah became the next king.

2 Kings 17

HOSHEA RULES IN ISRAEL

1Hoshea son of Elah began to rule over Israel in the twelfth year of
King Ahaz's reign in Judah. He reigned in Samaria nine years. 2He
did what was evil in the LORD's sight, but not to the same extent as
the kings of Israel who ruled before him.

3King Shalmaneser of Assyria attacked King Hoshea, so Hoshea was
forced to pay heavy tribute to Assyria. 4But Hoshea stopped paying
the annual tribute and conspired against the king of Assyria by
asking King So of Egypt* to help him shake free of Assyria's power.
When the king of Assyria discovered this treachery, he seized
Hoshea and put him in prison.

SAMARIA FALLS TO ASSYRIA

5Then the king of Assyria invaded the entire land, and for three
years he besieged the city of Samaria. 6Finally, in the ninth year of
King Hoshea's reign, Samaria fell, and the people of Israel were
exiled to Assyria. They were settled in colonies in Halah, along the

banks of the Habor River in Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7This disaster came upon the people of Israel because they
worshiped other gods. They sinned against the LORD their God,
who had brought them safely out of Egypt and had rescued them
from the power of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. 8They had followed
the practices of the pagan nations the LORD had driven from the
land ahead of them, as well as the practices the kings of Israel had
introduced. 9The people of Israel had also secretly done many things
that were not pleasing to the LORD their God. They built pagan
shrines for themselves in all their towns, from the smallest outpost
to the largest walled city. 10They set up sacred pillars and Asherah
poles at the top of every hill and under every green tree. 11They
offered sacrifices on all the hilltops, just like the nations the LORD
had driven from the land ahead of them. So the people of Israel had
done many evil things, arousing the LORD's anger. 12Yes, they
worshiped idols,* despite the LORD's specific and repeated
warnings.

13Again and again the LORD had sent his prophets and seers to
warn both Israel and Judah: "Turn from all your evil ways. Obey
my commands and decrees—the entire law that I commanded your
ancestors to obey, and that I gave you through my servants the
prophets."

14But the Israelites would not listen. They were as stubborn as their
ancestors who had refused to believe in the LORD their God. 15They
rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their
ancestors, and they despised all his warnings. They worshiped
worthless idols, so they became worthless themselves. They
followed the example of the nations around them, disobeying the
LORD's command not to imitate them.

16They rejected all the commands of the LORD their God and made
two calves from metal. They set up an Asherah pole and worshiped
Baal and all the forces of heaven. 17They even sacrificed their own
sons and daughters in the fire.* They consulted fortune-tellers and

practiced sorcery and sold themselves to evil, arousing the LORD's anger.

18Because the LORD was very angry with Israel, he swept them away from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah remained in the land. 19But even the people of Judah refused to obey the commands of the LORD their God, for they followed the evil practices that Israel had introduced. 20The LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel. He punished them by handing them over to their attackers until he had banished Israel from his presence.

21For when the LORD* tore Israel away from the kingdom of David, they chose Jeroboam son of Nebat as their king. But Jeroboam drew Israel away from following the LORD and made them commit a great sin. 22And the people of Israel persisted in all the evil ways of Jeroboam. They did not turn from these sins 23until the LORD finally swept them away from his presence, just as all his prophets had warned. So Israel was exiled from their land to Assyria, where they remain to this day.

FOREIGNERS SETTLE IN ISRAEL

24The king of Assyria transported groups of people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and resettled them in the towns of Samaria, replacing the people of Israel. They took possession of Samaria and lived in its towns. 25But since these foreign settlers did not worship the LORD when they first arrived, the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them.

26So a message was sent to the king of Assyria: “The people you
have sent to live in the towns of Samaria do not know the religious
customs of the God of the land. He has sent lions among them to
destroy them because they have not worshiped him correctly.”

27The king of Assyria then commanded, “Send one of the exiled
priests back to Samaria. Let him live there and teach the new
residents the religious customs of the God of the land.” 28So one of
the priests who had been exiled from Samaria returned to Bethel
and taught the new residents how to worship the LORD.

29But these various groups of foreigners also continued to worship
their own gods. In town after town where they lived, they placed
their idols at the pagan shrines that the people of Samaria had built.
30Those from Babylon worshiped idols of their god Succoth-benoth.
Those from Cuthah worshiped their god Nergal. And those from
Hamath worshiped Ashima. 31The Avvites worshiped their gods
Nibhaz and Tartak. And the people from Sepharvaim even burned
their own children as sacrifices to their gods Adrammelech and
Anammelech.

32These new residents worshiped the LORD, but they also appointed
from among themselves all sorts of people as priests to offer
sacrifices at their places of worship. 33And though they worshiped
the LORD, they continued to follow their own gods according to the
religious customs of the nations from which they came. 34And this is
still going on today. They continue to follow their former practices
instead of truly worshiping the LORD and obeying the decrees,
regulations, instructions, and commands he gave the descendants of
Jacob, whose name he changed to Israel.

35For the LORD had made a covenant with the descendants of Jacob
and commanded them: “Do not worship any other gods or bow
before them or serve them or offer sacrifices to them. 36But worship
only the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt with great strength
and a powerful arm. Bow down to him alone, and offer sacrifices
only to him. 37Be careful at all times to obey the decrees,

regulations, instructions, and commands that he wrote for you. You must not worship other gods. 38Do not forget the covenant I made with you, and do not worship other gods. 39You must worship only the LORD your God. He is the one who will rescue you from all your enemies.”

40But the people would not listen and continued to follow their former practices. 41So while these new residents worshiped the LORD, they also worshiped their idols. And to this day their descendants do the same.

2 Kings 18

HEZEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1Hezekiah son of Ahaz began to rule over Judah in the third year of King Hoshea’s reign in Israel. 2He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother was Abijah,* the daughter of Zechariah. 3He did what was pleasing in the LORD’s sight, just as his ancestor David had done. 4He removed the pagan shrines, smashed the sacred pillars, and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke up the bronze serpent that Moses had made, because the people of Israel had been offering sacrifices to it. The bronze serpent was called Nehushtan.*

5Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before or after his time. 6He remained faithful to the LORD in everything, and he carefully obeyed all the commands the LORD had given Moses. 7So the LORD was with him, and Hezekiah was successful in everything

he did. He revolted against the king of Assyria and refused to pay
him tribute. 8He also conquered the Philistines as far distant as Gaza
and its territory, from their smallest outpost to their largest walled
city.

9During the fourth year of Hezekiah's reign, which was the seventh
year of King Hoshea's reign in Israel, King Shalmaneser of Assyria
attacked the city of Samaria and began a siege against it. 10Three
years later, during the sixth year of King Hezekiah's reign and the
ninth year of King Hoshea's reign in Israel, Samaria fell. 11At that
time the king of Assyria exiled the Israelites to Assyria and placed
them in colonies in Halah, along the banks of the Habor River in
Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 12For they refused to listen to
the LORD their God and obey him. Instead, they violated his
covenant—all the laws that Moses the LORD's servant had
commanded them to obey.

PRAYERS 2 KINGS 18:13–19:19

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

13In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign,* King Sennacherib
of Assyria came to attack the fortified towns of Judah and
conquered them. 14King Hezekiah sent this message to the king of
Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. I will pay whatever tribute
money you demand if you will only withdraw." The king of Assyria
then demanded a settlement of more than eleven tons of silver and

one ton of gold.*15To gather this amount, King Hezekiah used all
the silver stored in the Temple of the LORD and in the palace
treasury. 16Hezekiah even stripped the gold from the doors of the
LORD's Temple and from the doorposts he had overlaid with gold,
and he gave it all to the Assyrian king.

17Nevertheless, the king of Assyria sent his commander in chief, his
field commander, and his chief of staff* from Lachish with a huge
army to confront King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The Assyrians took
up a position beside the aqueduct that feeds water into the upper
pool, near the road leading to the field where cloth is
washed.*18They summoned King Hezekiah, but the king sent these
officials to meet with them: Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace
administrator; Shebna the court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph,
the royal historian.

SENNACHERIB THREATENS JERUSALEM

19Then the Assyrian king's chief of staff told them to give this
message to Hezekiah:

"This is what the great king of Assyria says: What are you trusting
in that makes you so confident? 20Do you think that mere words can
substitute for military skill and strength? Who are you counting on,
that you have rebelled against me? 21On Egypt? If you lean on
Egypt, it will be like a reed that splinters beneath your weight and
pierces your hand. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is completely
unreliable!

22"But perhaps you will say to me, 'We are trusting in the LORD our
God!' But isn't he the one who was insulted by Hezekiah? Didn't
Hezekiah tear down his shrines and altars and make everyone in
Judah and Jerusalem worship only at the altar here in Jerusalem?

23"I'll tell you what! Strike a bargain with my master, the king of
Assyria. I will give you 2,000 horses if you can find that many men
to ride on them! 24With your tiny army, how can you think of
challenging even the weakest contingent of my master's troops,

even with the help of Egypt's chariots and charioteers? 25What's more, do you think we have invaded your land without the LORD's direction? The LORD himself told us, 'Attack this land and destroy it!'"

26Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to the Assyrian chief of staff, "Please speak to us in Aramaic, for we understand it well. Don't speak in Hebrew,* for the people on the wall will hear."

27But Sennacherib's chief of staff replied, "Do you think my master sent this message only to you and your master? He wants all the people to hear it, for when we put this city under siege, they will suffer along with you. They will be so hungry and thirsty that they will eat their own dung and drink their own urine."

28Then the chief of staff stood and shouted in Hebrew to the people on the wall, "Listen to this message from the great king of Assyria! 29This is what the king says: Don't let Hezekiah deceive you. He will never be able to rescue you from my power. 30Don't let him fool you into trusting in the LORD by saying, 'The LORD will surely rescue us. This city will never fall into the hands of the Assyrian king!'

31"Don't listen to Hezekiah! These are the terms the king of Assyria is offering: Make peace with me—open the gates and come out. Then each of you can continue eating from your own grapevine and fig tree and drinking from your own well. 32Then I will arrange to take you to another land like this one—a land of grain and new wine, bread and vineyards, olive groves and honey. Choose life instead of death!

"Don't listen to Hezekiah when he tries to mislead you by saying, 'The LORD will rescue us!' 33Have the gods of any other nations ever saved their people from the king of Assyria? 34What happened to the gods of Hamath and Arpad? And what about the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Did any god rescue Samaria from my power? 35What god of any nation has ever been able to save its

people from my power? So what makes you think that the LORD can rescue Jerusalem from me?”

36But the people were silent and did not utter a word because Hezekiah had commanded them, “Do not answer him.”

37Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian, went back to Hezekiah. They tore their clothes in despair, and they went in to see the king and told him what the Assyrian chief of staff had said.

2 Kings 19

HEZEKIAH SEEKS THE LORD’S HELP

1When King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes and put on burlap and went into the Temple of the LORD. 2And he sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the court secretary, and the leading priests, all dressed in burlap, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 3They told him, “This is what King Hezekiah says: Today is a day of trouble, insults, and disgrace. It is like when a child is ready to be born, but the mother has no strength to deliver the baby. 4But perhaps the LORD your God has heard the Assyrian chief of staff,* sent by the king to defy the living God, and will punish him for his words. Oh, pray for those of us who are left!”

5After King Hezekiah’s officials delivered the king’s message to Isaiah, 6the prophet replied, “Say to your master, ‘This is what the LORD says: Do not be disturbed by this blasphemous speech against me from the Assyrian king’s messengers. 7Listen! I myself will move against him,* and the king will receive a message that he is needed at home. So he will return to his land, where I will have him killed with a sword.’”

8Meanwhile, the Assyrian chief of staff left Jerusalem and went to

consult the king of Assyria, who had left Lachish and was attacking Libnah.

9Soon afterward King Sennacherib received word that King Tirhakah of Ethiopia* was leading an army to fight against him. Before leaving to meet the attack, he sent messengers back to Hezekiah in Jerusalem with this message:

10"This message is for King Hezekiah of Judah. Don't let your God, in whom you trust, deceive you with promises that Jerusalem will not be captured by the king of Assyria. 11You know perfectly well what the kings of Assyria have done wherever they have gone. They have completely destroyed everyone who stood in their way! Why should you be any different? 12Have the gods of other nations rescued them—such nations as Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Tel-assar? My predecessors destroyed them all! 13What happened to the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad? What happened to the kings of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?"

14After Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it, he went up to the LORD's Temple and spread it out before the LORD. 15And Hezekiah prayed this prayer before the LORD: "O LORD, God of Israel, you are enthroned between the mighty cherubim! You alone are God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You alone created the heavens and the earth. 16Bend down, O LORD, and listen! Open your eyes, O LORD, and see! Listen to Sennacherib's words of defiance against the living God.

17"It is true, LORD, that the kings of Assyria have destroyed all these nations. 18And they have thrown the gods of these nations into the fire and burned them. But of course the Assyrians could destroy them! They were not gods at all—only idols of wood and stone shaped by human hands. 19Now, O LORD our God, rescue us from his power; then all the kingdoms of the earth will know that you alone, O LORD, are God."

ISAIAH PREDICTS JUDAH'S DELIVERANCE

20Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer about King Sennacherib of Assyria. 21And the LORD has spoken this word against him: "The virgin daughter of Zion despises you and laughs at you.

The daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head in derision as you flee.

22"Whom have you been defying and ridiculing?
Against whom did you raise your voice?
At whom did you look with such haughty eyes?
It was the Holy One of Israel!

23By your messengers you have defied the Lord.
You have said, 'With my many chariots I have conquered the highest mountains— yes, the remotest peaks of Lebanon.
I have cut down its tallest cedars and its finest cypress trees.
I have reached its farthest corners and explored its deepest forests.

24I have dug wells in many foreign lands and refreshed myself with their water.
With the sole of my foot I stopped up all the rivers of Egypt!'

25"But have you not heard?
I decided this long ago.
Long ago I planned it, and now I am making it happen.
I planned for you to crush fortified cities into heaps of rubble.

26That is why their people have so little power and are so frightened and confused.
They are as weak as grass, as easily trampled as tender green shoots.
They are like grass sprouting on a housetop, scorched before it can grow lush and tall.

27"But I know you well— where you stay and when you come and go.
I know the way you have raged against me.

28And because of your raging against me and your arrogance, which
I have heard for myself, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit
in your mouth.
I will make you return by the same road on which you came."

29Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Here is the proof that what I say is
true: "This year you will eat only what grows up by itself, and next
year you will eat what springs up from that.

But in the third year you will plant crops and harvest them; you
will tend vineyards and eat their fruit.

30And you who are left in Judah, who have escaped the ravages of
the siege, will put roots down in your own soil and will grow up
and flourish.

31For a remnant of my people will spread out from Jerusalem, a
group of survivors from Mount Zion.
The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies*
will make this happen!

32"And this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria: "His
armies will not enter Jerusalem.

They will not even shoot an arrow at it.
They will not march outside its gates with their shields nor build
banks of earth against its walls.

33The king will return to his own country by the same road on
which he came.
He will not enter this city, says the LORD.

34For my own honor and for the sake of my servant David, I will
defend this city and protect it."

35That night the angel of the LORD went out to the Assyrian camp
and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. When the surviving Assyrians*
woke up the next morning, they found corpses everywhere. 36Then
King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and returned to his own

land. He went home to his capital of Nineveh and stayed there.

37One day while he was worshiping in the temple of his god
Nisroch, his sons* Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with their
swords. They then escaped to the land of Ararat, and another son,
Esarhaddon, became the next king of Assyria.

2 Kings 20

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

1About that time Hezekiah became deathly ill, and the prophet
Isaiah son of Amoz went to visit him. He gave the king this
message: "This is what the LORD says: Set your affairs in order, for
you are going to die. You will not recover from this illness."

2When Hezekiah heard this, he turned his face to the wall and
prayed to the LORD, 3"Remember, O LORD, how I have always been
faithful to you and have served you single-mindedly, always doing
what pleases you." Then he broke down and wept bitterly.

4But before Isaiah had left the middle courtyard,* this message came
to him from the LORD: 5"Go back to Hezekiah, the leader of my
people. Tell him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your ancestor
David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will
heal you, and three days from now you will get out of bed and go to
the Temple of the LORD. 6I will add fifteen years to your life, and I
will rescue you and this city from the king of Assyria. I will defend
this city for my own honor and for the sake of my servant David.'"

7Then Isaiah said, "Make an ointment from figs." So Hezekiah's
servants spread the ointment over the boil, and Hezekiah recovered!

8Meanwhile, Hezekiah had said to Isaiah, “What sign will the LORD
give to prove that he will heal me and that I will go to the Temple
of the LORD three days from now?”

9Isaiah replied, “This is the sign from the LORD to prove that he
will do as he promised. Would you like the shadow on the sundial
to go forward ten steps or backward ten steps?*”

10“The shadow always moves forward,” Hezekiah replied, “so that
would be easy. Make it go ten steps backward instead.” 11So Isaiah
the prophet asked the LORD to do this, and he caused the shadow
to move ten steps backward on the sundial* of Ahaz!

ENVOYS FROM BABYLON

12Soon after this, Merodach-baladan* son of Baladan, king of
Babylon, sent Hezekiah his best wishes and a gift, for he had heard
that Hezekiah had been very sick. 13Hezekiah received the
Babylonian envoys and showed them everything in his treasure-
houses—the silver, the gold, the spices, and the aromatic oils. He
also took them to see his armory and showed them everything in
his royal treasuries! There was nothing in his palace or kingdom
that Hezekiah did not show them.

14Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked him,
“What did those men want? Where were they from?”

Hezekiah replied, “They came from the distant land of Babylon.”

15“What did they see in your palace?” Isaiah asked.

“They saw everything,” Hezekiah replied. “I showed them
everything I own—all my royal treasuries.”

16Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Listen to this message from the
LORD: 17The time is coming when everything in your palace—all
the treasures stored up by your ancestors until now—will be carried
off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. 18Some of your
very own sons will be taken away into exile. They will become
eunuchs who will serve in the palace of Babylon’s king.”

19Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “This message you have given me
from the LORD is good.” For the king was thinking, “At least there
will be peace and security during my lifetime.”

20The rest of the events in Hezekiah’s reign, including the extent of
his power and how he built a pool and dug a tunnel* to bring water
into the city, are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of
Judah*. 21Hezekiah died, and his son Manasseh became the next
king.

JESUS’ FAMILY 2 KINGS 21:1-18

2 Kings 21

MANASSEH RULES IN JUDAH

1Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother was Hephzibah.
2He did what was evil in the LORD’s sight, following the detestable

practices of the pagan nations that the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. 3He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had destroyed. He constructed altars for Baal and set up an Asherah pole, just as King Ahab of Israel had done. He also bowed before all the powers of the heavens and worshiped them.

4He built pagan altars in the Temple of the LORD, the place where the LORD had said, “My name will remain in Jerusalem forever.” 5He built these altars for all the powers of the heavens in both courtyards of the LORD’s Temple. 6Manasseh also sacrificed his own son in the fire.* He practiced sorcery and divination, and he consulted with mediums and psychics. He did much that was evil in the LORD’s sight, arousing his anger.

7Manasseh even made a carved image of Asherah and set it up in the Temple, the very place where the LORD had told David and his son Solomon: “My name will be honored forever in this Temple and in Jerusalem—the city I have chosen from among all the tribes of Israel. 8If the Israelites will be careful to obey my commands—all the laws my servant Moses gave them—I will not send them into exile from this land that I gave their ancestors.” 9But the people refused to listen, and Manasseh led them to do even more evil than the pagan nations that the LORD had destroyed when the people of Israel entered the land.

10Then the LORD said through his servants the prophets: 11“King Manasseh of Judah has done many detestable things. He is even more wicked than the Amorites, who lived in this land before Israel. He has caused the people of Judah to sin with his idols.*12So this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I will bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of those who hear about it will tingle with horror. 13I will judge Jerusalem by the same standard I used for Samaria and the same measure* I used for the family of Ahab. I will wipe away the people of Jerusalem as one wipes a dish and turns it upside down. 14Then I will reject even the remnant of my own people who are left, and I will hand them over as plunder for their enemies. 15For they have done great evil in my sight and have angered me ever since their ancestors came out of Egypt.”

16Manasseh also murdered many innocent people until Jerusalem
was filled from one end to the other with innocent blood. This was
in addition to the sin that he caused the people of Judah to commit,
leading them to do evil in the LORD's sight.

17The rest of the events in Manasseh's reign and everything he did,
including the sins he committed, are recorded in *The Book of the
History of the Kings of Judah.* 18When Manasseh died, he was buried
in the palace garden, the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon
became the next king.

AMON RULES IN JUDAH

19Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem two years. His mother was Meshullemeth, the
daughter of Haruz from Jotbah. 20He did what was evil in the
LORD's sight, just as his father, Manasseh, had done. 21He followed
the example of his father, worshiping the same idols his father had
worshiped. 22He abandoned the LORD, the God of his ancestors, and
he refused to follow the LORD's ways.

23Then Amon's own officials conspired against him and assassinated
him in his palace. 24But the people of the land killed all those who
had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah the
next king.

25The rest of the events in Amon's reign and what he did are
recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.* 26He was
buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Josiah
became the next king.

WHO, ME? 2 KINGS 22:1–23:30

2 Kings 22

JOSIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in
Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother was Jedidah, the daughter
of Adaiah from Bozkath. 2He did what was pleasing in the LORD's
sight and followed the example of his ancestor David. He did not
turn away from doing what was right.

3In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent Shaphan son of
Azaliah and grandson of Meshullam, the court secretary, to the
Temple of the LORD. He told him, 4"Go to Hilkiah the high priest
and have him count the money the gatekeepers have collected from
the people at the LORD's Temple. 5Entrust this money to the men
assigned to supervise the restoration of the LORD's Temple. Then
they can use it to pay workers to repair the Temple. 6They will need
to hire carpenters, builders, and masons. Also have them buy the
timber and the finished stone needed to repair the Temple. 7But
don't require the construction supervisors to keep account of the
money they receive, for they are honest and trustworthy men."

HILKIAH DISCOVERS GOD'S LAW

8Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the court secretary, "I have
found the Book of the Law in the LORD's Temple!" Then Hilkiah
gave the scroll to Shaphan, and he read it.

9Shaphan went to the king and reported, “Your officials have turned
over the money collected at the Temple of the LORD to the workers
and supervisors at the Temple.” 10Shaphan also told the king,
“Hilkiah the priest has given me a scroll.” So Shaphan read it to the
king.

11When the king heard what was written in the Book of the Law, he
tore his clothes in despair. 12Then he gave these orders to Hilkiah
the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan
the court secretary, and Asaiah the king’s personal adviser: 13“Go to
the Temple and speak to the LORD for me and for the people and
for all Judah. Inquire about the words written in this scroll that has
been found. For the LORD’s great anger is burning against us
because our ancestors have not obeyed the words in this scroll. We
have not been doing everything it says we must do.”

14So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Acbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went
to the New Quarter* of Jerusalem to consult with the prophet
Huldah. She was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas,
the keeper of the Temple wardrobe.

15She said to them, “The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken! Go
back and tell the man who sent you, 16‘This is what the LORD says: I
am going to bring disaster on this city* and its people. All the words
written in the scroll that the king of Judah has read will come true.
17For my people have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to pagan
gods, and I am very angry with them for everything they have done.
My anger will burn against this place, and it will not be quenched.’

18“But go to the king of Judah who sent you to seek the LORD and
tell him: ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning
the message you have just heard: 19You were sorry and humbled
yourself before the LORD when you heard what I said against this
city and its people—that this land would be cursed and become
desolate. You tore your clothing in despair and wept before me in
repentance. And I have indeed heard you, says the LORD. 20So I will

not send the promised disaster until after you have died and been buried in peace. You will not see the disaster I am going to bring on this city.'"

So they took her message back to the king.

2 Kings 23

JOSIAH'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

1Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.
2And the king went up to the Temple of the LORD with all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, along with the priests and the prophets—all the people from the least to the greatest. There the king read to them the entire Book of the Covenant that had been found in the LORD's Temple. 3The king took his place of authority beside the pillar and renewed the covenant in the LORD's presence. He pledged to obey the LORD by keeping all his commands, laws, and decrees with all his heart and soul. In this way, he confirmed all the terms of the covenant that were written in the scroll, and all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.

4Then the king instructed Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the second rank and the Temple gatekeepers to remove from the LORD's Temple all the articles that were used to worship Baal, Asherah, and all the powers of the heavens. The king had all these things burned outside Jerusalem on the terraces of the Kidron Valley, and he carried the ashes away to Bethel. 5He did away with the idolatrous priests, who had been appointed by the previous kings of Judah, for they had offered sacrifices at the pagan shrines throughout Judah and even in the vicinity of Jerusalem. They had also offered sacrifices to Baal, and to the sun, the moon, the constellations, and to all the powers of the heavens. 6The king removed the Asherah pole from the LORD's Temple and took it outside Jerusalem to the Kidron Valley, where he burned it. Then he ground the ashes of the pole to dust and threw the dust over the graves of the people. 7He also tore down the living quarters of the male and female shrine prostitutes that were inside the Temple of

the LORD, where the women wove coverings for the Asherah pole.

8Josiah brought to Jerusalem all the priests who were living in
other towns of Judah. He also defiled the pagan shrines, where they
had offered sacrifices—all the way from Geba to Beersheba. He
destroyed the shrines at the entrance to the gate of Joshua, the
governor of Jerusalem. This gate was located to the left of the city
gate as one enters the city. 9The priests who had served at the pagan
shrines were not allowed to serve at* the LORD's altar in Jerusalem,
but they were allowed to eat unleavened bread with the other
priests.

10Then the king defiled the altar of Topheth in the valley of Ben-
Hinnom, so no one could ever again use it to sacrifice a son or
daughter in the fire* as an offering to Molech. 11He removed from
the entrance of the LORD's Temple the horse statues that the former
kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They were near the
quarters of Nathan-melech the eunuch, an officer of the court.* The
king also burned the chariots dedicated to the sun.

12Josiah tore down the altars that the kings of Judah had built on
the palace roof above the upper room of Ahaz. The king destroyed
the altars that Manasseh had built in the two courtyards of the
LORD's Temple. He smashed them to bits* and scattered the pieces
in the Kidron Valley. 13The king also desecrated the pagan shrines
east of Jerusalem, to the south of the Mount of Corruption, where
King Solomon of Israel had built shrines for Ashtoreth, the
detestable goddess of the Sidonians; and for Chemosh, the
detestable god of the Moabites; and for Molech,* the vile god of the
Ammonites. 14He smashed the sacred pillars and cut down the
Asherah poles. Then he desecrated these places by scattering human
bones over them.

15The king also tore down the altar at Bethel—the pagan shrine that
Jeroboam son of Nebat had made when he caused Israel to sin. He

burned down the shrine and ground it to dust, and he burned the Asherah pole. 16Then Josiah turned around and noticed several tombs in the side of the hill. He ordered that the bones be brought out, and he burned them on the altar at Bethel to desecrate it. (This happened just as the LORD had promised through the man of God when Jeroboam stood beside the altar at the festival.) Then Josiah turned and looked up at the tomb of the man of God* who had predicted these things. 17"What is that monument over there?" Josiah asked.

And the people of the town told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and predicted the very things that you have just done to the altar at Bethel!"

18Josiah replied, "Leave it alone. Don't disturb his bones." So they did not burn his bones or those of the old prophet from Samaria.

19Then Josiah demolished all the buildings at the pagan shrines in the towns of Samaria, just as he had done at Bethel. They had been built by the various kings of Israel and had made the LORD* very angry. 20He executed the priests of the pagan shrines on their own altars, and he burned human bones on the altars to desecrate them. Finally, he returned to Jerusalem.

JOSIAH CELEBRATES PASSOVER

21King Josiah then issued this order to all the people: "You must celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, as required in this Book of the Covenant." 22There had not been a Passover celebration like that since the time when the judges ruled in Israel, nor throughout all the years of the kings of Israel and Judah. 23But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah's reign, this Passover was celebrated to the LORD in Jerusalem.

24Josiah also got rid of the mediums and psychics, the household

gods, the idols,* and every other kind of detestable practice, both in Jerusalem and throughout the land of Judah. He did this in obedience to the laws written in the scroll that Hilkiah the priest had found in the LORD's Temple. 25Never before had there been a king like Josiah, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and soul and strength, obeying all the laws of Moses. And there has never been a king like him since.

26Even so, the LORD was very angry with Judah because of all the wicked things Manasseh had done to provoke him. 27For the LORD said, "I will also banish Judah from my presence just as I have banished Israel. And I will reject my chosen city of Jerusalem and the Temple where my name was to be honored."

28The rest of the events in Josiah's reign and all his deeds are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.*

29While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, went to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah and his army marched out to fight him,* but King Neco* killed him when they met at Megiddo. 30Josiah's officers took his body back in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. Then the people of the land anointed Josiah's son Jehoahaz and made him the next king.

JEHOAHAZ RULES IN JUDAH

31Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and
he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother was Hamutal, the
daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. 32He did what was evil in the
LORD's sight, just as his ancestors had done.

THE CITY OF RIBLAH

33Pharaoh Neco put Jehoahaz in prison at Riblah in the land of
Hamath to prevent him from ruling* in Jerusalem. He also
demanded that Judah pay 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of
gold* as tribute.

JEHOIAKIM RULES IN JUDAH

34Pharaoh Neco then installed Eliakim, another of Josiah's sons, to

reign in place of his father, and he changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt as a prisoner, where he died.

35In order to get the silver and gold demanded as tribute by Pharaoh Neco, Jehoiakim collected a tax from the people of Judah, requiring them to pay in proportion to their wealth.

36Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother was Zebidah, the daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah. 37He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as his ancestors had done.

2 Kings 24

1During Jehoiakim's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded the land of Judah. Jehoiakim surrendered and paid him tribute for three years but then rebelled. 2Then the LORD sent bands of Babylonian,* Aramean, Moabite, and Ammonite raiders against Judah to destroy it, just as the LORD had promised through his prophets. 3These disasters happened to Judah because of the LORD's command. He had decided to banish Judah from his presence because of the many sins of Manasseh, 4who had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. The LORD would not forgive this.

5The rest of the events in Jehoiakim's reign and all his deeds are recorded in *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah.* 6When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin became the next king.

7The king of Egypt did not venture out of his country after that, for the king of Babylon captured the entire area formerly claimed by Egypt—from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River.

JEHOIACHIN RULES IN JUDAH

8Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother was Nehushta, the
daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem. 9Jehoiachin did what was evil
in the LORD's sight, just as his father had done.

10During Jehoiachin's reign, the officers of King Nebuchadnezzar of
Babylon came up against Jerusalem and besieged it.
11Nebuchadnezzar himself arrived at the city during the siege.
12Then King Jehoiachin, along with the queen mother, his advisers,
his commanders, and his officials, surrendered to the Babylonians.

In the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, he took Jehoiachin
prisoner. 13As the LORD had said beforehand, Nebuchadnezzar

carried away all the treasures from the LORD's Temple and the royal palace. He stripped away* all the gold objects that King Solomon of Israel had placed in the Temple. 14King Nebuchadnezzar took all of Jerusalem captive, including all the commanders and the best of the soldiers, craftsmen, and artisans—10,000 in all. Only the poorest people were left in the land.

15Nebuchadnezzar led King Jehoiachin away as a captive to Babylon, along with the queen mother, his wives and officials, and all Jerusalem's elite. 16He also exiled 7,000 of the best troops and 1,000 craftsmen and artisans, all of whom were strong and fit for war. 17Then the king of Babylon installed Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's* uncle, as the next king, and he changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah.

ZEDEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

18Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. 19But Zedekiah did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as Jehoiakim had done. 20These things happened because of the LORD's anger against the people of Jerusalem and Judah, until he finally banished them from his presence and sent them into exile.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

2 Kings 25

1So on January 15,* during the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon led his entire army against Jerusalem.
They surrounded the city and built siege ramps against its walls.
2Jerusalem was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King
Zedekiah's reign.

3By July 18 in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign,* the famine in
the city had become very severe, and the last of the food was
entirely gone. 4Then a section of the city wall was broken down.
Since the city was surrounded by the Babylonians,* the soldiers
waited for nightfall and escaped* through the gate between the two
walls behind the king's garden. Then they headed toward the
Jordan Valley.*

5But the Babylonian* troops chased the king and overtook him on
the plains of Jericho, for his men had all deserted him and
scattered. 6They captured the king and took him to the king of
Babylon at Riblah, where they pronounced judgment upon
Zedekiah. 7They made Zedekiah watch as they slaughtered his sons.
Then they gouged out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him in bronze chains,
and led him away to Babylon.

THE TEMPLE DESTROYED

8On August 14 of that year,* which was the nineteenth year of King
Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard and
an official of the Babylonian king, arrived in Jerusalem. 9He burned
down the Temple of the LORD, the royal palace, and all the houses
of Jerusalem. He destroyed all the important buildings* in the city.
10Then he supervised the entire Babylonian army as they tore down
the walls of Jerusalem on every side. 11Then Nebuzaradan, the
captain of the guard, took as exiles the rest of the people who
remained in the city, the defectors who had declared their

allegiance to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the population.
12But the captain of the guard allowed some of the poorest people
to stay behind to care for the vineyards and fields.

13The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars in front of the
LORD's Temple, the bronze water carts, and the great bronze basin
called the Sea, and they carried all the bronze away to Babylon.
14They also took all the ash buckets, shovels, lamp snuffers, ladles,
and all the other bronze articles used for making sacrifices at the
Temple. 15The captain of the guard also took the incense burners
and basins, and all the other articles made of pure gold or silver.

16The weight of the bronze from the two pillars, the Sea, and the
water carts was too great to be measured. These things had been
made for the LORD's Temple in the days of Solomon. 17Each of the
pillars was 27 feet* tall. The bronze capital on top of each pillar was
7 1/2 feet* high and was decorated with a network of bronze
pomegranates all the way around.

18Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took with him as prisoners
Seraiah the high priest, Zephaniah the priest of the second rank,
and the three chief gatekeepers. 19And from among the people still
hiding in the city, he took an officer who had been in charge of the
Judean army; five of the king's personal advisers; the army
commander's chief secretary, who was in charge of recruitment; and
sixty other citizens. 20Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took
them all to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 21And there at Riblah, in
the land of Hamath, the king of Babylon had them all put to death.
So the people of Judah were sent into exile from their land.

GEDALIAH GOVERNS IN JUDAH

22Then King Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam
and grandson of Shaphan as governor over the people he had left in
Judah. 23When all the army commanders and their men learned that
the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor, they went

to see him at Mizpah. These included Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, Jezaniah* son of the Maacathite, and all their men.

24Gedaliah vowed to them that the Babylonian officials meant them no harm. “Don’t be afraid of them. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and all will go well for you,” he promised.

25But in midautumn of that year,* Ishmael son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama, who was a member of the royal family, went to Mizpah with ten men and killed Gedaliah. He also killed all the Judeans and Babylonians who were with him at Mizpah.

26Then all the people of Judah, from the least to the greatest, as well as the army commanders, fled in panic to Egypt, for they were afraid of what the Babylonians would do to them.

HOPE FOR ISRAEL’S ROYAL LINE

27In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah, Evil-merodach ascended to the Babylonian throne. He was kind to* Jehoiachin and released him* from prison on April 2 of that year.*28He spoke kindly to Jehoiachin and gave him a higher place than all the other exiled kings in Babylon. 29He supplied Jehoiachin with new clothes to replace his prison garb and allowed him to dine in the king’s presence for the rest of his life. 30So the king gave him a regular food allowance as long as he lived.

WELCOME TO

1 CHRONICLES

The writer of 1 Chronicles retells the story of the kingdom of Israel from a historical perspective that is shaped by the Exile and return. The writer focuses on the greatness of the kingdom and the accomplishments of King David. Written hundreds of years after the return of God's people from exile in Babylon, this exploration of Israel's history, which is continued in 2 Chronicles, attempts to follow the events that caused the kingdom of Judah to be conquered and the people exiled.

The first few chapters of 1 Chronicles contain a detailed list of names—genealogies that connect Adam to the Jews who returned from exile. These lists would have been precious to the people who had survived exile. They trace the exiles' heritage back to Israel's founding fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The genealogies serve as a reminder of where God's people came from and of what God had promised to do for them.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over 1

Chronicles without landing. If you like, skim the headings of 1 Chronicles to see what it contains. Your next stop is at 2 Chronicles 24:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your one stop in 1 Chronicles fills in a gap of history not covered in the book of 1 Kings—the instructions for building the Temple in Jerusalem that David gives to Solomon. Your next stop is at 1 Chronicles 28:1.

2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The two stops in 1 Chronicles detail the preparations and materials for the construction of God's Temple. You'll also read David's stirring prayer of praise to God after his preparations are completed. Your next stop is at 1 Chronicles 28:1.

FINDING JESUS IN 1 CHRONICLES

You can see Jesus in the reign of King David, whose royal line eventually provided the Messiah. David was a king who loved and feared God and led the people to worship God alone. He wasn't perfect, but his reign set the standard by which all other Israelite kings were judged. When Jesus came to earth, he fulfilled the role of king perfectly.
You can also see glimpses of Jesus in the Ark of the Covenant and

in the plans for the Temple. The Ark symbolized God's holiness and his presence with his people. The Temple was designed to be filled with God's glory in spectacular fashion. These were symbols, but when Jesus came and lived among his people, God was fully with them in human form.

1 Chronicles 1

FROM ADAM TO NOAH'S SONS

1The descendants of Adam were Seth, Enosh, 2Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, 3Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, 4and Noah.

The sons of Noah were* Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

DESCENDANTS OF JAPHETH

5The descendants of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

6The descendants of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath,* and Togarmah.

7The descendants of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

DESCENDANTS OF HAM

8The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim,* Put, and Canaan.

9The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. 10Cush was also the ancestor of Nimrod, who was the first heroic warrior on earth.

11Mizraim was the ancestor of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites,
Naphtuhites, 12Pathrusites, Casluhites, and the Caphtorites, from
whom the Philistines came.*

13Canaan's oldest son was Sidon, the ancestor of the Sidonians.
Canaan was also the ancestor of the Hittites,*14Jebusites, Amorites,
Girgashites, 15Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, 16Arvadites, Zemarites, and
Hamathites.

DESCENDANTS OF SHEM

17The descendants of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and
Aram.

The descendants of Aram were* Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.*

18Arphaxad was the father of Shelah.

Shelah was the father of Eber.

19Eber had two sons. The first was named Peleg (which means
"division"), for during his lifetime the people of the world were
divided into different language groups. His brother's name was
Joktan.

20Joktan was the ancestor of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth,
Jerah, 21Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22Obal,* Abimael, Sheba, 23Ophir,
Havilah, and Jobab. All these were descendants of Joktan.

24So this is the family line descended from Shem: Arphaxad,
Shelah,*25Eber, Peleg, Reu, 26Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27and Abram,
later known as Abraham.

DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM

28The sons of Abraham were Isaac and Ishmael. 29These are their
genealogical records: The sons of Ishmael were Nebaioth (the
oldest), Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 30Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad,
Tema, 31Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were the sons of
Ishmael.

32The sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine, were Zimran,
Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

The sons of Jokshan were Sheba and Dedan.

33The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and
Eldaah.

All these were descendants of Abraham through his concubine
Keturah.

DESCENDANTS OF ISAAC

34Abraham was the father of Isaac. The sons of Isaac were Esau and
Israel.*

DESCENDANTS OF ESAU

35The sons of Esau were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

36The descendants of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho,* Gatam,
Kenaz, and Amalek, who was born to Timna.*

37The descendants of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and
Mizzah.

ORIGINAL PEOPLES OF EDOM

38The descendants of Seir were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,
Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

39The descendants of Lotan were Hori and Hemam.* Lotan's sister
was named Timna.

40The descendants of Shobal were Alvan,* Manahath, Ebal, Shepho,*
and Onam.

The descendants of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah.

41The son of Anah was Dishon.

The descendants of Dishon were Hemdan,* Eshban, Ithran, and
Keran.

42The descendants of Ezer were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.*

The descendants of Dishan* were Uz and Aran.

RULERS OF EDOM

43These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before any
king ruled over the Israelites*: Bela son of Beor, who ruled from his
city of Dinhabah.

44When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became king in
his place.

45When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites
became king in his place.

46When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became king in his place
and ruled from the city of Avith. He was the one who destroyed the
Midianite army in the land of Moab.

47When Hadad died, Samlah from the city of Masrekah became king
in his place.

48When Samlah died, Shaul from the city of Rehoboth-on-the-River
became king in his place.

49When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Acbor became king in his
place.

50When Baal-hanan died, Hadad became king in his place and ruled
from the city of Pau.* His wife was Mehetabel, the daughter of
Matred and granddaughter of Me-zahab. 51Then Hadad died.

The clan leaders of Edom were Timna, Alvah,* Jetheth,
52Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, 53Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, 54Magdiel, and
Iram. These are the clan leaders of Edom.

1 Chronicles 2

DESCENDANTS OF ISRAEL

1The sons of Israel* were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar,
Zebulun, 2Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

DESCENDANTS OF JUDAH

3Judah had three sons from Bathshua, a Canaanite woman. Their

names were Er, Onan, and Shelah. But the LORD saw that the oldest son, Er, was a wicked man, so he killed him. 4Later Judah had twin sons from Tamar, his widowed daughter-in-law. Their names were Perez and Zerah. So Judah had five sons in all.

5The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

6The sons of Zerah were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda*—five in all.

7The son of Carmi (a descendant of Zimri) was Achan,* who brought disaster on Israel by taking plunder that had been set apart for the LORD.*

8The son of Ethan was Azariah.

FROM JUDAH'S GRANDSON HEZRON TO DAVID

9The sons of Hezron were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb.*

10Ram was the father of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon, a leader of Judah.

11Nahshon was the father of Salmon.*
Salmon was the father of Boaz.

12Boaz was the father of Obed.
Obed was the father of Jesse.

13Jesse's first son was Eliab, his second was Abinadab, his third was Shimea, 14his fourth was Nethanel, his fifth was Raddai, 15his sixth was Ozem, and his seventh was David.

16Their sisters were named Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah had three
sons named Abishai, Joab, and Asahel. 17Abigail married a man
named Jether, an Ishmaelite, and they had a son named Amasa.

OTHER DESCENDANTS OF HEZRON

18Hezron's son Caleb had sons from his wife Azubah and from
Jerioth.* Her sons were named Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. 19After
Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrathah,* and they had a son named
Hur. 20Hur was the father of Uri. Uri was the father of Bezalel.

21When Hezron was sixty years old, he married Gilead's sister, the
daughter of Makir. They had a son named Segub. 22Segub was the
father of Jair, who ruled twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead.
23(But Geshur and Aram captured the Towns of Jair* and also took
Kenath and its sixty surrounding villages.) All these were
descendants of Makir, the father of Gilead.

24Soon after Hezron died in the town of Caleb-ephrathah, his wife
Abijah gave birth to a son named Ashhur (the father of* Tekoa).

DESCENDANTS OF HEZRON'S SON JERAHMEEL

25The sons of Jerahmeel, the oldest son of Hezron, were Ram (the
firstborn), Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. 26Jerahmeel had a
second wife named Atarah. She was the mother of Onam.

27The sons of Ram, the oldest son of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, Jamin,
and Eker.

28The sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada.

The sons of Shammai were Nadab and Abishur.

29The sons of Abishur and his wife Abihail were Ahban and Molid.

30The sons of Nadab were Seled and Appaim. Seled died without
children, 31but Appaim had a son named Ishi. The son of Ishi was
Sheshan. Sheshan had a descendant named Ahlai.

32The sons of Jada, Shammai's brother, were Jether and Jonathan.
Jether died without children, 33but Jonathan had two sons named
Peleth and Zaza.

These were all descendants of Jerahmeel.

34Sheshan had no sons, though he did have daughters. He also had
an Egyptian servant named Jarha. 35Sheshan gave one of his
daughters to be the wife of Jarha, and they had a son named Attai.

36Attai was the father of Nathan.
Nathan was the father of Zabad.

37Zabad was the father of Ephlal.
Ephlal was the father of Obed.

38Obed was the father of Jehu.
Jehu was the father of Azariah.

39Azariah was the father of Helez.
Helez was the father of Eleasah.

40Eleasah was the father of Sismai.
Sismai was the father of Shallum.

41Shallum was the father of Jekamiah.
Jekamiah was the father of Elishama.

DESCENDANTS OF HEZRON'S SON CALEB

42The descendants of Caleb, the brother of Jerahmeel, included
Mesha (the firstborn), who became the father of Ziph. Caleb's
descendants also included the sons of Mareshah, the father of

Hebron.*

43The sons of Hebron were Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema.
44Shema was the father of Raham. Raham was the father of
Jorkeam. Rekem was the father of Shammai. 45The son of Shammai
was Maon. Maon was the father of Beth-zur.

46Caleb's concubine Ephah gave birth to Haran, Moza, and Gazez.
Haran was the father of Gazez.

47The sons of Jahdai were Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah,
and Shaaph.

48Another of Caleb's concubines, Maacah, gave birth to Sheber and
Tirhanah. 49She also gave birth to Shaaph (the father of
Madmannah) and Sheva (the father of Macbenah and Gibea). Caleb
also had a daughter named Acsah.

50These were all descendants of Caleb.

DESCENDANTS OF CALEB'S SON HUR

The sons of Hur, the oldest son of Caleb's wife Ephrathah, were
Shobal (the founder of Kiriath-jearim), 51Salma (the founder of
Bethlehem), and Hareph (the founder of Beth-gader).

52The descendants of Shobal (the founder of Kiriath-jearim) were
Haroeh, half the Manahathites, 53and the families of Kiriath-jearim
—the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites, and Mishraites, from whom
came the people of Zorah and Eshtaol.

54The descendants of Salma were the people of Bethlehem, the
Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab, the other half of the Manahathites,
the Zorites, 55and the families of scribes living at Jabez—the
Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Sucathites. All these were Kenites who
descended from Hammath, the father of the family of Recab.*

1 Chronicles 3

DESCENDANTS OF DAVID

1These are the sons of David who were born in Hebron: The oldest
was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.

The second was Daniel, whose mother was Abigail from Carmel.

2The third was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter
of Talmai, king of Geshur.
The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith.

3The fifth was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital.
The sixth was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, David's wife.

4These six sons were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned
seven and a half years.

Then David reigned another thirty-three years in Jerusalem. 5The
sons born to David in Jerusalem included Shammua,* Shobab,
Nathan, and Solomon. Their mother was Bathsheba,* the daughter
of Ammiel. 6David also had nine other sons: Ibhar, Elishua,*
Elpelet,*7Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 8Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

9These were the sons of David, not including his sons born to his
concubines. Their sister was named Tamar.

DESCENDANTS OF SOLOMON

10The descendants of Solomon were Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa,
Jehoshaphat, 11Jehoram,* Ahaziah, Joash, 12Amaziah, Uzziah,*
Jotham, 13Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, 14Amon, and Josiah.

15The sons of Josiah were Johanan (the oldest), Jehoiakim (the
second), Zedekiah (the third), and Jehoahaz* (the fourth).

16The successors of Jehoiakim were his son Jehoiachin and his brother Zedekiah.*

DESCENDANTS OF JEHOIACHIN

17The sons of Jehoiachin,* who was taken prisoner by the Babylonians, were Shealtiel, 18Malkiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

19The sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei.

The sons of Zerubbabel were Meshullam and Hananiah. (Their sister was Shelomith.) 20His five other sons were Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed.

21The sons of Hananiah were Pelatiah and Jeshaiah. Jeshaiah's son was Rephaiah. Rephaiah's son was Arnan. Arnan's son was Obadiah. Obadiah's son was Shecaniah.

22The descendants of Shecaniah were Shemaiah and his sons, Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat—six in all.

23The sons of Neariah were Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam—three in all.

24The sons of Elioenai were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani—seven in all.

1 Chronicles 4

OTHER DESCENDANTS OF JUDAH

1The descendants of Judah were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and
Shobal.

2Shobal's son Reaiah was the father of Jahath. Jahath was the
father of Ahumai and Lahad. These were the families of the
Zorathites.

3The descendants of* Etam were Jezreel, Ishma, Idbash, their sister
Hazzelelponi, 4Penuel (the father of* Gedor), and Ezer (the father of
Hushah). These were the descendants of Hur (the firstborn of
Ephrathah), the ancestor of Bethlehem.

5Ashhur (the father of Tekoa) had two wives, named Helah and
Naarah. 6Naarah gave birth to Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and
Haahashtari. 7Helah gave birth to Zereth, Izhar,* Ethnan, 8and Koz,
who became the ancestor of Anub, Zobebah, and all the families of
Aharhel son of Harum.

9There was a man named Jabez who was more honorable than any
of his brothers. His mother named him Jabez* because his birth had
been so painful. 10He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel,
"Oh, that you would bless me and expand my territory! Please be
with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!"
And God granted him his request.

11Kelub (the brother of Shuhah) was the father of Mehir. Mehir was
the father of Eshton. 12Eshton was the father of Beth-rapha, Paseah,
and Tehinnah. Tehinnah was the father of Ir-nahash. These were
the descendants of Recah.

13The sons of Kenaz were Othniel and Seraiah. Othniel's sons were
Hathath and Meonothai.*14Meonothai was the father of Ophrah.
Seraiah was the father of Joab, the founder of the Valley of

Craftsmen,* so called because they were craftsmen.

15The sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh were Iru, Elah, and Naam.
The son of Elah was Kenaz.

16The sons of Jehallelel were Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.

17The sons of Ezrah were Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. One of
Mered's wives became* the mother of Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah
(the father of Eshtemoa). 18He married a woman from Judah, who
became the mother of Jered (the father of Gedor), Heber (the father
of Soco), and Jekuthiel (the father of Zanoah). Mered also married
Bithia, a daughter of Pharaoh, and she bore him children.

19Hodiah's wife was the sister of Naham. One of her sons was the
father of Keilah the Garmite, and another was the father of
Eshtemoa the Maacathite.

20The sons of Shimon were Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon.

The descendants of Ishi were Zoheth and Ben-zoheth.

DESCENDANTS OF JUDAH'S SON SHELAH

21Shelah was one of Judah's sons. The descendants of Shelah were
Er (the father of Lecah); Laadah (the father of Mareshah); the
families of linen workers at Beth-ashbea; 22Jokim; the men of
Cozeba; and Joash and Saraph, who ruled over Moab and Jashubi-
lehem. These names all come from ancient records. 23They were the
pottery makers who lived in Netaim and Gederah. They lived there
and worked for the king.

DESCENDANTS OF SIMEON

24The sons of Simeon were Jemuel,* Jamin, Jarib, Zohar,* and
Shaul.

25The descendants of Shaul were Shallum, Mibsam, and Mishma.

26The descendants of Mishma were Hammuel, Zaccur, and Shimei.

27Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but none of his
brothers had large families. So Simeon's tribe never grew as large as
the tribe of Judah.

28They lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar-shual, 29Bilhah, Ezem,
Tolad, 30Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim,
Beth-biri, and Shaaraim. These towns were under their control until
the time of King David. 32Their descendants also lived in Etam, Ain,
Rimmon, Token, and Ashan—five towns 33and their surrounding
villages as far away as Baalath.* This was their territory, and these
names are listed in their genealogical records.

34Other descendants of Simeon included Meshobab, Jamlech,
Joshah son of Amaziah, 35Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, son of
Seraiah, son of Asiel, 36Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah,
Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, 37and Ziza son of Shiphi, son of Allon, son
of Jedaiah, son of Shimri, son of Shemaiah.

38These were the names of some of the leaders of Simeon's wealthy
clans. Their families grew, 39and they traveled to the region of
Gerar,* in the east part of the valley, seeking pastureland for their
flocks. 40They found lush pastures there, and the land was spacious,
quiet, and peaceful.

Some of Ham's descendants had been living in that region. 41But
during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah, these leaders of Simeon
invaded the region and completely destroyed* the homes of the
descendants of Ham and of the Meunites. No trace of them remains
today. They killed everyone who lived there and took the land for

themselves, because they wanted its good pastureland for their flocks. 42Five hundred of these invaders from the tribe of Simeon went to Mount Seir, led by Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel —all sons of Ishi. 43They destroyed the few Amalekites who had survived, and they have lived there ever since.

1 Chronicles 5

DESCENDANTS OF REUBEN

1The oldest son of Israel* was Reuben. But since he dishonored his father by sleeping with one of his father's concubines, his birthright was given to the sons of his brother Joseph. For this reason, Reuben is not listed in the genealogical records as the firstborn son. 2The descendants of Judah became the most powerful tribe and provided a ruler for the nation,* but the birthright belonged to Joseph.

3The sons of Reuben, the oldest son of Israel, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

4The descendants of Joel were Shemaiah, Gog, Shimei, 5Micah, Reaiah, Baal, 6and Beerah. Beerah was the leader of the Reubenites when they were taken into captivity by King Tiglath-pileser* of Assyria.

7Beerah's* relatives are listed in their genealogical records by their clans: Jeiel (the leader), Zechariah, 8and Bela son of Azaz, son of Shema, son of Joel.

The Reubenites lived in the area that stretches from Aroer to Nebo and Baal-meon. 9And since they had so many livestock in the land of Gilead, they spread east toward the edge of the desert that stretches to the Euphrates River.

10During the reign of Saul, the Reubenites defeated the Hagrites in

battle. Then they moved into the Hagrite settlements all along the eastern edge of Gilead.

DESCENDANTS OF GAD

11Next to the Reubenites, the descendants of Gad lived in the land of Bashan as far east as Salecah. 12Joel was the leader in the land of Bashan, and Shapham was second-in-command, followed by Janai and Shaphat.

13Their relatives, the leaders of seven other clans, were Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber. 14These were all descendants of Abihail son of Huri, son of Jaroah, son of Gilead, son of Michael, son of Jeshishai, son of Jahdo, son of Buz. 15Ahi son of Abdiel, son of Guni, was the leader of their clans.

16The Gadites lived in the land of Gilead, in Bashan and its villages, and throughout all the pasturelands of Sharon. 17All of these were listed in the genealogical records during the days of King Jotham of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel.

THE TRIBES EAST OF THE JORDAN

18There were 44,760 capable warriors in the armies of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. They were all skilled in combat and armed with shields, swords, and bows. 19They waged war against the Hagrites, the Jeturites, the Naphishites, and the Nodabites. 20They cried out to God during the battle, and he answered their prayer because they trusted in him. So the Hagrites and all their allies were defeated. 21The plunder taken from the Hagrites included 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep and goats, 2,000 donkeys, and 100,000 captives. 22Many of the Hagrites were killed in the battle because God was fighting against them. The people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh lived in their land until they were taken into exile.

23The half-tribe of Manasseh was very large and spread through the

land from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon.
24These were the leaders of their clans: Epher,* Ishi, Eliel, Azriel,
Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. These men had a great reputation
as mighty warriors and leaders of their clans.

25But these tribes were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors.
They worshiped the gods of the nations that God had destroyed.
26So the God of Israel caused King Pul of Assyria (also known as
Tiglath-pileser) to invade the land and take away the people of
Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh as captives. The
Assyrians exiled them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the Gozan River,
where they remain to this day.

1 Chronicles 6

THE PRIESTLY LINE

1*The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

2The descendants of Kohath included Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and
Uzziel.

3The children of Amram were Aaron, Moses, and Miriam.

The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

4Eleazar was the father of Phinehas.
Phinehas was the father of Abishua.

5Abishua was the father of Bukki.
Bukki was the father of Uzzi.

6Uzzi was the father of Zerahiah.
Zerahiah was the father of Meraioth.

7Meraioth was the father of Amariah.
Amariah was the father of Ahitub.

8Ahitub was the father of Zadok.
Zadok was the father of Ahimaaz.

9Ahimaaz was the father of Azariah.
Azariah was the father of Johanan.

10Johanan was the father of Azariah, the high priest at the Temple* built by Solomon in Jerusalem.

11Azariah was the father of Amariah.
Amariah was the father of Ahitub.

12Ahitub was the father of Zadok.
Zadok was the father of Shallum.

13Shallum was the father of Hilkiah.
Hilkiah was the father of Azariah.

14Azariah was the father of Seraiah.
Seraiah was the father of Jehozadak, 15who went into exile when the LORD sent the people of Judah and Jerusalem into captivity under Nebuchadnezzar.

THE LEVITE CLANS

16*The sons of Levi were Gershon,* Kohath, and Merari.

17The descendants of Gershon included Libni and Shimei.

18The descendants of Kohath included Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

19The descendants of Merari included Mahli and Mushi.

The following were the Levite clans, listed according to their ancestral descent:

20The descendants of Gershon included Libni, Jahath, Zimmah,
21Joah, Iddo, Zerah, and Jeatherai.

22The descendants of Kohath included Amminadab, Korah, Assir,
23Elkanah, Abiasaph,* Assir, 24Tahath, Uriel, Uzziah, and Shaul.

25The descendants of Elkanah included Amasai, Ahimoth, 26Elkanah,
Zophai, Nahath, 27Eliab, Jeroham, Elkanah, and Samuel.*

28The sons of Samuel were Joel* (the older) and Abijah (the
second).

29The descendants of Merari included Mahli, Libni, Shimei, Uzzah,
30Shimea, Haggiah, and Asaiah.

THE TEMPLE MUSICIANS

31David assigned the following men to lead the music at the house
of the LORD after the Ark was placed there. 32They ministered with
music at the Tabernacle* until Solomon built the Temple of the
LORD in Jerusalem. They carried out their work, following all the
regulations handed down to them. 33These are the men who served,
along with their sons: Heman the musician was from the clan of
Kohath. His genealogy was traced back through Joel, Samuel,
34Elkanah, Jeroham, Eliel, Toah, 35Zuph, Elkanah, Mahath, Amasai,
36Elkanah, Joel, Azariah, Zephaniah, 37Tahath, Assir, Abiasaph,
Korah, 38Izhar, Kohath, Levi, and Israel.*

39Heman's first assistant was Asaph from the clan of Gershon.*
Asaph's genealogy was traced back through Berekiah, Shimea,
40Michael, Baaseiah, Malkijah, 41Ethni, Zerah, Adaiah, 42Ethan,
Zimmah, Shimei, 43Jahath, Gershon, and Levi.

44Heman's second assistant was Ethan from the clan of Merari.
Ethan's genealogy was traced back through Kishi, Abdi, Malluch,
45Hashabiah, Amaziah, Hilkiah, 46Amzi, Bani, Shemer, 47Mahli,
Mushi, Merari, and Levi.

48Their fellow Levites were appointed to various other tasks in the
Tabernacle, the house of God.

AARON'S DESCENDANTS

49Only Aaron and his descendants served as priests. They presented
the offerings on the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense,
and they performed all the other duties related to the Most Holy
Place. They made atonement for Israel by doing everything that
Moses, the servant of God, had commanded them.

50The descendants of Aaron were Eleazar, Phinehas, Abishua,
51Bukki, Uzzi, Zerahiah, 52Meraioth, Amariah, Ahitub, 53Zadok, and
Ahimaaz.

TERRITORY FOR THE LEVITES

54This is a record of the towns and territory assigned by means of
sacred lots to the descendants of Aaron, who were from the clan of
Kohath. 55This territory included Hebron and its surrounding
pasturelands in Judah, 56but the fields and outlying areas belonging
to the city were given to Caleb son of Jephunneh. 57So the
descendants of Aaron were given the following towns, each with its
pasturelands: Hebron (a city of refuge),* Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa,
58Holon,* Debir, 59Ain,* Juttah,* and Beth-shemesh. 60And from the
territory of Benjamin they were given Gibeon,* Geba, Alemeth, and
Anathoth, each with its pasturelands. So thirteen towns were given
to the descendants of Aaron. 61The remaining descendants of
Kohath received ten towns from the territory of the half-tribe of
Manasseh by means of sacred lots.

62The descendants of Gershon received by sacred lots thirteen towns

from the territories of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and from the Bashan area of Manasseh, east of the Jordan.

63The descendants of Merari received by sacred lots twelve towns from the territories of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

64So the people of Israel assigned all these towns and pasturelands to the Levites. 65The towns in the territories of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, mentioned above, were assigned to them by means of sacred lots.

66The descendants of Kohath were given the following towns from the territory of Ephraim, each with its pasturelands: 67Shechem (a city of refuge in the hill country of Ephraim),* Gezer, 68Jokmeam, Beth-horon, 69Aijalon, and Gath-rimmon. 70The remaining descendants of Kohath were assigned the towns of Aner and Bileam from the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh, each with its pasturelands.

71The descendants of Gershon received the towns of Golan (in Bashan) and Ashtaroth from the territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh, each with its pasturelands. 72From the territory of Issachar, they were given Kedesh, Daberath, 73Ramoth, and Anem, each with its pasturelands. 74From the territory of Asher, they received Mashal, Abdon, 75Hukok, and Rehob, each with its pasturelands. 76From the territory of Naphtali, they were given Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon, and Kiriathaim, each with its pasturelands.

77The remaining descendants of Merari received the towns of Jokneam, Kartah,* Rimmon,* and Tabor from the territory of Zebulun, each with its pasturelands. 78From the territory of Reuben, east of the Jordan River opposite Jericho, they received Bezer (a desert town), Jahaz,*79Kedemoth, and Mephaath, each with its pasturelands. 80And from the territory of Gad, they received Ramoth

in Gilead, Mahanaim, 81Heshbon, and Jazer, each with its pasturelands.

1 Chronicles 7

DESCENDANTS OF ISSACHAR

1The four sons of Issachar were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

2The sons of Tola were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Shemuel. Each of them was the leader of an ancestral clan. At the time of King David, the total number of mighty warriors listed in the records of these clans was 22,600.

3The son of Uzzi was Izrahiah. The sons of Izrahiah were Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah. These five became the leaders of clans. 4All of them had many wives and many sons, so the total number of men available for military service among their descendants was 36,000.

5The total number of mighty warriors from all the clans of the tribe of Issachar was 87,000. All of them were listed in their genealogical records.

DESCENDANTS OF BENJAMIN

6Three of Benjamin's sons were Bela, Beker, and Jediael.

7The five sons of Bela were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri. Each of them was the leader of an ancestral clan. The total number of mighty warriors from these clans was 22,034, as listed in their genealogical records.

8The sons of Beker were Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. 9Each of them was the

leader of an ancestral clan. The total number of mighty warriors and leaders from these clans was 20,200, as listed in their genealogical records.

10The son of Jediael was Bilhan. The sons of Bilhan were Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Kenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar. 11Each of them was the leader of an ancestral clan. From these clans the total number of mighty warriors ready for war was 17,200.

12The sons of Ir were Shuppim and Huppim. Hushim was the son of Aher.

DESCENDANTS OF NAPHTALI

13The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel,* Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.* They were all descendants of Jacob's concubine Bilhah.

DESCENDANTS OF MANASSEH

14The descendants of Manasseh through his Aramean concubine included Asriel. She also bore Makir, the father of Gilead. 15Makir found wives for* Huppim and Shuppim. Makir had a sister named Maacah. One of his descendants was Zelophehad, who had only daughters.

16Makir's wife, Maacah, gave birth to a son whom she named Peresh. His brother's name was Sheresh. The sons of Peresh were Ulam and Rakem. 17The son of Ulam was Bedan. All these were considered Gileadites, descendants of Makir son of Manasseh.

18Makir's sister Hammoleketh gave birth to Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.

19The sons of Shemida were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

DESCENDANTS OF EPHRAIM

20The descendants of Ephraim were Shuthelah, Bered, Tahath,
Eleadah, Tahath, 21Zabad, Shuthelah, Ezer, and Elead. These two
were killed trying to steal livestock from the local farmers near
Gath. 22Their father, Ephraim, mourned for them a long time, and
his relatives came to comfort him. 23Afterward Ephraim slept with
his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Ephraim
named him Beriah* because of the tragedy his family had suffered.
24He had a daughter named Sheerah. She built the towns of Lower
and Upper Beth-horon and Uzzen-sheerah.

25The descendants of Ephraim included Rephah, Resheph, Telah,
Tahan, 26Ladan, Ammihud, Elishama, 27Nun, and Joshua.

28The descendants of Ephraim lived in the territory that included
Bethel and its surrounding towns to the south, Naaran to the east,
Gezer and its villages to the west, and Shechem and its surrounding
villages to the north as far as Ayyah and its towns. 29Along the
border of Manasseh were the towns of Beth-shan,* Taanach,
Megiddo, Dor, and their surrounding villages. The descendants of
Joseph son of Israel* lived in these towns.

DESCENDANTS OF ASHER

30The sons of Asher were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. They
had a sister named Serah.

31The sons of Beriah were Heber and Malkiel (the father of
Birzaith).

32The sons of Heber were Japhlet, Shomer, and Hotham. They had a
sister named Shua.

33The sons of Japhlet were Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath.

34The sons of Shomer were Ahi,* Rohgah, Hubbah, and Aram.

35The sons of his brother Helem* were Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.

36The sons of Zophah were Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah,
37Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran,* and Beera.

38The sons of Jether were Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara.

39The sons of Ulla were Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia.

40Each of these descendants of Asher was the head of an ancestral clan. They were all select men—mighty warriors and outstanding leaders. The total number of men available for military service was 26,000, as listed in their genealogical records.

1 Chronicles 8

DESCENDANTS OF BENJAMIN

1Benjamin's first son was Bela, the second was Ashbel, the third was Aharah, 2the fourth was Nohah, and the fifth was Rapha.

3The sons of Bela were Addar, Gera, Abihud,*4Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, 5Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram.

6The sons of Ehud, leaders of the clans living at Geba, were exiled to Manahath. 7Ehud's sons were Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera. Gera, who led them into exile, was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.*

8After Shaharaim divorced his wives Hushim and Baara, he had
children in the land of Moab. 9His wife Hodesh gave birth to Jobab,
Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, 10Jeuz, Sakia, and Mirmah. These sons all
became the leaders of clans.

11Shaharaim's wife Hushim had already given birth to Abitub and
Elpaal. 12The sons of Elpaal were Eber, Misham, Shemed (who built
the towns of Ono and Lod and their nearby villages), 13Beriah, and
Shema. They were the leaders of the clans living in Aijalon, and
they drove out the inhabitants of Gath.

14Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth, 15Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, 16Michael,
Ishpah, and Joha were the sons of Beriah.

17Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, 18Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab
were the sons of Elpaal.

19Jakim, Zicri, Zabdi, 20Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21Adaiah, Beraiah,
and Shimrath were the sons of Shimei.

22Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23Abdon, Zicri, Hanan, 24Hananiah, Elam,
Anthothijah, 25Iphdeiah, and Penuel were the sons of Shashak.

26Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zicri
were the sons of Jeroham.

28These were the leaders of the ancestral clans; they were listed in
their genealogical records, and they all lived in Jerusalem.

THE FAMILY OF SAUL

29Jeiel* (the father of* Gibeon) lived in the town of Gibeon. His
wife's name was Maacah, 30and his oldest son was named Abdon.

Jeiel's other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner,* Nadab, 31Gedor, Ahio,
Zechariah,*32and Mikloth, who was the father of Shimeam.* All
these families lived near each other in Jerusalem.

33Ner was the father of Kish.
Kish was the father of Saul.
Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malkishua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal.

34Jonathan was the father of Merib-baal.
Merib-baal was the father of Micah.

35Micah was the father of Pithon, Melech, Tahrea,* and Ahaz.

36Ahaz was the father of Jadah.*
Jadah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri.
Zimri was the father of Moza.

37Moza was the father of Binea.
Binea was the father of Rephaiah.*
Rephaiah was the father of Eleasah.
Eleasah was the father of Azel.

38Azel had six sons: Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah,
and Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.

39Azel's brother Eshek had three sons: the first was Ulam, the
second was Jeush, and the third was Eliphelet. 40Ulam's sons were
all mighty warriors and expert archers. They had many sons and
grandsons—150 in all.

All these were descendants of Benjamin.

1 Chronicles 9

1So all Israel was listed in the genealogical records in *The Book of*

the Kings of Israel.

THE RETURNING EXILES

The people of Judah were exiled to Babylon because they were
unfaithful to the LORD. 2The first of the exiles to return to their
property in their former towns were priests, Levites, Temple
servants, and other Israelites. 3Some of the people from the tribes of
Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh came and settled in
Jerusalem.

4One family that returned was that of Uthai son of Ammihud, son of
Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, a descendant of Perez son of Judah.

5Others returned from the Shilonite clan, including Asaiah (the
oldest) and his sons.

6From the Zerahite clan, Jeuel returned with his relatives.

In all, 690 families from the tribe of Judah returned.

7From the tribe of Benjamin came Sallu son of Meshullam, son of
Hodaviah, son of Hassenuah; 8Ibneiah son of Jeroham; Elah son of
Uzzi, son of Micri; and Meshullam son of Shephatiah, son of Reuel,
son of Ibnijah.

9These men were all leaders of clans, and they were listed in their
genealogical records. In all, 956 families from the tribe of Benjamin
returned.

THE RETURNING PRIESTS

10Among the priests who returned were Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jakin,
11Azariah son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of
Meraioth, son of Ahitub. Azariah was the chief officer of the house
of God.

12Other returning priests were Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malkijah, and Maasai son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of Meshillemith, son of Immer.

13In all, 1,760 priests returned. They were heads of clans and very able men. They were responsible for ministering at the house of God.

THE RETURNING LEVITES

14The Levites who returned were Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, a descendant of Merari; 15Bakbakkar; Heresh; Galal; Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zicri, son of Asaph; 16Obadiah son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun; and Berekiah son of Asa, son of Elkanah, who lived in the area of Netophah.

17The gatekeepers who returned were Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their relatives. Shallum was the chief gatekeeper. 18Prior to this time, they were responsible for the King's Gate on the east side. These men served as gatekeepers for the camps of the Levites. 19Shallum was the son of Kore, a descendant of Abiasaph,* from the clan of Korah. He and his relatives, the Korahites, were responsible for guarding the entrance to the sanctuary, just as their ancestors had guarded the Tabernacle in the camp of the LORD.

20Phinehas son of Eleazar had been in charge of the gatekeepers in earlier times, and the LORD had been with him. 21And later Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was responsible for guarding the entrance to the Tabernacle.*

22In all, there were 212 gatekeepers in those days, and they were listed according to the genealogies in their villages. David and Samuel the seer had appointed their ancestors because they were reliable men. 23These gatekeepers and their descendants, by their divisions, were responsible for guarding the entrance to the house of the LORD when that house was a tent. 24The gatekeepers were stationed on all four sides—east, west, north, and south. 25Their

relatives in the villages came regularly to share their duties for seven-day periods.

26The four chief gatekeepers, all Levites, were trusted officials, for they were responsible for the rooms and treasuries at the house of God. 27They would spend the night around the house of God, since it was their duty to guard it and to open the gates every morning.

28Some of the gatekeepers were assigned to care for the various articles used in worship. They checked them in and out to avoid any loss. 29Others were responsible for the furnishings, the items in the sanctuary, and the supplies, such as choice flour, wine, olive oil, frankincense, and spices. 30But it was the priests who blended the spices. 31Mattithiah, a Levite and the oldest son of Shallum the Korahite, was entrusted with baking the bread used in the offerings. 32And some members of the clan of Kohath were in charge of preparing the bread to be set on the table each Sabbath day.

33The musicians, all prominent Levites, lived at the Temple. They were exempt from other responsibilities since they were on duty at all hours. 34All these men lived in Jerusalem. They were the heads of Levite families and were listed as prominent leaders in their genealogical records.

KING SAUL'S FAMILY TREE

35Jeiel (the father of* Gibeon) lived in the town of Gibeon. His wife's name was Maacah, 36and his oldest son was named Abdon. Jeiel's other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. 38Mikloth was the father of Shimeam. All these families lived near each other in Jerusalem.

39Ner was the father of Kish.
Kish was the father of Saul.
Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malkishua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal.

40Jonathan was the father of Merib-baal.
Merib-baal was the father of Micah.

41The sons of Micah were Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz.*

42Ahaz was the father of Jadah.*
Jadah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri.
Zimri was the father of Moza.

43Moza was the father of Binea.
Binea's son was Rephaiah.
Rephaiah's son was Eleasah.
Eleasah's son was Azel.

44Azel had six sons, whose names were Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael,
Shearíah, Obadiah, and Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.

1 Chronicles 10

THE DEATH OF KING SAUL

1Now the Philistines attacked Israel, and the men of Israel fled
before them. Many were slaughtered on the slopes of Mount Gilboa.
2The Philistines closed in on Saul and his sons, and they killed three
of his sons—Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malkishua. 3The fighting
grew very fierce around Saul, and the Philistine archers caught up
with him and wounded him.

4Saul groaned to his armor bearer, "Take your sword and kill me
before these pagan Philistines come to taunt and torture me."

But his armor bearer was afraid and would not do it. So Saul took
his own sword and fell on it. 5When his armor bearer realized that
Saul was dead, he fell on his own sword and died. 6So Saul and his
three sons died there together, bringing his dynasty to an end.

7When all the Israelites in the Jezreel Valley saw that their army
had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned
their towns and fled. So the Philistines moved in and occupied their
towns.

8The next day, when the Philistines went out to strip the dead, they
found the bodies of Saul and his sons on Mount Gilboa. 9So they
stripped off Saul's armor and cut off his head. Then they proclaimed
the good news of Saul's death before their idols and to the people
throughout the land of Philistia. 10They placed his armor in the
temple of their gods, and they fastened his head to the temple of
Dagon.

11But when everyone in Jabesh-gilead heard about everything the
Philistines had done to Saul, 12all their mighty warriors brought the
bodies of Saul and his sons back to Jabesh. Then they buried their
bones beneath the great tree at Jabesh, and they fasted for seven
days.

13So Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD. He failed to
obey the LORD's command, and he even consulted a medium
14instead of asking the LORD for guidance. So the LORD killed him
and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

1 Chronicles 11

DAVID BECOMES KING OF ALL ISRAEL

1Then all Israel gathered before David at Hebron and told him, "We
are your own flesh and blood. 2In the past,* even when Saul was
king, you were the one who really led the forces of Israel. And the
LORD your God told you, 'You will be the shepherd of my people
Israel. You will be the leader of my people Israel.'"

3So there at Hebron, David made a covenant before the LORD with
all the elders of Israel. And they anointed him king of Israel, just as

the LORD had promised through Samuel.

DAVID CAPTURES JERUSALEM

4Then David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (or Jebus, as it used to be called), where the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land, were living. 5The people of Jebus taunted David, saying, “You’ll never get in here!” But David captured the fortress of Zion, which is now called the City of David.

6David had said to his troops, “Whoever is first to attack the Jebusites will become the commander of my armies!” And Joab, the son of David’s sister Zeruiah, was first to attack, so he became the commander of David’s armies.

7David made the fortress his home, and that is why it is called the City of David. 8He extended the city from the supporting terraces* to the surrounding area, while Joab rebuilt the rest of Jerusalem. 9And David became more and more powerful, because the LORD of Heaven’s Armies was with him.

DAVID’S MIGHTIEST WARRIORS

10These are the leaders of David’s mighty warriors. Together with all Israel, they decided to make David their king, just as the LORD had promised concerning Israel.

11Here is the record of David’s mightiest warriors: The first was Jashobeam the Hacmonite, who was leader of the Three—the mightiest warriors among David’s men.* He once used his spear to kill 300 enemy warriors in a single battle.

12Next in rank among the Three was Eleazar son of Dodai,* a descendant of Ahoah. 13He was with David when the Philistines

gathered for battle at Pas-dammim and attacked the Israelites in a field full of barley. The Israelite army fled, 14but Eleazar and David* held their ground in the middle of the field and beat back the Philistines. So the LORD saved them by giving them a great victory.

15Once when David was at the rock near the cave of Adullam, the Philistine army was camped in the valley of Rephaim. The Three (who were among the Thirty—an elite group among David's fighting men) went down to meet him there. 16David was staying in the stronghold at the time, and a Philistine detachment had occupied the town of Bethlehem.

17David remarked longingly to his men, "Oh, how I would love some of that good water from the well by the gate in Bethlehem." 18So the Three broke through the Philistine lines, drew some water from the well by the gate in Bethlehem, and brought it back to David. But David refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out as an offering to the LORD. 19"God forbid that I should drink this!" he exclaimed. "This water is as precious as the blood of these men* who risked their lives to bring it to me." So David did not drink it. These are examples of the exploits of the Three.

DAVID'S THIRTY MIGHTY MEN

20Abishai, the brother of Joab, was the leader of the Thirty.* He once used his spear to kill 300 enemy warriors in a single battle. It was by such feats that he became as famous as the Three. 21Abishai was the most famous of the Thirty and was their commander, though he was not one of the Three.

22There was also Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant warrior from Kabzeel. He did many heroic deeds, which included killing two champions* of Moab. Another time, on a snowy day, he chased a lion down into a pit and killed it. 23Once, armed only with a club, he killed an Egyptian warrior who was 7*1/2* feet* tall and who was

armed with a spear as thick as a weaver's beam. Benaiah wrenched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with it. 24Deeds like these made Benaiah as famous as the three mightiest warriors. 25He was more honored than the other members of the Thirty, though he was not one of the Three. And David made him captain of his bodyguard.

26David's mighty warriors also included: Asahel, Joab's brother;
Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem;

27Shammah from Harod;*
Helez from Pelon;

28Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa; Abiezer from Anathoth;

29Sibbecai from Hushah; Zalmon* from Ahoah;

30Maharai from Netophah; Heled son of Baanah from Netophah;

31Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah (in the land of Benjamin); Benaiah from Pirathon;

32Hurai from near Nahale-gaash*; Abi-albon* from Arabah;

33Azmaveth from Bahurim*; Eliahba from Shaalbon;

34the sons of Jashen* from Gizon; Jonathan son of Shagee from Harar;

35Ahiam son of Sharar* from Harar; Eliphal son of Ur;

36Hepher from Mekerah; Ahijah from Pelon;

37Hezro from Carmel; Paarai* son of Ezbai;

38Joel, the brother of Nathan; Mibhar son of Hagri;

39Zelek from Ammon; Naharai from Beeroth, the armor bearer of
Joab son of Zeruiah;

40Ira from Jattir; Gareb from Jattir;

41Uriah the Hittite; Zabad son of Ahlai;

42Adina son of Shiza, the Reubenite leader who had thirty men with
him;

43Hanan son of Maacah; Joshaphat from Mithna;

44Uzzia from Ashtaroth; Shama and Jeiel, the sons of Hotham, from
Aroer;

45Jediael son of Shimri; Joha, his brother, from Tiz;

46Eliel from Mahavah; Jeribai and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam;
Ithmah from Moab;

47Eliel and Obed; Jaasiel from Zobah.*

1 Chronicles 12

WARRIORS JOIN DAVID'S ARMY

1The following men joined David at Ziklag while he was hiding
from Saul son of Kish. They were among the warriors who fought
beside David in battle. 2All of them were expert archers, and they
could shoot arrows or sling stones with their left hand as well as
their right. They were all relatives of Saul from the tribe of
Benjamin. 3Their leader was Ahiezer son of Shemaah from Gibeah;
his brother Joash was second-in-command. These were the other
warriors: Jeziel and Pelet, sons of Azmaveth; Beracah; Jehu from
Anathoth;

4Ishmaiah from Gibeon, a famous warrior and leader among the Thirty; *Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad from Gederah;

5Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, and Shephatiah from Haruph;

6Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, who were Korahites;

7Joelah and Zebadiah, sons of Jeroham from Gedor.

8Some brave and experienced warriors from the tribe of Gad also defected to David while he was at the stronghold in the wilderness. They were expert with both shield and spear, as fierce as lions and as swift as deer on the mountains.

9Ezer was their leader.
Obadiah was second.
Eliab was third.

10Mishmannah was fourth.
Jeremiah was fifth.

11Attai was sixth.
Eliel was seventh.

12Johanan was eighth.
Elzabad was ninth.

13Jeremiah was tenth.
Macbannai was eleventh.

14These warriors from Gad were army commanders. The weakest among them could take on a hundred regular troops, and the strongest could take on a thousand! 15These were the men who crossed the Jordan River during its seasonal flooding at the beginning of the year and drove out all the people living in the lowlands on both the east and west banks.

16Others from Benjamin and Judah came to David at the stronghold.
17David went out to meet them and said, “If you have come in
peace to help me, we are friends. But if you have come to betray me
to my enemies when I am innocent, then may the God of our
ancestors see it and punish you.”

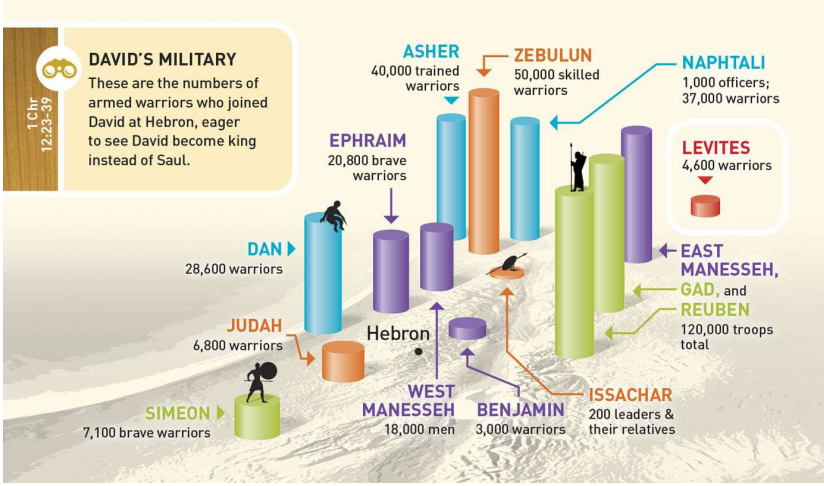
18Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, the leader of the Thirty, and
he said, “We are yours, David!

We are on your side, son of Jesse.
Peace and prosperity be with you, and success to all who help you,
for your God is the one who helps you.”

So David let them join him, and he made them officers over his
troops.

19Some men from Manasseh defected from the Israelite army and
joined David when he set out with the Philistines to fight against
Saul. But as it turned out, the Philistine rulers refused to let David
and his men go with them. After much discussion, they sent them
back, for they said, “It will cost us our heads if David switches
loyalties to Saul and turns against us.”

20Here is a list of the men from Manasseh who defected to David as
he was returning to Ziklag: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael,
Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai. Each commanded 1,000 troops from
the tribe of Manasseh. 21They helped David chase down bands of
raiders, for they were all brave and able warriors who became
commanders in his army. 22Day after day more men joined David
until he had a great army, like the army of God.



DAVID'S MILITARY

23These are the numbers of armed warriors who joined David at
Hebron. They were all eager to see David become king instead of
Saul, just as the LORD had promised.

24From the tribe of Judah, there were 6,800 warriors armed with
shields and spears.

25From the tribe of Simeon, there were 7,100 brave warriors.

26From the tribe of Levi, there were 4,600 warriors. 27This included
Jehoiada, leader of the family of Aaron, who had 3,700 under his
command. 28This also included Zadok, a brave young warrior, with
22 members of his family who were all officers.

29From the tribe of Benjamin, Saul's relatives, there were 3,000
warriors. Most of the men from Benjamin had remained loyal to
Saul until this time.

30From the tribe of Ephraim, there were 20,800 brave warriors,
each highly respected in his own clan.

31From the half-tribe of Manasseh west of the Jordan, 18,000 men
were designated by name to help David become king.

32From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe
with their relatives. All these men understood the signs of the times
and knew the best course for Israel to take.

33From the tribe of Zebulun, there were 50,000 skilled warriors.
They were fully armed and prepared for battle and completely loyal
to David.

34From the tribe of Naphtali, there were 1,000 officers and 37,000
warriors armed with shields and spears.

35From the tribe of Dan, there were 28,600 warriors, all prepared
for battle.

36From the tribe of Asher, there were 40,000 trained warriors, all
prepared for battle.

37From the east side of the Jordan River—where the tribes of
Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh lived—there were
120,000 troops armed with every kind of weapon.

38All these men came in battle array to Hebron with the single
purpose of making David the king over all Israel. In fact, everyone
in Israel agreed that David should be their king. 39They feasted and
drank with David for three days, for preparations had been made by
their relatives for their arrival. 40And people from as far away as
Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali brought food on donkeys, camels,
mules, and oxen. Vast supplies of flour, fig cakes, clusters of raisins,
wine, olive oil, cattle, sheep, and goats were brought to the

celebration. There was great joy throughout the land of Israel.

1 Chronicles 13

DAVID ATTEMPTS TO MOVE THE ARK

1David consulted with all his officials, including the generals and captains of his army.*2Then he addressed the entire assembly of Israel as follows: “If you approve and if it is the will of the LORD our God, let us send messages to all the Israelites throughout the land, including the priests and Levites in their towns and pasturelands. Let us invite them to come and join us. 3It is time to bring back the Ark of our God, for we neglected it during the reign of Saul.”

4The whole assembly agreed to this, for the people could see it was the right thing to do. 5So David summoned all Israel, from the Shihor Brook of Egypt in the south all the way to the town of Lebo-hamath in the north, to join in bringing the Ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. 6Then David and all Israel went to Baalah of Judah (also called Kiriath-jearim) to bring back the Ark of God, which bears the name* of the LORD who is enthroned between the cherubim. 7They placed the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it from Abinadab’s house. Uzzah and Ahio were guiding the cart. 8David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, singing songs and playing all kinds of musical instruments—lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets.

9But when they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon,* the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the Ark. 10Then the LORD’s anger was aroused against Uzzah, and he struck him dead because he had laid his hand on the Ark. So Uzzah died there in the presence of God.

11David was angry because the LORD’s anger had burst out against Uzzah. He named that place Perez-uzzah (which means “to burst

out against Uzzah”), as it is still called today.

12David was now afraid of God, and he asked, “How can I ever
bring the Ark of God back into my care?” 13So David did not move
the Ark into the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of
Obed-edom of Gath. 14The Ark of God remained there in Obed-
edom’s house for three months, and the LORD blessed the
household of Obed-edom and everything he owned.

1 Chronicles 14

DAVID’S PALACE AND FAMILY

1Then King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with
cedar timber, and stonemasons and carpenters to build him a
palace. 2And David realized that the LORD had confirmed him as
king over Israel and had greatly blessed his kingdom for the sake of
his people Israel.

3Then David married more wives in Jerusalem, and they had more
sons and daughters. 4These are the names of David’s sons who were
born in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5Ibhar,
Elishua, Elpelet, 6Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7Elishama, Eliada,* and
Eliphelet.

DAVID CONQUERS THE PHILISTINES

8When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over
all Israel, they mobilized all their forces to capture him. But David
was told they were coming, so he marched out to meet them. 9The
Philistines arrived and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. 10So
David asked God, “Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you
hand them over to me?”

The LORD replied, “Yes, go ahead. I will hand them over to you.”

11So David and his troops went up to Baal-perazim and defeated the
Philistines there. “God did it!” David exclaimed. “He used me to
burst through my enemies like a raging flood!” So they named that
place Baal-perazim (which means “the Lord who bursts through”).
12The Philistines had abandoned their gods there, so David gave
orders to burn them.

13But after a while the Philistines returned and raided the valley
again. 14And once again David asked God what to do. “Do not
attack them straight on,” God replied. “Instead, circle around
behind and attack them near the poplar* trees. 15When you hear a
sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, go out and
attack! That will be the signal that God is moving ahead of you to
strike down the Philistine army.” 16So David did what God
commanded, and they struck down the Philistine army all the way
from Gibeon to Gezer.

17So David’s fame spread everywhere, and the LORD caused all the
nations to fear David.

1 Chronicles 15

PREPARING TO MOVE THE ARK

1David now built several buildings for himself in the City of David.
He also prepared a place for the Ark of God and set up a special tent
for it. 2Then he commanded, “No one except the Levites may carry
the Ark of God. The LORD has chosen them to carry the Ark of the
LORD and to serve him forever.”

3Then David summoned all Israel to Jerusalem to bring the Ark of
the LORD to the place he had prepared for it. 4This is the number of
the descendants of Aaron (the priests) and the Levites who were
called together:

5From the clan of Kohath, 120, with Uriel as their leader.

6From the clan of Merari, 220, with Asaiah as their leader.

7From the clan of Gershon,* 130, with Joel as their leader.

8From the descendants of Elizaphan, 200, with Shemaiah as their leader.

9From the descendants of Hebron, 80, with Eliel as their leader.

10From the descendants of Uzziel, 112, with Amminadab as their leader.

11Then David summoned the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, and these Levite leaders: Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12He said to them, “You are the leaders of the Levite families. You must purify yourselves and all your fellow Levites, so you can bring the Ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. 13Because you Levites did not carry the Ark the first time, the anger of the LORD our God burst out against us. We failed to ask God how to move it properly.” 14So the priests and the Levites purified themselves in order to bring the Ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to Jerusalem. 15Then the Levites carried the Ark of God on their shoulders with its carrying poles, just as the LORD had instructed Moses.

16David also ordered the Levite leaders to appoint a choir of Levites who were singers and musicians to sing joyful songs to the accompaniment of harps, lyres, and cymbals. 17So the Levites appointed Heman son of Joel along with his fellow Levites: Asaph son of Berekiah, and Ethan son of Kushaiah from the clan of Merari. 18The following men were chosen as their assistants: Zechariah, Jaaziel,* Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, and the gatekeepers—Obed-edom and Jeiel.

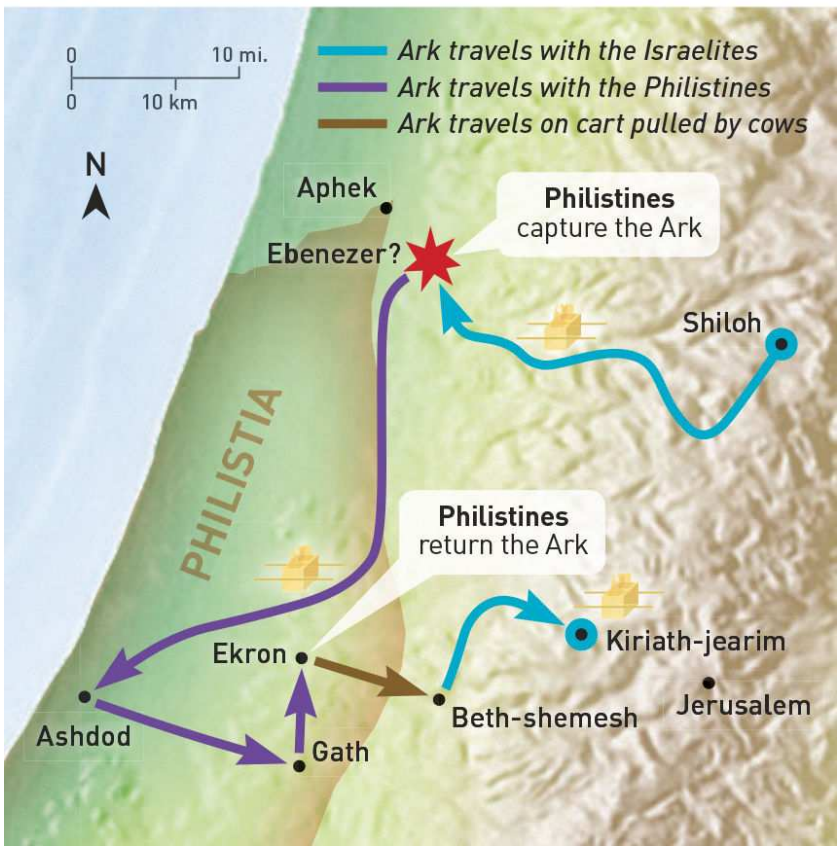
19The musicians Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were chosen to sound
the bronze cymbals. 20Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni,
Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah were chosen to play the
harps.*21Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and
Azaziah were chosen to play the lyres.*22Kenaniah, the head Levite,
was chosen as the choir leader because of his skill.

23Berekiah and Elkanah were chosen to guard* the Ark. 24Shebaniah,
Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer—all
of whom were priests—were chosen to blow the trumpets as they
marched in front of the Ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah were
chosen to guard the Ark.

1 Chr 15:25

MOVING THE ARK

The Philistines captured Israel's Ark of the Covenant, but it became a curse to them. However, the Levite Obed-edom kept the Ark at his house where it was a great blessing. God's presence is a curse to those who reject him but is a blessing to those who love and fear him.



MOVING THE ARK

MOVING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

25Then David and the elders of Israel and the generals of the army* went to the house of Obed-edom to bring the Ark of the LORD's Covenant up to Jerusalem with a great celebration. 26And because God was clearly helping the Levites as they carried the Ark of the LORD's Covenant, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams.

27David was dressed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who carried the Ark, and also the singers, and Kenaniah the choir leader. David was also wearing a priestly garment.*28So all Israel brought up the Ark of the LORD's Covenant with shouts of joy, the blowing of rams' horns and trumpets, the crashing of cymbals, and loud playing on harps and lyres.

29But as the Ark of the LORD's Covenant entered the City of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked down from her window. When she saw King David skipping about and laughing with joy, she was filled with contempt for him.

1 Chronicles 16

1They brought the Ark of God and placed it inside the special tent David had prepared for it. And they presented burnt offerings and peace offerings to God. 2When he had finished his sacrifices, David blessed the people in the name of the LORD. 3Then he gave to every man and woman in all Israel a loaf of bread, a cake of dates,* and a cake of raisins.

4David appointed the following Levites to lead the people in worship before the Ark of the LORD—to invoke his blessings, to give thanks, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel. 5Asaph, the leader of this group, sounded the cymbals. Second to him was Zechariah, followed by Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel. They played the harps and lyres. 6The priests, Benaiah and Jahaziel, played the trumpets regularly before the Ark of God's Covenant.

DAVID'S SONG OF PRAISE

7On that day David gave to Asaph and his fellow Levites this song of thanksgiving to the LORD:

8Give thanks to the LORD and proclaim his greatness.
Let the whole world know what he has done.

9Sing to him; yes, sing his praises.
Tell everyone about his wonderful deeds.

10Exult in his holy name; rejoice, you who worship the LORD.

11Search for the LORD and for his strength; continually seek him.

12Remember the wonders he has performed, his miracles, and the rulings he has given,

13you children of his servant Israel, you descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones.

14He is the LORD our God.
His justice is seen throughout the land.

15Remember his covenant forever— the commitment he made to a thousand generations.

16This is the covenant he made with Abraham and the oath he swore to Isaac.

17He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, and to the people of Israel as a never-ending covenant:

18"I will give you the land of Canaan as your special possession."

19He said this when you were few in number, a tiny group of strangers in Canaan.

20They wandered from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another.

21Yet he did not let anyone oppress them.
He warned kings on their behalf:

22“Do not touch my chosen people, and do not hurt my prophets.”

23Let the whole earth sing to the LORD!
Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.

24Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does.

25Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise!
He is to be feared above all gods.

26The gods of other nations are mere idols, but the LORD made the heavens!

27Honor and majesty surround him; strength and joy fill his dwelling.

28O nations of the world, recognize the LORD, recognize that the LORD is glorious and strong.

29Give to the LORD the glory he deserves!
Bring your offering and come into his presence.
Worship the LORD in all his holy splendor.

30Let all the earth tremble before him.
The world stands firm and cannot be shaken.

31Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice!
Tell all the nations, “The LORD reigns!”

32Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise!
Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy!

33Let the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth.

34Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever.

35Cry out, “Save us, O God of our salvation!
Gather and rescue us from among the nations, so we can thank your
holy name and rejoice and praise you.”

36Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who lives from everlasting to
everlasting!

And all the people shouted “Amen!” and praised the LORD.

WORSHIP AT JERUSALEM AND GIBEON

37David arranged for Asaph and his fellow Levites to serve regularly
before the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant, doing whatever needed to
be done each day. 38This group included Obed-edom (son of
Jeduthun), Hosah, and sixty-eight other Levites as gatekeepers.

39Meanwhile, David stationed Zadok the priest and his fellow
priests at the Tabernacle of the LORD at the place of worship in
Gibeon, where they continued to minister before the LORD. 40They
sacrificed the regular burnt offerings to the LORD each morning and
evening on the altar set aside for that purpose, obeying everything
written in the Law of the LORD, as he had commanded Israel.
41David also appointed Heman, Jeduthun, and the others chosen by
name to give thanks to the LORD, for “his faithful love endures
forever.” 42They used their trumpets, cymbals, and other
instruments to accompany their songs of praise to God.* And the
sons of Jeduthun were appointed as gatekeepers.

43Then all the people returned to their homes, and David turned
and went home to bless his own family.

1 Chronicles 17

THE LORD’S COVENANT PROMISE TO DAVID

1When David was settled in his palace, he summoned Nathan the
prophet. “Look,” David said, “I am living in a beautiful cedar

palace,* but the Ark of the LORD's Covenant is out there under a tent!"

2Nathan replied to David, "Do whatever you have in mind, for God is with you."

3But that same night God said to Nathan,

4"Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD has declared: You are not the one to build a house for me to live in. 5I have never lived in a house, from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. My home has always been a tent, moving from one place to another in a Tabernacle. 6Yet no matter where I have gone with the Israelites, I have never once complained to Israel's leaders, the shepherds of my people. I have never asked them, "Why haven't you built me a beautiful cedar house?"'

7"Now go and say to my servant David, 'This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel. 8I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth! 9And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won't oppress them as they've done in the past, 10starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will defeat all your enemies.
"'Furthermore, I declare that the LORD will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings! 11For when you die and join your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, one of your sons, and I will make his kingdom strong. 12He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for me. And I will secure his throne forever. 13I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my favor from him as I took it from the one who ruled before you. 14I will confirm him as king over my house and my kingdom for all time, and his throne will be secure forever.'"

15So Nathan went back to David and told him everything the LORD had said in this vision.

DAVID'S PRAYER OF THANKS

16Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and prayed,

"Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 17And now, O God, in addition to everything else, you speak of giving your servant a lasting dynasty! You speak as though I were someone very great,* O LORD God!

18"What more can I say to you about the way you have honored me? You know what your servant is really like. 19For the sake of your servant, O LORD, and according to your will, you have done all these great things and have made them known.

20"O LORD, there is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you! 21What other nation on earth is like your people Israel? What other nation, O God, have you redeemed from slavery to be your own people? You made a great name for yourself when you redeemed your people from Egypt. You performed awesome miracles and drove out the nations that stood in their way. 22You chose Israel to be your very own people forever, and you, O LORD, became their God.

23"And now, O LORD, I am your servant; do as you have promised concerning me and my family. May it be a promise that will last forever. 24And may your name be established and honored forever so that everyone will say, 'The LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, is Israel's God!' And may the house of your servant David continue before you forever.

25"O my God, I have been bold enough to pray to you because you have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him—a dynasty of kings! 26For you are God, O LORD. And you have promised these good things to your servant. 27And now, it has pleased you to bless the house of your servant, so that it will continue forever before you. For when you grant a blessing, O LORD, it is an eternal blessing!"

1 Chronicles 18

DAVID'S MILITARY VICTORIES

1After this, David defeated and subdued the Philistines by
conquering Gath and its surrounding towns. 2David also conquered
the land of Moab, and the Moabites who were spared became
David's subjects and paid him tribute money.

3David also destroyed the forces of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, as far
as Hamath,* when Hadadezer marched out to strengthen his control
along the Euphrates River. 4David captured 1,000 chariots, 7,000
charioteers, and 20,000 foot soldiers. He crippled all the chariot
horses except enough for 100 chariots.

5When Arameans from Damascus arrived to help King Hadadezer,
David killed 22,000 of them. 6Then he placed several army
garrisons* in Damascus, the Aramean capital, and the Arameans
became David's subjects and paid him tribute money. So the LORD
made David victorious wherever he went.

7David brought the gold shields of Hadadezer's officers to
Jerusalem, 8along with a large amount of bronze from Hadadezer's
towns of Tebah* and Cun. Later Solomon melted the bronze and
molded it into the great bronze basin called the Sea, the pillars, and
the various bronze articles used at the Temple.

9When King Toi* of Hamath heard that David had destroyed the
entire army of King Hadadezer of Zobah, 10he sent his son Joram* to
congratulate King David for his successful campaign. Hadadezer
and Toi had been enemies and were often at war. Joram presented
David with many gifts of gold, silver, and bronze.

11King David dedicated all these gifts to the LORD, along with the
silver and gold he had taken from the other nations—from Edom,
Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek.

12Abishai son of Zeruiah destroyed 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of
Salt. 13He placed army garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites
became David's subjects. In fact, the LORD made David victorious
wherever he went.

14So David reigned over all Israel and did what was just and right
for all his people. 15Joab son of Zeruiah was commander of the
army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the royal historian. 16Zadok
son of Ahitub and Ahimelech* son of Abiathar were the priests.
Seraiah* was the court secretary. 17Benaiah son of Jehoiada was
captain of the king's bodyguard.* And David's sons served as the
king's chief assistants.

1 Chronicles 19

DAVID DEFEATS THE AMMONITES

1Some time after this, King Nahash of the Ammonites died, and his
son Hanun* became king. 2David said, "I am going to show loyalty
to Hanun because his father, Nahash, was always loyal to me." So
David sent messengers to express sympathy to Hanun about his
father's death.

But when David's ambassadors arrived in the land of Ammon, 3the
Ammonite commanders said to Hanun, "Do you really think these
men are coming here to honor your father? No! David has sent
them to spy out the land so they can come in and conquer it!" 4So
Hanun seized David's ambassadors and shaved them, cut off their
robes at the buttocks, and sent them back to David in shame.

5When David heard what had happened to the men, he sent
messengers to tell them, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow
out, and then come back." For they felt deep shame because of their

appearance.

6When the people of Ammon realized how seriously they had
angered David, Hanun and the Ammonites sent 75,000 pounds* of
silver to hire chariots and charioteers from Aram-naharaim, Aram-
maacah, and Zobah. 7They also hired 32,000 chariots and secured
the support of the king of Maacah and his army. These forces
camped at Medeba, where they were joined by the Ammonite
troops that Hanun had recruited from his own towns. 8When David
heard about this, he sent Joab and all his warriors to fight them.
9The Ammonite troops came out and drew up their battle lines at
the entrance of the city, while the other kings positioned themselves
to fight in the open fields.

10When Joab saw that he would have to fight on both the front and
the rear, he chose some of Israel's elite troops and placed them
under his personal command to fight the Arameans in the fields.
11He left the rest of the army under the command of his brother
Abishai, who was to attack the Ammonites. 12"If the Arameans are
too strong for me, then come over and help me," Joab told his
brother. "And if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will help
you. 13Be courageous! Let us fight bravely for our people and the
cities of our God. May the LORD's will be done."

14When Joab and his troops attacked, the Arameans began to run
away. 15And when the Ammonites saw the Arameans running, they
also ran from Abishai and retreated into the city. Then Joab
returned to Jerusalem.

16The Arameans now realized that they were no match for Israel, so
they sent messengers and summoned additional Aramean troops
from the other side of the Euphrates River.* These troops were
under the command of Shobach,* the commander of Hadadezer's
forces.

17When David heard what was happening, he mobilized all Israel,
crossed the Jordan River, and positioned his troops in battle
formation. Then David engaged the Arameans in battle, and they
fought against him. 18But again the Arameans fled from the
Israelites. This time David's forces killed 7,000 charioteers and
40,000 foot soldiers, including Shobach, the commander of their
army. 19When Hadadezer's allies saw that they had been defeated
by Israel, they surrendered to David and became his subjects. After
that, the Arameans were no longer willing to help the Ammonites.

1 Chronicles 20

DAVID CAPTURES RABBAH

1In the spring of the year,* when kings normally go out to war, Joab
led the Israelite army in successful attacks against the land of the
Ammonites. In the process he laid siege to the city of Rabbah,
attacking and destroying it. However, David stayed behind in
Jerusalem.

2Then David went to Rabbah and removed the crown from the
king's head,* and it was placed on his own head. The crown was
made of gold and set with gems, and he found that it weighed
seventy-five pounds.* David took a vast amount of plunder from the
city. 3He also made slaves of the people of Rabbah and forced them
to labor with saws, iron picks, and iron axes.* That is how David
dealt with the people of all the Ammonite towns. Then David and
all the army returned to Jerusalem.

BATTLES AGAINST PHILISTINE GIANTS

4After this, war broke out with the Philistines at Gezer. As they
fought, Sibbecai from Hushah killed Saph,* a descendant of the
giants,* and so the Philistines were subdued.

5During another battle with the Philistines, Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath of Gath. The handle of Lahmi's spear was as thick as a weaver's beam!

6In another battle with the Philistines at Gath, they encountered a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all, who was also a descendant of the giants. 7But when he defied and taunted Israel, he was killed by Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimea.

8These Philistines were descendants of the giants of Gath, but David and his warriors killed them.

1 Chronicles 21

DAVID TAKES A CENSUS

1Satan rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census of the people of Israel. 2So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army, "Take a census of all the people of Israel—from Beersheba in the south to Dan in the north—and bring me a report so I may know how many there are."

3But Joab replied, "May the LORD increase the number of his people a hundred times over! But why, my lord the king, do you want to do this? Are they not all your servants? Why must you cause Israel to sin?"

4But the king insisted that they take the census, so Joab traveled throughout all Israel to count the people. Then he returned to Jerusalem 5and reported the number of people to David. There were 1,100,000 warriors in all Israel who could handle a sword, and 470,000 in Judah. 6But Joab did not include the tribes of Levi and Benjamin in the census because he was so distressed at what the king had made him do.

JUDGMENT FOR DAVID'S SIN

7God was very displeased with the census, and he punished Israel
for it. 8Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by taking this
census. Please forgive my guilt for doing this foolish thing."

9Then the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer. This was the message:
10"Go and say to David, 'This is what the LORD says: I will give you
three choices. Choose one of these punishments, and I will inflict it
on you.'"

11So Gad came to David and said, "These are the choices the LORD
has given you. 12You may choose three years of famine, three
months of destruction by the sword of your enemies, or three days
of severe plague as the angel of the LORD brings devastation
throughout the land of Israel. Decide what answer I should give the
LORD who sent me."

13"I'm in a desperate situation!" David replied to Gad. "But let me
fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is very great. Do not
let me fall into human hands."

14So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and 70,000 people died as
a result. 15And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But just as
the angel was preparing to destroy it, the LORD relented and said to
the death angel, "Stop! That is enough!" At that moment the angel
of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Araunah* the
Jebusite.

16David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD standing between
heaven and earth with his sword drawn, reaching out over
Jerusalem. So David and the leaders of Israel put on burlap to show
their deep distress and fell face down on the ground. 17And David
said to God, "I am the one who called for the census! I am the one
who has sinned and done wrong! But these people are as innocent
as sheep—what have they done? O LORD my God, let your anger
fall against me and my family, but do not destroy your people."

DAVID BUILDS AN ALTAR

18Then the angel of the LORD told Gad to instruct David to go up
and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah
the Jebusite. 19So David went up to do what the LORD had
commanded him through Gad. 20Araunah, who was busy threshing
wheat at the time, turned and saw the angel there. His four sons,
who were with him, ran away and hid. 21When Araunah saw David
approaching, he left his threshing floor and bowed before David
with his face to the ground.

22David said to Araunah, “Let me buy this threshing floor from you
at its full price. Then I will build an altar to the LORD there, so that
he will stop the plague.”

23“Take it, my lord the king, and use it as you wish,” Araunah said
to David. “I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, and the
threshing boards for wood to build a fire on the altar, and the
wheat for the grain offering. I will give it all to you.”

24But King David replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it for
the full price. I will not take what is yours and give it to the LORD.
I will not present burnt offerings that have cost me nothing!” 25So
David gave Araunah 600 pieces of gold* in payment for the
threshing floor.

26David built an altar there to the LORD and sacrificed burnt
offerings and peace offerings. And when David prayed, the LORD
answered him by sending fire from heaven to burn up the offering
on the altar. 27Then the LORD spoke to the angel, who put the
sword back into its sheath.

28When David saw that the LORD had answered his prayer, he
offered sacrifices there at Araunah’s threshing floor. 29At that time
the Tabernacle of the LORD and the altar of burnt offering that
Moses had made in the wilderness were located at the place of

worship in Gibeon. 30But David was not able to go there to inquire of God, because he was terrified by the drawn sword of the angel of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 22

1Then David said, “This will be the location for the Temple of the LORD God and the place of the altar for Israel’s burnt offerings!”

PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE

2So David gave orders to call together the foreigners living in Israel, and he assigned them the task of preparing finished stone for building the Temple of God. 3David provided large amounts of iron for the nails that would be needed for the doors in the gates and for the clamps, and he gave more bronze than could be weighed. 4He also provided innumerable cedar logs, for the men of Tyre and Sidon had brought vast amounts of cedar to David.

5David said, “My son Solomon is still young and inexperienced. And since the Temple to be built for the LORD must be a magnificent structure, famous and glorious throughout the world, I will begin making preparations for it now.” So David collected vast amounts of building materials before his death.

6Then David sent for his son Solomon and instructed him to build a Temple for the LORD, the God of Israel. 7“My son, I wanted to build a Temple to honor the name of the LORD my God,” David told him. 8“But the LORD said to me, ‘You have killed many men in the battles you have fought. And since you have shed so much blood in my sight, you will not be the one to build a Temple to honor my name. 9But you will have a son who will be a man of peace. I will give him peace with his enemies in all the surrounding lands. His name will be Solomon,* and I will give peace and quiet to Israel during his reign. 10He is the one who will build a Temple to honor my name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will secure the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.’

11“Now, my son, may the LORD be with you and give you success as
you follow his directions in building the Temple of the LORD your
God. 12And may the LORD give you wisdom and understanding,
that you may obey the Law of the LORD your God as you rule over
Israel. 13For you will be successful if you carefully obey the decrees
and regulations that the LORD gave to Israel through Moses. Be
strong and courageous; do not be afraid or lose heart!

14“I have worked hard to provide materials for building the Temple
of the LORD—nearly 4,000 tons of gold, 40,000 tons of silver,* and
so much iron and bronze that it cannot be weighed. I have also
gathered timber and stone for the walls, though you may need to
add more. 15You have a large number of skilled stonemasons and
carpenters and craftsmen of every kind. 16You have expert
goldsmiths and silversmiths and workers of bronze and iron. Now
begin the work, and may the LORD be with you!”

17Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to assist Solomon in
this project. 18“The LORD your God is with you,” he declared. “He
has given you peace with the surrounding nations. He has handed
them over to me, and they are now subject to the LORD and his
people. 19Now seek the LORD your God with all your heart and
soul. Build the sanctuary of the LORD God so that you can bring the
Ark of the LORD’s Covenant and the holy vessels of God into the
Temple built to honor the LORD’s name.”

1 Chronicles 23

DUTIES OF THE LEVITES

1When David was an old man, he appointed his son Solomon to be
king over Israel. 2David summoned all the leaders of Israel, together
with the priests and Levites. 3All the Levites who were thirty years
old or older were counted, and the total came to 38,000. 4Then
David said, “From all the Levites, 24,000 will supervise the work at

the Temple of the LORD. Another 6,000 will serve as officials and judges. 5Another 4,000 will work as gatekeepers, and 4,000 will praise the LORD with the musical instruments I have made." 6Then David divided the Levites into divisions named after the clans descended from the three sons of Levi—Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

THE GERSHONITES

7The Gershonite family units were defined by their lines of descent from Libni* and Shimei, the sons of Gershon. 8Three of the descendants of Libni were Jehiel (the family leader), Zetham, and Joel. 9These were the leaders of the family of Libni.

Three of the descendants of Shimei were Shelomoth, Haziel, and Haran. 10Four other descendants of Shimei were Jahath, Ziza,* Jeush, and Beriah. 11Jahath was the family leader, and Ziza was next. Jeush and Beriah were counted as a single family because neither had many sons.

THE KOHATHITES

12Four of the descendants of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

13The sons of Amram were Aaron and Moses. Aaron and his descendants were set apart to dedicate the most holy things, to offer sacrifices in the LORD's presence, to serve the LORD, and to pronounce blessings in his name forever.

14As for Moses, the man of God, his sons were included with the tribe of Levi. 15The sons of Moses were Gershom and Eliezer. 16The descendants of Gershom included Shebuel, the family leader. 17Eliezer had only one son, Rehabiah, the family leader. Rehabiah had numerous descendants.

18The descendants of Izhar included Shelomith, the family leader.

19The descendants of Hebron included Jeriah (the family leader), Amariah (the second), Jahaziel (the third), and Jekameam (the fourth).

20The descendants of Uzziel included Micah (the family leader) and Isshiah (the second).

THE MERARITES

21The descendants of Merari included Mahli and Mushi.

The sons of Mahli were Eleazar and Kish. 22Eleazar died with no sons, only daughters. His daughters married their cousins, the sons of Kish.

23Three of the descendants of Mushi were Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth.

24These were the descendants of Levi by clans, the leaders of their family groups, registered carefully by name. Each had to be twenty years old or older to qualify for service in the house of the LORD. 25For David said, “The LORD, the God of Israel, has given us peace, and he will always live in Jerusalem. 26Now the Levites will no longer need to carry the Tabernacle and its furnishings from place to place.” 27In accordance with David’s final instructions, all the Levites twenty years old or older were registered for service.

28The work of the Levites was to assist the priests, the descendants of Aaron, as they served at the house of the LORD. They also took care of the courtyards and side rooms, helped perform the ceremonies of purification, and served in many other ways in the house of God. 29They were in charge of the sacred bread that was set out on the table, the choice flour for the grain offerings, the wafers made without yeast, the cakes cooked in olive oil, and the other mixed breads. They were also responsible to check all the weights and measures. 30And each morning and evening they stood

before the LORD to sing songs of thanks and praise to him. 31They assisted with the burnt offerings that were presented to the LORD on Sabbath days, at new moon celebrations, and at all the appointed festivals. The required number of Levites served in the LORD's presence at all times, following all the procedures they had been given.

32And so, under the supervision of the priests, the Levites watched over the Tabernacle and the Temple* and faithfully carried out their duties of service at the house of the LORD.

1 Chronicles 24

DUTIES OF THE PRIESTS

1This is how Aaron's descendants, the priests, were divided into groups for service. The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and they had no sons. So only Eleazar and Ithamar were left to carry on as priests.

3With the help of Zadok, who was a descendant of Eleazar, and of Ahimelech, who was a descendant of Ithamar, David divided Aaron's descendants into groups according to their various duties. 4Eleazar's descendants were divided into sixteen groups and Ithamar's into eight, for there were more family leaders among the descendants of Eleazar.

5All tasks were assigned to the various groups by means of sacred lots so that no preference would be shown, for there were many qualified officials serving God in the sanctuary from among the descendants of both Eleazar and Ithamar. 6Shemaiah son of Nethanel, a Levite, acted as secretary and wrote down the names and assignments in the presence of the king, the officials, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech son of Abiathar, and the family leaders of the priests and Levites. The descendants of Eleazar and Ithamar took

turns casting lots.

7The first lot fell to Jehoiarib.
The second lot fell to Jedaiah.

8The third lot fell to Harim.
The fourth lot fell to Seorim.

9The fifth lot fell to Malkijah.
The sixth lot fell to Mijamin.

10The seventh lot fell to Hakkoz.
The eighth lot fell to Abijah.

11The ninth lot fell to Jeshua.
The tenth lot fell to Shecaniah.

12The eleventh lot fell to Eliashib.
The twelfth lot fell to Jakim.

13The thirteenth lot fell to Huppah.
The fourteenth lot fell to Jeshebeab.

14The fifteenth lot fell to Bilgah.
The sixteenth lot fell to Immer.

15The seventeenth lot fell to Hezir.
The eighteenth lot fell to Happizzez.

16The nineteenth lot fell to Pethahiah.
The twentieth lot fell to Jehezkel.

17The twenty-first lot fell to Jakin.
The twenty-second lot fell to Gamul.

18The twenty-third lot fell to Delaiah.
The twenty-fourth lot fell to Maaziah.

19Each group carried out its appointed duties in the house of the LORD according to the procedures established by their ancestor Aaron in obedience to the commands of the LORD, the God of

Israel.

FAMILY LEADERS AMONG THE LEVITES

20These were the other family leaders descended from Levi: From
the descendants of Amram, the leader was Shebuel.*

From the descendants of Shebuel, the leader was Jehdeiah.

21From the descendants of Rehabiah, the leader was Isshiah.

22From the descendants of Izhar, the leader was Shelomith.*
From the descendants of Shelomith, the leader was Jahath.

23From the descendants of Hebron, Jeriah was the leader,* Amariah
was second, Jahaziel was third, and Jekameam was fourth.

24From the descendants of Uzziel, the leader was Micah.
From the descendants of Micah, the leader was Shamir, 25along with
Isshiah, the brother of Micah.
From the descendants of Isshiah, the leader was Zechariah.

26From the descendants of Merari, the leaders were Mahli and
Mushi.
From the descendants of Jaaziah, the leader was Beno.

27From the descendants of Merari through Jaaziah, the leaders were
Beno, Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri.

28From the descendants of Mahli, the leader was Eleazar, though he
had no sons.

29From the descendants of Kish, the leader was Jerahmeel.

30From the descendants of Mushi, the leaders were Mahli, Eder, and
Jerimoth.

These were the descendants of Levi in their various families. 31Like

the descendants of Aaron, they were assigned to their duties by means of sacred lots, without regard to age or rank. Lots were drawn in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the family leaders of the priests and the Levites.

1 Chronicles 25

DUTIES OF THE MUSICIANS

1David and the army commanders then appointed men from the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun to proclaim God's messages to the accompaniment of lyres, harps, and cymbals. Here is a list of their names and their work:

2From the sons of Asaph, there were Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asarelah. They worked under the direction of their father, Asaph, who proclaimed God's messages by the king's orders.

3From the sons of Jeduthun, there were Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei,* Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six in all. They worked under the direction of their father, Jeduthun, who proclaimed God's messages to the accompaniment of the lyre, offering thanks and praise to the LORD.

4From the sons of Heman, there were Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael,* Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth. 5All these were the sons of Heman, the king's seer, for God had honored him with fourteen sons and three daughters.

6All these men were under the direction of their fathers as they made music at the house of the LORD. Their responsibilities included the playing of cymbals, harps, and lyres at the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman reported directly to the king.

7They and their families were all trained in making music before
the LORD, and each of them—288 in all—was an accomplished
musician. 8The musicians were appointed to their term of service by
means of sacred lots, without regard to whether they were young or
old, teacher or student.

9The first lot fell to Joseph of the Asaph clan and twelve of his sons
and relatives.*
The second lot fell to Gedaliah and twelve of his sons and relatives.

10The third lot fell to Zaccur and twelve of his sons and relatives.

11The fourth lot fell to Zeri* and twelve of his sons and relatives.

12The fifth lot fell to Nethaniah and twelve of his sons and relatives.

13The sixth lot fell to Bukkiah and twelve of his sons and relatives.

14The seventh lot fell to Asarelah* and twelve of his sons and
relatives.

15The eighth lot fell to Jeshaiah and twelve of his sons and
relatives.

16The ninth lot fell to Mattaniah and twelve of his sons and
relatives.

17The tenth lot fell to Shimei and twelve of his sons and relatives.

18The eleventh lot fell to Uzziel* and twelve of his sons and
relatives.

19The twelfth lot fell to Hashabiah and twelve of his sons and
relatives.

20The thirteenth lot fell to Shubael and twelve of his sons and
relatives.

21The fourteenth lot fell to Mattithiah and twelve of his sons and relatives.

22The fifteenth lot fell to Jerimoth* and twelve of his sons and relatives.

23The sixteenth lot fell to Hananiah and twelve of his sons and relatives.

24The seventeenth lot fell to Joshbekashah* and twelve of his sons and relatives.

25The eighteenth lot fell to Hanani and twelve of his sons and relatives.

26The nineteenth lot fell to Mallothi and twelve of his sons and relatives.

27The twentieth lot fell to Eliathah and twelve of his sons and relatives.

28The twenty-first lot fell to Hothir and twelve of his sons and relatives.

29The twenty-second lot fell to Giddalti and twelve of his sons and relatives.

30The twenty-third lot fell to Mahazioth and twelve of his sons and relatives.

31The twenty-fourth lot fell to Romamti-ezer and twelve of his sons and relatives.

1 Chronicles 26

DUTIES OF THE GATEKEEPERS

1These are the divisions of the gatekeepers: From the Korahites, there was Meshelemiah son of Kore, of the family of Abiasaph.*2The

sons of Meshelemiah were Zechariah (the oldest), Jediael (the second), Zebadiah (the third), Jathniel (the fourth), 3Elam (the fifth), Jehohanan (the sixth), and Eliehoenai (the seventh).

4The sons of Obed-edom, also gatekeepers, were Shemaiah (the oldest), Jehozabad (the second), Joah (the third), Sacar (the fourth), Nethanel (the fifth), 5Ammiel (the sixth), Issachar (the seventh), and Peullethai (the eighth). God had richly blessed Obed-edom.

6Obed-edom's son Shemaiah had sons with great ability who earned positions of great authority in the clan. 7Their names were Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad. Their relatives, Elihu and Semakiah, were also very capable men.

8All of these descendants of Obed-edom, including their sons and grandsons—sixty-two of them in all—were very capable men, well qualified for their work.

9Meshelemiah's eighteen sons and relatives were also very capable men.

10Hosah, of the Merari clan, appointed Shimri as the leader among his sons, though he was not the oldest. 11His other sons included Hilkiah (the second), Tebaliah (the third), and Zechariah (the fourth). Hosah's sons and relatives, who served as gatekeepers, numbered thirteen in all.

12These divisions of the gatekeepers were named for their family leaders, and like the other Levites, they served at the house of the LORD. 13They were assigned by families for guard duty at the various gates, without regard to age or training, for it was all decided by means of sacred lots.

14The responsibility for the east gate went to Meshelemiah* and his group. The north gate was assigned to his son Zechariah, a man of

unusual wisdom. 15The south gate went to Obed-edom, and his sons were put in charge of the storehouse. 16Shuppim and Hosah were assigned the west gate and the gateway leading up to the Temple.* Guard duties were divided evenly. 17Six Levites were assigned each day to the east gate, four to the north gate, four to the south gate, and two pairs at the storehouse. 18Six were assigned each day to the west gate, four to the gateway leading up to the Temple, and two to the courtyard.*

19These were the divisions of the gatekeepers from the clans of Korah and Merari.

TREASURERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS

20Other Levites, led by Ahijah, were in charge of the treasuries of the house of God and the treasuries of the gifts dedicated to the LORD. 21From the family of Libni* in the clan of Gershon, Jehiel* was the leader. 22The sons of Jehiel, Zetham and his brother Joel, were in charge of the treasuries of the house of the LORD.

23These are the leaders that descended from Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel:

24From the clan of Amram, Shebuel was a descendant of Gershom son of Moses. He was the chief officer of the treasuries. 25His relatives through Eliezer were Rehabiah, Jeshaiah, Joram, Zicri, and Shelomoth.

26Shelomoth and his relatives were in charge of the treasuries containing the gifts that King David, the family leaders, and the generals and captains* and other officers of the army had dedicated to the LORD. 27These men dedicated some of the plunder they had gained in battle to maintain the house of the LORD. 28Shelomoth* and his relatives also cared for the gifts dedicated to the LORD by Samuel the seer, Saul son of Kish, Abner son of Ner, and Joab son of Zeruiah. All the other dedicated gifts were in their care, too.

29From the clan of Izhar came Kenaniah. He and his sons were
given administrative responsibilities* over Israel as officials and
judges.

30From the clan of Hebron came Hashabiah. He and his relatives—
1,700 capable men—were put in charge of the Israelite lands west
of the Jordan River. They were responsible for all matters related to
the things of the LORD and the service of the king in that area.

31Also from the clan of Hebron came Jeriah,* who was the leader of
the Hebronites according to the genealogical records. (In the
fortieth year of David's reign, a search was made in the records, and
capable men from the clan of Hebron were found at Jazer in the
land of Gilead.) 32There were 2,700 capable men among the
relatives of Jeriah. King David sent them to the east side of the
Jordan River and put them in charge of the tribes of Reuben and
Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. They were responsible for all
matters related to God and to the king.

1 Chronicles 27

MILITARY COMMANDERS AND DIVISIONS

1This is the list of Israelite generals and captains,* and their officers,
who served the king by supervising the army divisions that were on
duty each month of the year. Each division served for one month
and had 24,000 troops.

2Jashobeam son of Zabdiel was commander of the first division of
24,000 troops, which was on duty during the first month. 3He was a
descendant of Perez and was in charge of all the army officers for
the first month.

4Dodai, a descendant of Ahoah, was commander of the second

division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the second month. Mikloth was his chief officer.

5Benaiah son of Jehoiada the priest was commander of the third division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the third month. 6This was the Benaiah who commanded David's elite military group known as the Thirty. His son Ammizabad was his chief officer.

7Asahel, the brother of Joab, was commander of the fourth division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the fourth month. Asahel was succeeded by his son Zebadiah.

8Shammah* the Izrahite was commander of the fifth division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the fifth month.

9Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa was commander of the sixth division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the sixth month.

10Helez, a descendant of Ephraim from Pelon, was commander of the seventh division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the seventh month.

11Sibbecai, a descendant of Zerah from Hushah, was commander of the eighth division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the eighth month.

12Abiezer from Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin was commander of the ninth division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the ninth month.

13Maharai, a descendant of Zerah from Netophah, was commander of the tenth division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the tenth month.

14Benaiah from Pirathon in Ephraim was commander of the
eleventh division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during the
eleventh month.

15Heled,* a descendant of Othniel from Netophah, was commander
of the twelfth division of 24,000 troops, which was on duty during
the twelfth month.

LEADERS OF THE TRIBES

16The following were the tribes of Israel and their leaders:

Tribe	*Leader*
Reuben	Eliezer son of Zicri
Simeon	Shephatiah son of Maacah
Levi	Hashabiah son of Kemuel
Aaron	Zadok (the priests)
Judah	Elihu (a brother of David)
Issachar	Omri son of Michael
Zebulun	Ishmaiah son of Obadiah
Naphtali	Jerimoth son of Azriel
Ephraim	Hoshea son of Azaziah
Manasseh (west)	Joel son of Pedaiah
Manasseh (east)	Iddo son of Zechariah
Benjamin	Jaasiel son of Abner
Dan	Azarel son of Jeroham

These were the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

23When David took his census, he did not count those who were
younger than twenty years of age, because the LORD had promised
to make the Israelites as numerous as the stars in heaven. 24Joab son
of Zeruiah began the census but never finished it because* the anger
of God fell on Israel. The total number was never recorded in King
David's official records.

OFFICIALS OF DAVID'S KINGDOM

25Azmaveth son of Adiel was in charge of the palace treasuries.

Jonathan son of Uzziah was in charge of the regional treasuries throughout the towns, villages, and fortresses of Israel.

26Ezri son of Kelub was in charge of the field workers who farmed the king's lands.

27Shimei from Ramah was in charge of the king's vineyards.

Zabdi from Shepham was responsible for the grapes and the supplies of wine.

28Baal-hanan from Geder was in charge of the king's olive groves and sycamore-fig trees in the foothills of Judah.*

Joash was responsible for the supplies of olive oil.

29Shitrai from Sharon was in charge of the cattle on the Sharon Plain.

Shaphat son of Adlai was responsible for the cattle in the valleys.

30Obil the Ishmaelite was in charge of the camels.

Jehdeiah from Meronoth was in charge of the donkeys.

31Jaziz the Hagrite was in charge of the king's flocks of sheep and goats.

All these officials were overseers of King David's property.

32Jonathan, David's uncle, was a wise counselor to the king, a man

of great insight, and a scribe. Jehiel the Hacmonite was responsible for teaching the king's sons. 33Ahithophel was the royal adviser. Hushai the Arkite was the king's friend. 34Ahithophel was succeeded by Jehoiada son of Benaiah and by Abiathar. Joab was commander of the king's army.

1 Chronicles 28

DAVID'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

1David summoned all the officials of Israel to Jerusalem—the
leaders of the tribes, the commanders of the army divisions, the
other generals and captains,* the overseers of the royal property
and livestock, the palace officials, the mighty men, and all the other
brave warriors in the kingdom. 2David rose to his feet and said: “My
brothers and my people! It was my desire to build a Temple where
the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant, God’s footstool, could rest
permanently. I made the necessary preparations for building it, 3but
God said to me, ‘You must not build a Temple to honor my name,
for you are a warrior and have shed much blood.’

4“Yet the LORD, the God of Israel, has chosen me from among all
my father’s family to be king over Israel forever. For he has chosen
the tribe of Judah to rule, and from among the families of Judah he
chose my father’s family. And from among my father’s sons the
LORD was pleased to make me king over all Israel. 5And from
among my sons—for the LORD has given me many—he chose
Solomon to succeed me on the throne of Israel and to rule over the
LORD’s kingdom. 6He said to me, ‘Your son Solomon will build my
Temple and its courtyards, for I have chosen him as my son, and I
will be his father. 7And if he continues to obey my commands and
regulations as he does now, I will make his kingdom last forever.’

8“So now, with God as our witness, and in the sight of all Israel—
the LORD’s assembly—I give you this charge. Be careful to obey all
the commands of the LORD your God, so that you may continue to
possess this good land and leave it to your children as a permanent
inheritance.

9“And Solomon, my son, learn to know the God of your ancestors
intimately. Worship and serve him with your whole heart and a
willing mind. For the LORD sees every heart and knows every plan
and thought. If you seek him, you will find him. But if you forsake
him, he will reject you forever. 10So take this seriously. The LORD
has chosen you to build a Temple as his sanctuary. Be strong, and
do the work.”

11Then David gave Solomon the plans for the Temple and its surroundings, including the entry room, the storerooms, the upstairs rooms, the inner rooms, and the inner sanctuary—which was the place of atonement. 12David also gave Solomon all the plans he had in mind* for the courtyards of the LORD's Temple, the outside rooms, the treasuries, and the rooms for the gifts dedicated to the LORD. 13The king also gave Solomon the instructions concerning the work of the various divisions of priests and Levites in the Temple of the LORD. And he gave specifications for the items in the Temple that were to be used for worship.

14David gave instructions regarding how much gold and silver should be used to make the items needed for service. 15He told Solomon the amount of gold needed for the gold lampstands and lamps, and the amount of silver for the silver lampstands and lamps, depending on how each would be used. 16He designated the amount of gold for the table on which the Bread of the Presence would be placed and the amount of silver for other tables.

17David also designated the amount of gold for the solid gold meat hooks used to handle the sacrificial meat and for the basins, pitchers, and dishes, as well as the amount of silver for every dish. 18He designated the amount of refined gold for the altar of incense. Finally, he gave him a plan for the LORD's "chariot"—the gold cherubim* whose wings were stretched out over the Ark of the LORD's Covenant. 19"Every part of this plan," David told Solomon, "was given to me in writing from the hand of the LORD.*"

20Then David continued, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it that all the work related to the Temple of the LORD is finished correctly. 21The various divisions of priests and Levites will serve in the Temple of God. Others with skills of every kind will volunteer, and the officials and the entire nation are at your command."

1 Chronicles 29

GIFTS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

1Then King David turned to the entire assembly and said, “My son
Solomon, whom God has clearly chosen as the next king of Israel, is
still young and inexperienced. The work ahead of him is enormous,
for the Temple he will build is not for mere mortals—it is for the
LORD God himself! 2Using every resource at my command, I have
gathered as much as I could for building the Temple of my God.
Now there is enough gold, silver, bronze, iron, and wood, as well as
great quantities of onyx, other precious stones, costly jewels, and all
kinds of fine stone and marble.

THE LAND OF OPHIR

3"And now, because of my devotion to the Temple of my God, I am
giving all of my own private treasures of gold and silver to help in
the construction. This is in addition to the building materials I have
already collected for his holy Temple. 4I am donating more than
112 tons of gold* from Ophir and 262 tons of refined silver* to be
used for overlaying the walls of the buildings 5and for the other
gold and silver work to be done by the craftsmen. Now then, who
will follow my example and give offerings to the LORD today?"

6Then the family leaders, the leaders of the tribes of Israel, the
generals and captains of the army,* and the king's administrative
officers all gave willingly. 7For the construction of the Temple of
God, they gave about 188 tons of gold,* 10,000 gold coins,* 375
tons of silver,* 675 tons of bronze,* and 3,750 tons of iron.*8They
also contributed numerous precious stones, which were deposited in
the treasury of the house of the LORD under the care of Jehiel, a
descendant of Gershon. 9The people rejoiced over the offerings, for
they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD, and King
David was filled with joy.

DAVID'S PRAYER OF PRAISE

10Then David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole
assembly:

"O LORD, the God of our ancestor Israel,* may you be praised
forever and ever! 11Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the
glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and
on earth is yours, O LORD, and this is your kingdom. We adore you
as the one who is over all things. 12Wealth and honor come from
you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in
your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given

strength.

13“O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! 14But
who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to
you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only
what you first gave us! 15We are here for only a moment, visitors
and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days
on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace.

16“O LORD our God, even this material we have gathered to build a
Temple to honor your holy name comes from you! It all belongs to
you! 17I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice
when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with
good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts
willingly and joyously.

18“O LORD, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,
make your people always want to obey you. See to it that their love
for you never changes. 19Give my son Solomon the wholehearted
desire to obey all your commands, laws, and decrees, and to do
everything necessary to build this Temple, for which I have made
these preparations.”

20Then David said to the whole assembly, “Give praise to the LORD
your God!” And the entire assembly praised the LORD, the God of
their ancestors, and they bowed low and knelt before the LORD and
the king.

SOLOMON NAMED AS KING

21The next day they brought 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams, and 1,000
male lambs as burnt offerings to the LORD. They also brought
liquid offerings and many other sacrifices on behalf of all Israel.
22They feasted and drank in the LORD’s presence with great joy that
day.

And again they crowned David’s son Solomon as their new king.
They anointed him before the LORD as their leader, and they
anointed Zadok as priest. 23So Solomon took the throne of the LORD
in place of his father, David, and he succeeded in everything, and

all Israel obeyed him. 24All the officials, the warriors, and the sons of King David pledged their loyalty to King Solomon. 25And the LORD exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel, and he gave Solomon greater royal splendor than any king in Israel before him.

SUMMARY OF DAVID'S REIGN

26So David son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27He reigned over Israel for forty years, seven of them in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 28He died at a ripe old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth, and honor. Then his son Solomon ruled in his place.

29All the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, are written in *The Record of Samuel the Seer, The Record of Nathan the Prophet,* and *The Record of Gad the Seer.* 30These accounts include the mighty deeds of his reign and everything that happened to him and to Israel and to all the surrounding kingdoms.

2 Chronicles

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

WELCOME TO

2 CHRONICLES

Second Chronicles recounts the history of Israel's downfall. The story begins with the glory of Solomon's reign over a united people,

but soon the nation splinters into two kingdoms. The writer of 2 Chronicles focuses on the rulers of Judah, from Rehoboam to Zedekiah, who is king when the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem. Hezekiah and Josiah, two of Judah's good kings, get special attention for their religious revivals, but ultimately the wickedness of other rulers and the people leads to catastrophe and exile.

This historical book covers four hundred years of royal intrigue and power, murder and mayhem, victory and renewal. We'll see the best and worst of human nature, but through it all we'll witness God's enduring love and care for his people.

1 STOP

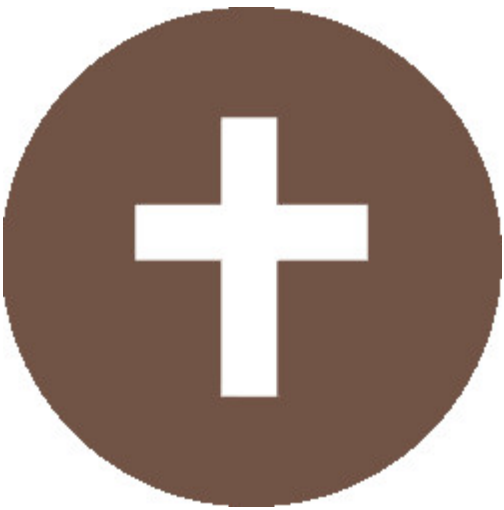
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll land in the story of the youngest king of Judah, a seven-year-old boy named Joash who is famous for repairing the neglected Temple. Your next stop is at 2 Chronicles 24:1.

11 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The stops along the way in 2 Chronicles tell the stories of the key rulers of Judah. Despite the efforts of a few good kings, the kingdom continues to drift away from God until it is destroyed. Your next stop is at 2 Chronicles 11:1.

15 STOPS

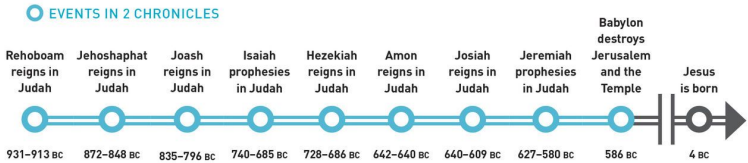
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The scenic route takes you through the significant rulers of Judah, from the first king, Rehoboam, to the last, Zedekiah. You'll also make detours to encounter the prophets of the time and hear their messages for the people of Judah. Your next stop is at 2 Chronicles 11:1.



FINDING JESUS IN 2 CHRONICLES

Solomon's first order of business as the new king was to build a Temple that would house God's glory as well as the Ark of the Covenant. Both the Temple and the Ark symbolized God's presence among his people. The Ark had represented God's presence among them since the time of Moses. Now the Ark was in its proper place within the Temple. The Temple and all that it contained showed the people that their God was a God who lives with the people he loves. Hundreds of years later, God's presence would no longer need a physical structure; he would be with his people through his Son, Jesus. Jesus was the embodiment of what the Temple represented.

He was God, and he lived among the people he loved.



2 Chronicles 1

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM

1Solomon son of David took firm control of his kingdom, for the
LORD his God was with him and made him very powerful.

2Solomon called together all the leaders of Israel—the generals and
captains of the army,* the judges, and all the political and clan
leaders. 3Then he led the entire assembly to the place of worship in
Gibeon, for God's Tabernacle* was located there. (This was the
Tabernacle that Moses, the LORD's servant, had made in the
wilderness.)

4David had already moved the Ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to
the tent he had prepared for it in Jerusalem. 5But the bronze altar
made by Bezalel son of Uri and grandson of Hur was there* at
Gibeon in front of the Tabernacle of the LORD. So Solomon and the
people gathered in front of it to consult the LORD.*6There in front
of the Tabernacle, Solomon went up to the bronze altar in the
LORD's presence and sacrificed 1,000 burnt offerings on it.

7That night God appeared to Solomon and said, "What do you
want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"

8Solomon replied to God, “You showed great and faithful love to
David, my father, and now you have made me king in his place. 9O
LORD God, please continue to keep your promise to David my
father, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as
the dust of the earth! 10Give me the wisdom and knowledge to lead
them properly,* for who could possibly govern this great people of
yours?”

11God said to Solomon, “Because your greatest desire is to help your
people, and you did not ask for wealth, riches, fame, or even the
death of your enemies or a long life, but rather you asked for
wisdom and knowledge to properly govern my people—12I will
certainly give you the wisdom and knowledge you requested. But I
will also give you wealth, riches, and fame such as no other king
has had before you or will ever have in the future!”

13Then Solomon returned to Jerusalem from the Tabernacle at the
place of worship in Gibeon, and he reigned over Israel.

14Solomon built up a huge force of chariots and horses.* He had
1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. He stationed some of them in the
chariot cities and some near him in Jerusalem. 15The king made
silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stone. And valuable
cedar timber was as common as the sycamore-fig trees that grow in
the foothills of Judah.*16Solomon’s horses were imported from
Egypt* and from Cilicia*; the king’s traders acquired them from
Cilicia at the standard price. 17At that time chariots from Egypt
could be purchased for 600 pieces of silver,* and horses for 150
pieces of silver.* They were then exported to the kings of the
Hittites and the kings of Aram.

2 Chronicles 2

PREPARATIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

1*Solomon decided to build a Temple to honor the name of the

LORD, and also a royal palace for himself. 2*He enlisted a force of
70,000 laborers, 80,000 men to quarry stone in the hill country,
and 3,600 foremen.

3Solomon also sent this message to King Hiram* at Tyre:

"Send me cedar logs as you did for my father, David, when he was
building his palace. 4I am about to build a Temple to honor the
name of the LORD my God. It will be a place set apart to burn
fragrant incense before him, to display the special sacrificial bread,
and to sacrifice burnt offerings each morning and evening, on the
Sabbaths, at new moon celebrations, and at the other appointed
festivals of the LORD our God. He has commanded Israel to do
these things forever.

5"This must be a magnificent Temple because our God is greater
than all other gods. 6But who can really build him a worthy home?
Not even the highest heavens can contain him! So who am I to
consider building a Temple for him, except as a place to burn
sacrifices to him?

7"So send me a master craftsman who can work with gold, silver,
bronze, and iron, as well as with purple, scarlet, and blue cloth. He
must be a skilled engraver who can work with the craftsmen of
Judah and Jerusalem who were selected by my father, David.

8"Also send me cedar, cypress, and red sandalwood* logs from
Lebanon, for I know that your men are without equal at cutting
timber in Lebanon. I will send my men to help them. 9An immense
amount of timber will be needed, for the Temple I am going to
build will be very large and magnificent. 10In payment for your
woodcutters, I will send 100,000 bushels of crushed wheat, 100,000
bushels of barley,* 110,000 gallons of wine, and 110,000 gallons of
olive oil.*"

11King Hiram sent this letter of reply to Solomon:

"It is because the LORD loves his people that he has made you their

king! 12Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who made the heavens and the earth! He has given King David a wise son, gifted with skill and understanding, who will build a Temple for the LORD and a royal palace for himself.

13"I am sending you a master craftsman named Huram-abi, who is extremely talented. 14His mother is from the tribe of Dan in Israel, and his father is from Tyre. He is skillful at making things from gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and he also works with stone and wood. He can work with purple, blue, and scarlet cloth and fine linen. He is also an engraver and can follow any design given to him. He will work with your craftsmen and those appointed by my lord David, your father.

15"Send along the wheat, barley, olive oil, and wine that my lord has mentioned. 16We will cut whatever timber you need from the Lebanon mountains and will float the logs in rafts down the coast of the Mediterranean Sea* to Joppa. From there you can transport the logs up to Jerusalem."

17Solomon took a census of all foreigners in the land of Israel, like the census his father had taken, and he counted 153,600. 18He assigned 70,000 of them as common laborers, 80,000 as quarry workers in the hill country, and 3,600 as foremen.

2 Chronicles 3

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

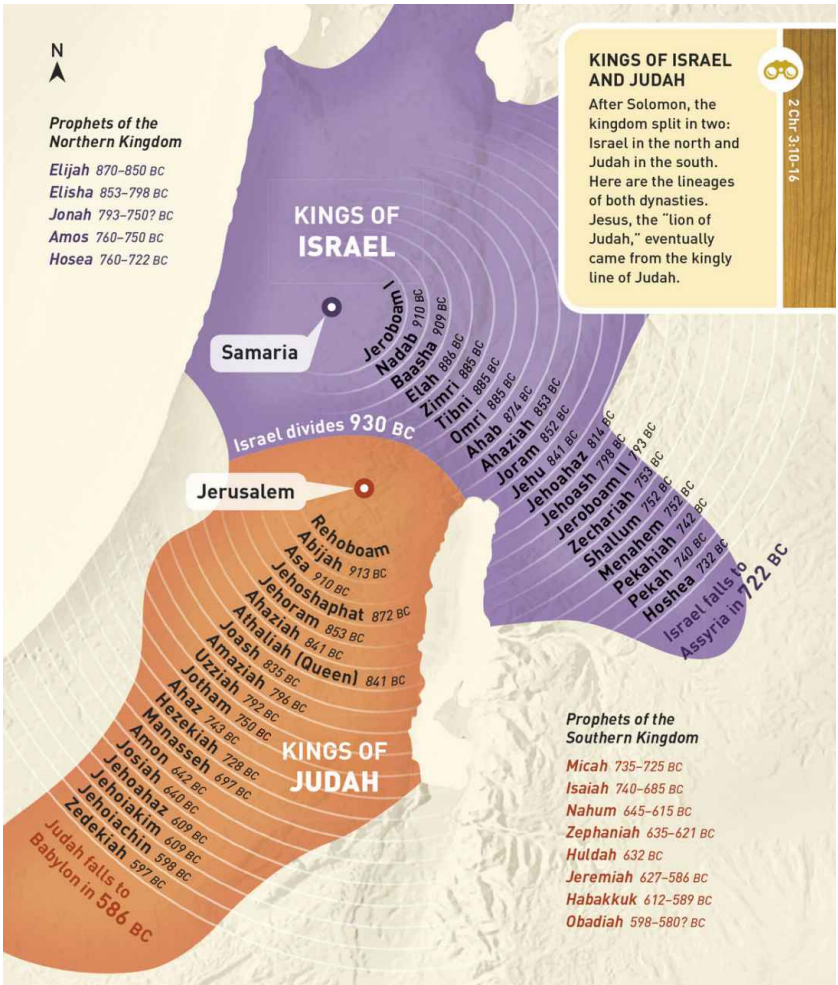
1So Solomon began to build the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to David, his father. The Temple was built on the threshing floor of Araunah* the Jebusite, the site that David had selected. 2The construction began in midspring,* during the fourth year of Solomon's reign.

3These are the dimensions Solomon used for the foundation of the Temple of God (using the old standard of measurement).* It was 90

feet long and 30 feet wide.*4The entry room at the front of the
Temple was 30 feet* wide, running across the entire width of the
Temple, and 30 feet* high. He overlaid the inside with pure gold.

5He paneled the main room of the Temple with cypress wood,
overlaid it with fine gold, and decorated it with carvings of palm
trees and chains. 6He decorated the walls of the Temple with
beautiful jewels and with gold from the land of Parvaim. 7He
overlaid the beams, thresholds, walls, and doors throughout the
Temple with gold, and he carved figures of cherubim on the walls.

8He made the Most Holy Place 30 feet wide, corresponding to the
width of the Temple, and 30 feet deep. He overlaid its interior with
23 tons* of fine gold. 9The gold nails that were used weighed 20
ounces* each. He also overlaid the walls of the upper rooms with
gold.



KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

10He made two figures shaped like cherubim, overlaid them with
gold, and placed them in the Most Holy Place. 11The total wingspan
of the two cherubim standing side by side was 30 feet. One wing of
the first figure was 7 1/2 feet* long, and it touched the Temple wall.
The other wing, also 7 1/2 feet long, touched one of the wings of the
second figure. 12In the same way, the second figure had one wing
7 1/2 feet long that touched the opposite wall. The other wing, also

7 1/2 feet long, touched the wing of the first figure. 13So the wingspan of the two cherubim side by side was 30 feet. They stood on their feet and faced out toward the main room of the Temple.

14Across the entrance of the Most Holy Place he hung a curtain made of fine linen, decorated with blue, purple, and scarlet thread and embroidered with figures of cherubim.

15For the front of the Temple, he made two pillars that were 27 feet* tall, each topped by a capital extending upward another 7 1/2 feet. 16He made a network of interwoven chains* and used them to decorate the tops of the pillars. He also made 100 decorative pomegranates and attached them to the chains. 17Then he set up the two pillars at the entrance of the Temple, one to the south of the entrance and the other to the north. He named the one on the south Jakin, and the one on the north Boaz.*

2 Chronicles 4

FURNISHINGS FOR THE TEMPLE

1Solomon* also made a bronze altar 30 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 15 feet high.*2Then he cast a great round basin, 15 feet across from rim to rim, called the Sea. It was 7 1/2 feet deep and about 45 feet in circumference.*3It was encircled just below its rim by two rows of figures that resembled oxen. There were about six oxen per foot* all the way around, and they were cast as part of the basin.

4The Sea was placed on a base of twelve bronze oxen, all facing outward. Three faced north, three faced west, three faced south, and three faced east, and the Sea rested on them. 5The walls of the Sea were about three inches* thick, and its rim flared out like a cup and resembled a water lily blossom. It could hold about 16,500 gallons* of water.

6He also made ten smaller basins for washing the utensils for the
burnt offerings. He set five on the south side and five on the north.
But the priests washed themselves in the Sea.

7He then cast ten gold lampstands according to the specifications
that had been given, and he put them in the Temple. Five were
placed against the south wall, and five were placed against the
north wall.

8He also built ten tables and placed them in the Temple, five along
the south wall and five along the north wall. Then he molded 100
gold basins.

9He then built a courtyard for the priests, and also the large outer
courtyard. He made doors for the courtyard entrances and overlaid
them with bronze. 10The great bronze basin called the Sea was
placed near the southeast corner of the Temple.

11Huram-abi also made the necessary washbasins, shovels, and
bowls.

So at last Huram-abi completed everything King Solomon had
assigned him to make for the Temple of God:

12the two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;
the two networks of interwoven chains that decorated the capitals;

13the 400 pomegranates that hung from the chains on the capitals
(two rows of pomegranates for each of the chain networks that
decorated the capitals on top of the pillars);

14the water carts holding the basins;

15the Sea and the twelve oxen under it;

16the ash buckets, the shovels, the meat hooks, and all the related
articles.

Huram-abi made all these things of burnished bronze for the
Temple of the LORD, just as King Solomon had directed. 17The king
had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between Succoth
and Zarethan.* 18Solomon used such great quantities of bronze that
its weight could not be determined.

19Solomon also made all the furnishings for the Temple of God: the
gold altar; the tables for the Bread of the Presence;

20the lampstands and their lamps of solid gold, to burn in front of
the Most Holy Place as prescribed;

21the flower decorations, lamps, and tongs—all of the purest gold;

22the lamp snuffers, bowls, ladles, and incense burners—all of solid
gold; the doors for the entrances to the Most Holy Place and the
main room of the Temple, overlaid with gold.

2 Chronicles 5

1So Solomon finished all his work on the Temple of the LORD. Then
he brought all the gifts his father, David, had dedicated—the silver,
the gold, and the various articles—and he stored them in the
treasuries of the Temple of God.

THE ARK BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE

2Solomon then summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all
the heads of tribes—the leaders of the ancestral families of Israel.
They were to bring the Ark of the LORD's Covenant to the Temple
from its location in the City of David, also known as Zion. 3So all
the men of Israel assembled before the king at the annual Festival of
Shelters, which is held in early autumn.*

4When all the elders of Israel arrived, the Levites picked up the Ark.
5The priests and Levites brought up the Ark along with the special
tent* and all the sacred items that had been in it. 6There, before the

Ark, King Solomon and the entire community of Israel sacrificed so many sheep, goats, and cattle that no one could keep count!

7Then the priests carried the Ark of the LORD's Covenant into the inner sanctuary of the Temple—the Most Holy Place—and placed it beneath the wings of the cherubim. 8The cherubim spread their wings over the Ark, forming a canopy over the Ark and its carrying poles. 9These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place,* which is in front of the Most Holy Place, but not from the outside. They are still there to this day. 10Nothing was in the Ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Mount Sinai,* where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel when they left Egypt.

11Then the priests left the Holy Place. All the priests who were present had purified themselves, whether or not they were on duty that day. 12And the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and all their sons and brothers—were dressed in fine linen robes and stood at the east side of the altar playing cymbals, lyres, and harps. They were joined by 120 priests who were playing trumpets. 13The trumpeters and singers performed together in unison to praise and give thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices and praised the LORD with these words: "He is good!

His faithful love endures forever!"

At that moment a thick cloud filled the Temple of the LORD. 14The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple of God.

2 Chronicles 6

SOLOMON PRAISES THE LORD

1Then Solomon prayed, "O LORD, you have said that you would live in a thick cloud of darkness. 2Now I have built a glorious Temple for you, a place where you can live forever!"

3Then the king turned around to the entire community of Israel
standing before him and gave this blessing: 4“Praise the LORD, the
God of Israel, who has kept the promise he made to my father,
David. For he told my father, 5‘From the day I brought my people
out of the land of Egypt, I have never chosen a city among any of
the tribes of Israel as the place where a Temple should be built to
honor my name. Nor have I chosen a king to lead my people Israel.
6But now I have chosen Jerusalem as the place for my name to be
honored, and I have chosen David to be king over my people
Israel.’”

7Then Solomon said, “My father, David, wanted to build this
Temple to honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 8But the
LORD told him, ‘You wanted to build the Temple to honor my
name. Your intention is good, 9but you are not the one to do it. One
of your own sons will build the Temple to honor me.’

10“And now the LORD has fulfilled the promise he made, for I have
become king in my father’s place, and now I sit on the throne of
Israel, just as the LORD promised. I have built this Temple to honor
the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 11There I have placed the
Ark, which contains the covenant that the LORD made with the
people of Israel.”

PRAYERS 2 CHRONICLES 6:12-42

SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

12Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the
entire community of Israel, and he lifted his hands in prayer. 13Now
Solomon had made a bronze platform 7 1/2 feet long, 7 1/2 feet wide,
and 4 1/2 feet high* and had placed it at the center of the Temple's
outer courtyard. He stood on the platform, and then he knelt in
front of the entire community of Israel and lifted his hands toward
heaven. 14He prayed,

"O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven
and earth. You keep your covenant and show unfailing love to all
who walk before you in wholehearted devotion. 15You have kept
your promise to your servant David, my father. You made that
promise with your own mouth, and with your own hands you have
fulfilled it today.

16"And now, O LORD, God of Israel, carry out the additional
promise you made to your servant David, my father. For you said to
him, 'If your descendants guard their behavior and faithfully follow
my Law as you have done, one of them will always sit on the throne
of Israel.' 17Now, O LORD, God of Israel, fulfill this promise to your
servant David.

18"But will God really live on earth among people? Why, even the
highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this Temple I
have built! 19Nevertheless, listen to my prayer and my plea, O LORD
my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is making to
you. 20May you watch over this Temple day and night, this place
where you have said you would put your name. May you always
hear the prayers I make toward this place. 21May you hear the
humble and earnest requests from me and your people Israel when
we pray toward this place. Yes, hear us from heaven where you
live, and when you hear, forgive.

22"If someone wrongs another person and is required to take an
oath of innocence in front of your altar at this Temple, 23then hear
from heaven and judge between your servants—the accuser and the
accused. Pay back the guilty as they deserve. Acquit the innocent
because of their innocence.

24“If your people Israel are defeated by their enemies because they
have sinned against you, and if they turn back and acknowledge
your name and pray to you here in this Temple, 25then hear from
heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and return them to
this land you gave to them and to their ancestors.

26“If the skies are shut up and there is no rain because your people
have sinned against you, and if they pray toward this Temple and
acknowledge your name and turn from their sins because you have
punished them, 27then hear from heaven and forgive the sins of
your servants, your people Israel. Teach them to follow the right
path, and send rain on your land that you have given to your people
as their special possession.

28“If there is a famine in the land or a plague or crop disease or
attacks of locusts or caterpillars, or if your people’s enemies are in
the land besieging their towns—whatever disaster or disease there
is—29and if your people Israel pray about their troubles or sorrow,
raising their hands toward this Temple, 30then hear from heaven
where you live, and forgive. Give your people what their actions
deserve, for you alone know each human heart. 31Then they will
fear you and walk in your ways as long as they live in the land you
gave to our ancestors.

32“In the future, foreigners who do not belong to your people Israel
will hear of you. They will come from distant lands when they hear
of your great name and your strong hand and your powerful arm.
And when they pray toward this Temple, 33then hear from heaven
where you live, and grant what they ask of you. In this way, all the
people of the earth will come to know and fear you, just as your
own people Israel do. They, too, will know that this Temple I have
built honors your name.

34“If your people go out where you send them to fight their
enemies, and if they pray to you by turning toward this city you
have chosen and toward this Temple I have built to honor your
name, 35then hear their prayers from heaven and uphold their
cause.

36“If they sin against you—and who has never sinned?—you might
become angry with them and let their enemies conquer them and

take them captive to a foreign land far away or near. 37But in that land of exile, they might turn to you in repentance and pray, 'We have sinned, done evil, and acted wickedly.' 38If they turn to you with their whole heart and soul in the land of their captivity and pray toward the land you gave to their ancestors—toward this city you have chosen, and toward this Temple I have built to honor your name—39then hear their prayers and their petitions from heaven where you live, and uphold their cause. Forgive your people who have sinned against you.

40"O my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to all the prayers made to you in this place.

41"And now arise, O LORD God, and enter your resting place, along with the Ark, the symbol of your power.
May your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation; may your loyal servants rejoice in your goodness.

42O LORD God, do not reject the king you have anointed.
Remember your unfailing love for your servant David."

2 Chronicles 7

THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

1When Solomon finished praying, fire flashed down from heaven and burned up the burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple. 2The priests could not enter the Temple of the LORD because the glorious presence of the LORD filled it. 3When all the people of Israel saw the fire coming down and the glorious presence of the LORD filling the Temple, they fell face down on the ground and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying, "He is good!

His faithful love endures forever!"

4Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices to the LORD. 5King Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats. And so the king and all the people dedicated the Temple of God. 6The priests took their assigned positions, and so did

the Levites who were singing, “His faithful love endures forever!” They accompanied the singing with music from the instruments King David had made for praising the LORD. Across from the Levites, the priests blew the trumpets, while all Israel stood.

7Solomon then consecrated the central area of the courtyard in front of the LORD’s Temple. He offered burnt offerings and the fat of peace offerings there, because the bronze altar he had built could not hold all the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and sacrificial fat.

8For the next seven days Solomon and all Israel celebrated the Festival of Shelters.* A large congregation had gathered from as far away as Lebo-hamath in the north and the Brook of Egypt in the south. 9On the eighth day they had a closing ceremony, for they had celebrated the dedication of the altar for seven days and the Festival of Shelters for seven days. 10Then at the end of the celebration,* Solomon sent the people home. They were all joyful and glad because the LORD had been so good to David and to Solomon and to his people Israel.

THE LORD’S RESPONSE TO SOLOMON

11So Solomon finished the Temple of the LORD, as well as the royal palace. He completed everything he had planned to do in the construction of the Temple and the palace. 12Then one night the LORD appeared to Solomon and said,

“I have heard your prayer and have chosen this Temple as the place for making sacrifices. 13At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues among you. 14Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. 15My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place. 16For I have chosen this Temple and set it apart to be holy—a place where my name will be honored forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to my

heart.

17"As for you, if you faithfully follow me as David your father did,
obeying all my commands, decrees, and regulations, 18then I will
establish the throne of your dynasty. For I made this covenant with
your father, David, when I said, 'One of your descendants will
always rule over Israel.'

19"But if you or your descendants abandon me and disobey the
decrees and commands I have given you, and if you serve and
worship other gods, 20then I will uproot the people from this land
that I have given them. I will reject this Temple that I have made
holy to honor my name. I will make it an object of mockery and
ridicule among the nations. 21And though this Temple is impressive
now, all who pass by will be appalled. They will ask, 'Why did the
LORD do such terrible things to this land and to this Temple?'

22"And the answer will be, 'Because his people abandoned the
LORD, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of Egypt,
and they worshiped other gods instead and bowed down to them.
That is why he has brought all these disasters on them.'"

2 Chronicles 8

SOLOMON'S MANY ACHIEVEMENTS

1It took Solomon twenty years to build the LORD's Temple and his
own royal palace. At the end of that time, 2Solomon turned his
attention to rebuilding the towns that King Hiram* had given him,
and he settled Israelites in them.

3Solomon also fought against the town of Hamath-zobah and
conquered it. 4He rebuilt Tadmor in the wilderness and built towns
in the region of Hamath as supply centers. 5He fortified the towns of
Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-horon, rebuilding their walls and
installing barred gates. 6He also rebuilt Baalath and other supply
centers and constructed towns where his chariots and horses* could
be stationed. He built everything he desired in Jerusalem and
Lebanon and throughout his entire realm.

7There were still some people living in the land who were not
Israelites, including the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and
Jebusites. 8These were descendants of the nations whom the people
of Israel had not destroyed. So Solomon conscripted them for his
labor force, and they serve as forced laborers to this day. 9But
Solomon did not conscript any of the Israelites for his labor force.
Instead, he assigned them to serve as fighting men, officers in his
army, commanders of his chariots, and charioteers. 10King Solomon
appointed 250 of them to supervise the people.

11Solomon moved his wife, Pharaoh's daughter, from the City of
David to the new palace he had built for her. He said, "My wife
must not live in King David's palace, for the Ark of the LORD has
been there, and it is holy ground."

12Then Solomon presented burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar
he had built for him in front of the entry room of the Temple. 13He
offered the sacrifices for the Sabbaths, the new moon festivals, and
the three annual festivals—the Passover celebration, the Festival of
Harvest,* and the Festival of Shelters—as Moses had commanded.

14In assigning the priests to their duties, Solomon followed the
regulations of his father, David. He also assigned the Levites to lead
the people in praise and to assist the priests in their daily duties.
And he assigned the gatekeepers to their gates by their divisions,
following the commands of David, the man of God. 15Solomon did
not deviate in any way from David's commands concerning the
priests and Levites and the treasuries.

16So Solomon made sure that all the work related to building the
Temple of the LORD was carried out, from the day its foundation
was laid to the day of its completion.

17Later Solomon went to Ezion-geber and Elath,* ports along the
shore of the Red Sea* in the land of Edom. 18Hiram sent him ships

commanded by his own officers and manned by experienced crews of sailors. These ships sailed to Ophir with Solomon's men and brought back to Solomon almost seventeen tons* of gold.

2 Chronicles 9

VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA 1**WHEN THE QUEEN OF SHEBA HEARD OF SOLOMON'S FAME, SHE CAME TO JERUSALEM TO TEST HIM WITH HARD QUESTIONS. SHE ARRIVED WITH A LARGE GROUP OF ATTENDANTS AND A GREAT CARAVAN OF CAMELS LOADED WITH SPICES, LARGE QUANTITIES OF GOLD, AND PRECIOUS JEWELS. WHEN SHE MET WITH SOLOMON, SHE TALKED WITH HIM ABOUT EVERYTHING SHE HAD ON HER MIND.** 2**SOLOMON HAD ANSWERS FOR ALL HER QUESTIONS; NOTHING WAS TOO HARD FOR HIM TO EXPLAIN TO HER.** 3**WHEN THE QUEEN OF SHEBA REALIZED HOW WISE SOLOMON WAS, AND WHEN SHE SAW THE PALACE HE HAD BUILT,** 4**SHE WAS OVERWHELMED. SHE WAS ALSO AMAZED AT THE FOOD ON HIS TABLES, THE ORGANIZATION OF HIS OFFICIALS AND THEIR SPLENDID CLOTHING, THE CUP-BEARERS AND THEIR ROBES, AND THE BURNT OFFERINGS* SOLOMON MADE AT THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD.**

5She exclaimed to the king, "Everything I heard in my country about your achievements* and wisdom is true! 6I didn't believe what was said until I arrived here and saw it with my own eyes. In fact, I had not heard the half of your great wisdom! It is far beyond what I was told. 7How happy your people must be! What a privilege for your officials to stand here day after day, listening to your wisdom! 8Praise the LORD your God, who delights in you and has placed you on the throne as king to rule for him. Because God loves Israel and desires this kingdom to last forever, he has made you king over them so you can rule with justice and righteousness."

9Then she gave the king a gift of 9,000 pounds* of gold, great

quantities of spices, and precious jewels. Never before had there been spices as fine as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

10(In addition, the crews of Hiram and Solomon brought gold from Ophir, and they also brought red sandalwood* and precious jewels. 11The king used the sandalwood to make steps* for the Temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and to construct lyres and harps for the musicians. Never before had such beautiful things been seen in Judah.)

12King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba whatever she asked for—gifts of greater value than the gifts she had given him. Then she and all her attendants returned to their own land.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND SPLENDOR

13Each year Solomon received about 25 tons* of gold. 14This did not include the additional revenue he received from merchants and traders. All the kings of Arabia and the governors of the provinces also brought gold and silver to Solomon.

15King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold, each weighing more than 15 pounds.*16He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold, each weighing more than 7 1/2 pounds.* The king placed these shields in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

17Then the king made a huge throne, decorated with ivory and overlaid with pure gold. 18The throne had six steps, with a footstool of gold. There were armrests on both sides of the seat, and the figure of a lion stood on each side of the throne. 19There were also twelve other lions, one standing on each end of the six steps. No other throne in all the world could be compared with it!

20All of King Solomon's drinking cups were solid gold, as were all
the utensils in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. They were not
made of silver, for silver was considered worthless in Solomon's
day!

21The king had a fleet of trading ships of Tarshish manned by the
sailors sent by Hiram.* Once every three years the ships returned,
loaded with gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.*

22So King Solomon became richer and wiser than any other king on
earth. 23Kings from every nation came to consult him and to hear
the wisdom God had given him. 24Year after year everyone who
visited brought him gifts of silver and gold, clothing, weapons,
spices, horses, and mules.

25Solomon had 4,000 stalls for his horses and chariots, and he had
12,000 horses.* He stationed some of them in the chariot cities, and
some near him in Jerusalem. 26He ruled over all the kings from the
Euphrates River* in the north to the land of the Philistines and the
border of Egypt in the south. 27The king made silver as plentiful in
Jerusalem as stone. And valuable cedar timber was as common as
the sycamore-fig trees that grow in the foothills of
Judah.*28Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt* and many
other countries.

SUMMARY OF SOLOMON'S REIGN

29The rest of the events of Solomon's reign, from beginning to end,
are recorded in *The Record of Nathan the Prophet,* and *The Prophecy
of Ahijah from Shiloh,* and also in *The Visions of Iddo the Seer,*
concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat. 30Solomon ruled in Jerusalem
over all Israel for forty years. 31When he died, he was buried in the
City of David, named for his father. Then his son Rehoboam became
the next king.

2 Chronicles 10

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

1 Rehoboam went to Shechem, where all Israel had gathered to
make him king. 2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard of this, he
returned from Egypt, for he had fled to Egypt to escape from King
Solomon. 3 The leaders of Israel summoned him, and Jeroboam and
all Israel went to speak with Rehoboam. 4 "Your father was a hard
master," they said. "Lighten the harsh labor demands and heavy
taxes that your father imposed on us. Then we will be your loyal
subjects."

5 Rehoboam replied, "Come back in three days for my answer." So
the people went away.

6 Then King Rehoboam discussed the matter with the older men who
had counseled his father, Solomon. "What is your advice?" he
asked. "How should I answer these people?"

7 The older counselors replied, "If you are good to these people and
do your best to please them and give them a favorable answer, they
will always be your loyal subjects."

8 But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and instead
asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him
and were now his advisers. 9 "What is your advice?" he asked them.
"How should I answer these people who want me to lighten the
burdens imposed by my father?"

10 The young men replied, "This is what you should tell those
complainers who want a lighter burden: 'My little finger is thicker
than my father's waist! 11 Yes, my father laid heavy burdens on you,
but I'm going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with
whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!'"

12Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to hear
Rehoboam's decision, just as the king had ordered. 13But Rehoboam
spoke harshly to them, for he rejected the advice of the older
counselors 14and followed the counsel of his younger advisers. He
told the people, "My father laid* heavy burdens on you, but I'm
going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips,
but I will beat you with scorpions!"

15So the king paid no attention to the people. This turn of events
was the will of God, for it fulfilled the LORD's message to Jeroboam
son of Nebat through the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh.

16When all Israel realized* that the king had refused to listen to
them, they responded, "Down with the dynasty of David!

We have no interest in the son of Jesse.
Back to your homes, O Israel!
Look out for your own house, O David!"

So all the people of Israel returned home. 17But Rehoboam
continued to rule over the Israelites who lived in the towns of
Judah.

18King Rehoboam sent Adoniram,* who was in charge of forced
labor, to restore order, but the people of Israel stoned him to death.
When this news reached King Rehoboam, he quickly jumped into
his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. 19And to this day the northern
tribes of Israel have refused to be ruled by a descendant of David.

2 Chronicles 11

SHEMAIAH'S PROPHECY

1When Rehoboam arrived at Jerusalem, he mobilized the men of
Judah and Benjamin—180,000 select troops—to fight against Israel
and to restore the kingdom to himself.

2But the LORD said to Shemaiah, the man of God, 3"Say to

Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the Israelites
in Judah and Benjamin: 4‘This is what the LORD says: Do not fight
against your relatives. Go back home, for what has happened is my
doing!’” So they obeyed the message of the LORD and did not fight
against Jeroboam.

REHOBOAM FORTIFIES JUDAH

5Rehoboam remained in Jerusalem and fortified various towns for
the defense of Judah. 6He built up Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7Beth-
zur, Soco, Adullam, 8Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9Adoraim, Lachish,
Azekah, 10Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These became the fortified
towns of Judah and Benjamin. 11Rehoboam strengthened their
defenses and stationed commanders in them, and he stored supplies
of food, olive oil, and wine. 12He also put shields and spears in these
towns as a further safety measure. So only Judah and Benjamin
remained under his control.

13But all the priests and Levites living among the northern tribes of
Israel sided with Rehoboam. 14The Levites even abandoned their
pasturelands and property and moved to Judah and Jerusalem,
because Jeroboam and his sons would not allow them to serve the
LORD as priests. 15Jeroboam appointed his own priests to serve at
the pagan shrines, where they worshiped the goat and calf idols he
had made. 16From all the tribes of Israel, those who sincerely
wanted to worship the LORD, the God of Israel, followed the Levites
to Jerusalem, where they could offer sacrifices to the LORD, the
God of their ancestors. 17This strengthened the kingdom of Judah,
and for three years they supported Rehoboam son of Solomon, for
during those years they faithfully followed in the footsteps of David
and Solomon.

REHOBOAM’S FAMILY

18Rehoboam married his cousin Mahalath, the daughter of David’s
son Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Eliab son of Jesse.
19Mahalath had three sons—Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham.

20Later Rehoboam married another cousin, Maacah, the
granddaughter of Absalom. Maacah gave birth to Abijah, Attai,
Ziza, and Shelomith. 21Rehoboam loved Maacah more than any of
his other wives and concubines. In all, he had eighteen wives and
sixty concubines, and they gave birth to twenty-eight sons and sixty
daughters.

22Rehoboam appointed Maacah's son Abijah as leader among the
princes, making it clear that he would be the next king. 23Rehoboam
also wisely gave responsibilities to his other sons and stationed
some of them in the fortified towns throughout the land of Judah
and Benjamin. He provided them with generous provisions, and he
found many wives for them.

SKIP TO 12:13

2 Chronicles 12

EGYPT INVADES JUDAH

1But when Rehoboam was firmly established and strong, he
abandoned the Law of the LORD, and all Israel followed him in this
sin. 2Because they were unfaithful to the LORD, King Shishak of
Egypt came up and attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of King
Rehoboam's reign. 3He came with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horses,*
and a countless army of foot soldiers, including Libyans, Sukkites,
and Ethiopians.*4Shishak conquered Judah's fortified towns and
then advanced to attack Jerusalem.

5The prophet Shemaiah then met with Rehoboam and Judah's

leaders, who had all fled to Jerusalem because of Shishak. Shemaiah told them, “This is what the LORD says: You have abandoned me, so I am abandoning you to Shishak.”

6Then the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, “The LORD is right in doing this to us!”

7When the LORD saw their change of heart, he gave this message to Shemaiah: “Since the people have humbled themselves, I will not completely destroy them and will soon give them some relief. I will not use Shishak to pour out my anger on Jerusalem. 8But they will become his subjects, so they will know the difference between serving me and serving earthly rulers.”

9So King Shishak of Egypt came up and attacked Jerusalem. He ransacked the treasuries of the LORD’s Temple and the royal palace; he stole everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. 10King Rehoboam later replaced them with bronze shields as substitutes, and he entrusted them to the care of the commanders of the guard who protected the entrance to the royal palace. 11Whenever the king went to the Temple of the LORD, the guards would also take the shields and then return them to the guardroom. 12Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD’s anger was turned away, and he did not destroy him completely. There were still some good things in the land of Judah.

SUMMARY OF REHOBOAM’S REIGN

13King Rehoboam firmly established himself in Jerusalem and continued to rule. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen from among all the tribes of Israel as the place to honor his name. Rehoboam’s mother was Naamah, a woman from Ammon. 14But he was an evil king, for he did not seek the LORD with all his heart.

15The rest of the events of Rehoboam's reign, from beginning to
end, are recorded in *The Record of Shemaiah the Prophet* and *The
Record of Iddo the Seer,* which are part of the genealogical record.
Rehoboam and Jeroboam were continually at war with each other.
16When Rehoboam died, he was buried in the City of David. Then
his son Abijah became the next king.

2 Chronicles 13

ABIJAH'S WAR WITH JEROBOAM

1Abijah began to rule over Judah in the eighteenth year of
Jeroboam's reign in Israel. 2He reigned in Jerusalem three years. His
mother was Maacah,* the daughter of Uriel from Gibeah.

Then war broke out between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3Judah, led by
King Abijah, fielded 400,000 select warriors, while Jeroboam
mustered 800,000 select troops from Israel.

MOUNT ZEMARAIM

4When the army of Judah arrived in the hill country of Ephraim,
Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim and shouted to Jeroboam and all
Israel: "Listen to me! 5Don't you realize that the LORD, the God of
Israel, made a lasting covenant* with David, giving him and his

descendants the throne of Israel forever? 6Yet Jeroboam son of
Nebat, a mere servant of David's son Solomon, rebelled against his
master. 7Then a whole gang of scoundrels joined him, defying
Solomon's son Rehoboam when he was young and inexperienced
and could not stand up to them.

8"Do you really think you can stand against the kingdom of the
LORD that is led by the descendants of David? You may have a vast
army, and you have those gold calves that Jeroboam made as your
gods. 9But you have chased away the priests of the LORD (the
descendants of Aaron) and the Levites, and you have appointed
your own priests, just like the pagan nations. You let anyone
become a priest these days! Whoever comes to be dedicated with a
young bull and seven rams can become a priest of these so-called
gods of yours!

10"But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not abandoned
him. Only the descendants of Aaron serve the LORD as priests, and
the Levites alone may help them in their work. 11They present burnt
offerings and fragrant incense to the LORD every morning and
evening. They place the Bread of the Presence on the holy table,
and they light the gold lampstand every evening. We are following
the instructions of the LORD our God, but you have abandoned
him. 12So you see, God is with us. He is our leader. His priests blow
their trumpets and lead us into battle against you. O people of
Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your ancestors, for
you will not succeed!"

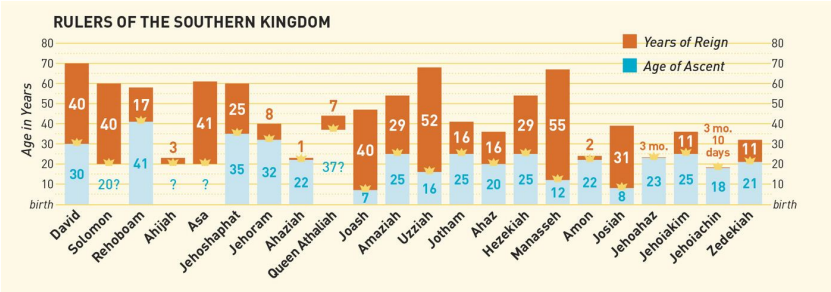
13Meanwhile, Jeroboam had secretly sent part of his army around
behind the men of Judah to ambush them. 14When Judah realized
that they were being attacked from the front and the rear, they
cried out to the LORD for help. Then the priests blew the trumpets,
15and the men of Judah began to shout. At the sound of their battle
cry, God defeated Jeroboam and all Israel and routed them before
Abijah and the army of Judah.

16The Israelite army fled from Judah, and God handed them over to

Judah in defeat. 17Abijah and his army inflicted heavy losses on
them; 500,000 of Israel's select troops were killed that day. 18So
Judah defeated Israel on that occasion because they trusted in the
LORD, the God of their ancestors. 19Abijah and his army pursued
Jeroboam's troops and captured some of his towns, including
Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron, along with their surrounding
villages.

20So Jeroboam of Israel never regained his power during Abijah's
lifetime, and finally the LORD struck him down and he died.
21Meanwhile, Abijah of Judah grew more and more powerful. He
married fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen
daughters.

22The rest of the events of Abijah's reign, including his words and
deeds, are recorded in *The Commentary of Iddo the Prophet.*



RULERS OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

2 Chronicles 14

EARLY YEARS OF ASA'S REIGN

1*When Abijah died, he was buried in the City of David. Then his
son Asa became the next king. There was peace in the land for ten
years. 2*Asa did what was pleasing and good in the sight of the
LORD his God. 3He removed the foreign altars and the pagan
shrines. He smashed the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah
poles. 4He commanded the people of Judah to seek the LORD, the
God of their ancestors, and to obey his law and his commands. 5Asa
also removed the pagan shrines, as well as the incense altars from
every one of Judah's towns. So Asa's kingdom enjoyed a period of
peace. 6During those peaceful years, he was able to build up the
fortified towns throughout Judah. No one tried to make war against
him at this time, for the LORD was giving him rest from his
enemies.

7Asa told the people of Judah, "Let us build towns and fortify them
with walls, towers, gates, and bars. The land is still ours because we
sought the LORD our God, and he has given us peace on every
side." So they went ahead with these projects and brought them to
completion.

8King Asa had an army of 300,000 warriors from the tribe of Judah,
armed with large shields and spears. He also had an army of

280,000 warriors from the tribe of Benjamin, armed with small shields and bows. Both armies were composed of well-trained fighting men.

9Once an Ethiopian* named Zerah attacked Judah with an army of 1,000,000 men* and 300 chariots. They advanced to the town of Mareshah, 10so Asa deployed his armies for battle in the valley north of Mareshah.*11Then Asa cried out to the LORD his God, “O LORD, no one but you can help the powerless against the mighty! Help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in you alone. It is in your name that we have come against this vast horde. O LORD, you are our God; do not let mere men prevail against you!”

12So the LORD defeated the Ethiopians* in the presence of Asa and the army of Judah, and the enemy fled. 13Asa and his army pursued them as far as Gerar, and so many Ethiopians fell that they were unable to rally. They were destroyed by the LORD and his army, and the army of Judah carried off a vast amount of plunder.

14While they were at Gerar, they attacked all the towns in that area, and terror from the LORD came upon the people there. As a result, a vast amount of plunder was taken from these towns, too. 15They also attacked the camps of herdsmen and captured many sheep, goats, and camels before finally returning to Jerusalem.

ASA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

1Then the Spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded, 2and he
went out to meet King Asa as he was returning from the battle.
"Listen to me, Asa!" he shouted. "Listen, all you people of Judah
and Benjamin! The LORD will stay with you as long as you stay
with him! Whenever you seek him, you will find him. But if you
abandon him, he will abandon you. 3For a long time Israel was
without the true God, without a priest to teach them, and without
the Law to instruct them. 4But whenever they were in trouble and
turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him out, they
found him.

5"During those dark times, it was not safe to travel. Problems
troubled the people of every land. 6Nation fought against nation,
and city against city, for God was troubling them with every kind of
problem. 7But as for you, be strong and courageous, for your work
will be rewarded."

8When Asa heard this message from Azariah the prophet,* he took
courage and removed all the detestable idols from the land of Judah
and Benjamin and in the towns he had captured in the hill country
of Ephraim. And he repaired the altar of the LORD, which stood in
front of the entry room of the LORD's Temple.

9Then Asa called together all the people of Judah and Benjamin,
along with the people of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who had
settled among them. For many from Israel had moved to Judah
during Asa's reign when they saw that the LORD his God was with
him. 10The people gathered at Jerusalem in late spring,* during the
fifteenth year of Asa's reign.

11On that day they sacrificed to the LORD 700 cattle and 7,000
sheep and goats from the plunder they had taken in the battle.
12Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of
their ancestors, with all their heart and soul. 13They agreed that

anyone who refused to seek the LORD, the God of Israel, would be put to death—whether young or old, man or woman. 14They shouted out their oath of loyalty to the LORD with trumpets blaring and rams' horns sounding. 15All in Judah were happy about this covenant, for they had entered into it with all their heart. They earnestly sought after God, and they found him. And the LORD gave them rest from their enemies on every side.

16King Asa even deposed his grandmother* Maacah from her position as queen mother because she had made an obscene Asherah pole. He cut down her obscene pole, broke it up, and burned it in the Kidron Valley. 17Although the pagan shrines were not removed from Israel, Asa's heart remained completely faithful throughout his life. 18He brought into the Temple of God the silver and gold and the various items that he and his father had dedicated.

19So there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

2 Chronicles 16

FINAL YEARS OF ASA'S REIGN

1In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, King Baasha of Israel invaded Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent anyone from entering or leaving King Asa's territory in Judah.

2Asa responded by removing the silver and gold from the treasuries of the Temple of the LORD and the royal palace. He sent it to King Ben-hadad of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus, along with this message:

3"Let there be a treaty* between you and me like the one between your father and my father. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel so that he will leave

me alone.”

4Ben-hadad agreed to King Asa’s request and sent the commanders
of his army to attack the towns of Israel. They conquered the towns
of Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah,* and all the store cities in Naphtali.
5As soon as Baasha of Israel heard what was happening, he
abandoned his project of fortifying Ramah and stopped all work on
it. 6Then King Asa called out all the men of Judah to carry away the
building stones and timbers that Baasha had been using to fortify
Ramah. Asa used these materials to fortify the towns of Geba and
Mizpah.

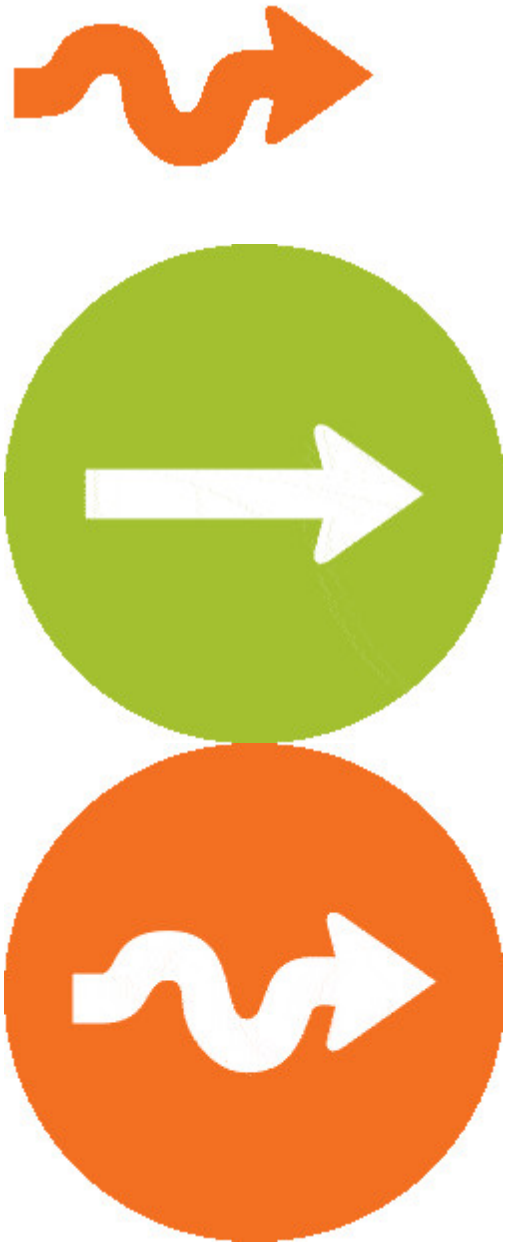
7At that time Hanani the seer came to King Asa and told him,
“Because you have put your trust in the king of Aram instead of in
the LORD your God, you missed your chance to destroy the army of
the king of Aram. 8Don’t you remember what happened to the
Ethiopians* and Libyans and their vast army, with all of their
chariots and charioteers?* At that time you relied on the LORD, and
he handed them over to you. 9The eyes of the LORD search the
whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully
committed to him. What a fool you have been! From now on you
will be at war.”

10Asa became so angry with Hanani for saying this that he threw
him into prison and put him in stocks. At that time Asa also began
to oppress some of his people.

SUMMARY OF ASA’S REIGN

11The rest of the events of Asa’s reign, from beginning to end, are
recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.* 12In the thirty-
ninth year of his reign, Asa developed a serious foot disease. Yet
even with the severity of his disease, he did not seek the LORD’s
help but turned only to his physicians. 13So he died in the forty-first
year of his reign. 14He was buried in the tomb he had carved out for
himself in the City of David. He was laid on a bed perfumed with
sweet spices and fragrant ointments, and the people built a huge

funeral fire in his honor.



2 Chronicles 17

JEHOSHAPHAT RULES IN JUDAH

1Then Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, became the next king. He
strengthened Judah to stand against any attack from Israel. 2He
stationed troops in all the fortified towns of Judah, and he assigned
additional garrisons to the land of Judah and to the towns of
Ephraim that his father, Asa, had captured.

3The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example
of his father's early years* and did not worship the images of Baal.
4He sought his father's God and obeyed his commands instead of
following the evil practices of the kingdom of Israel. 5So the LORD
established Jehoshaphat's control over the kingdom of Judah. All
the people of Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, so he became
very wealthy and highly esteemed. 6He was deeply committed to*
the ways of the LORD. He removed the pagan shrines and Asherah
poles from Judah.

7In the third year of his reign Jehoshaphat sent his officials to teach
in all the towns of Judah. These officials included Ben-hail,
Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah. 8He sent Levites along
with them, including Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel,
Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah.
He also sent out the priests Elishama and Jehoram. 9They took
copies of the Book of the Law of the LORD and traveled around
through all the towns of Judah, teaching the people.

10Then the fear of the LORD fell over all the surrounding kingdoms
so that none of them wanted to declare war on Jehoshaphat. 11Some
of the Philistines brought him gifts and silver as tribute, and the
Arabs brought 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats.

12So Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful and built
fortresses and storage cities throughout Judah. 13He stored
numerous supplies in Judah's towns and stationed an army of

seasoned troops at Jerusalem. 14His army was enrolled according to ancestral clans.

From Judah there were 300,000 troops organized in units of 1,000, under the command of Adnah. 15Next in command was Jehohanan, who commanded 280,000 troops. 16Next was Amasiah son of Zicri, who volunteered for the LORD's service, with 200,000 troops under his command.

17From Benjamin there were 200,000 troops equipped with bows and shields. They were under the command of Eliada, a veteran soldier. 18Next in command was Jehozabad, who commanded 180,000 armed men.

19These were the troops stationed in Jerusalem to serve the king, besides those Jehoshaphat stationed in the fortified towns throughout Judah.

SKIP TO 19:4

2 Chronicles 18

JEHOSHAPHAT AND AHAB

1Jehoshaphat enjoyed great riches and high esteem, and he made an alliance with Ahab of Israel by having his son marry Ahab's daughter. 2A few years later he went to Samaria to visit Ahab, who prepared a great banquet for him and his officials. They butchered great numbers of sheep, goats, and cattle for the feast. Then Ahab enticed Jehoshaphat to join forces with him to recover Ramoth-

gilead.

3“Will you go with me to Ramoth-gilead?” King Ahab of Israel
asked King Jehoshaphat of Judah.

Jehoshaphat replied, “Why, of course! You and I are as one, and my
troops are your troops. We will certainly join you in battle.” 4Then
Jehoshaphat added, “But first let’s find out what the LORD says.”

5So the king of Israel summoned the prophets, 400 of them, and
asked them, “Should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should
I hold back?”

They all replied, “Yes, go right ahead! God will give the king
victory.”

6But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there not also a prophet of the LORD
here? We should ask him the same question.”

7The king of Israel replied to Jehoshaphat, “There is one more man
who could consult the LORD for us, but I hate him. He never
prophesies anything but trouble for me! His name is Micaiah son of
Imlah.”

Jehoshaphat replied, “That’s not the way a king should talk! Let’s
hear what he has to say.”

8So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, “Quick!
Bring Micaiah son of Imlah.”

MICAIAH PROPHESIES AGAINST AHAB

9King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, dressed in
their royal robes, were sitting on thrones at the threshing floor near
the gate of Samaria. All of Ahab’s prophets were prophesying there
in front of them. 10One of them, Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, made
some iron horns and proclaimed, “This is what the LORD says: With

these horns you will gore the Arameans to death!”

11All the other prophets agreed. “Yes,” they said, “go up to Ramoth-gilead and be victorious, for the LORD will give the king victory!”

12Meanwhile, the messenger who went to get Micaiah said to him, “Look, all the prophets are promising victory for the king. Be sure that you agree with them and promise success.”

13But Micaiah replied, “As surely as the LORD lives, I will say only what my God says.”

14When Micaiah arrived before the king, Ahab asked him, “Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should I hold back?”

Micaiah replied sarcastically, “Yes, go up and be victorious, for you will have victory over them!”

15But the king replied sharply, “How many times must I demand that you speak only the truth to me when you speak for the LORD?”

16Then Micaiah told him, “In a vision I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD said, ‘Their master has been killed.* Send them home in peace.’”

17“Didn’t I tell you?” the king of Israel exclaimed to Jehoshaphat. “He never prophesies anything but trouble for me.”

18Then Micaiah continued, “Listen to what the LORD says! I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the armies of heaven around him, on his right and on his left. 19And the LORD said, ‘Who can entice King Ahab of Israel to go into battle against Ramoth-gilead so he can be killed?’

“There were many suggestions, 20and finally a spirit approached the

LORD and said, ‘I can do it!’

“‘How will you do this?’ the LORD asked.

21“And the spirit replied, ‘I will go out and inspire all of Ahab’s prophets to speak lies.’

“‘You will succeed,’ said the LORD. ‘Go ahead and do it.’

22“So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of your prophets. For the LORD has pronounced your doom.”

23Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah walked up to Micaiah and slapped him across the face. “Since when did the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you?” he demanded.

24And Micaiah replied, “You will find out soon enough when you are trying to hide in some secret room!”

25“Arrest him!” the king of Israel ordered. “Take him back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to my son Joash. 26Give them this order from the king: ‘Put this man in prison, and feed him nothing but bread and water until I return safely from the battle!’”

27But Micaiah replied, “If you return safely, it will mean that the LORD has not spoken through me!” Then he added to those standing around, “Everyone mark my words!”

THE DEATH OF AHAB

28So King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah led their armies against Ramoth-gilead. 29The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “As we go into battle, I will disguise myself so no one will recognize me, but you wear your royal robes.” So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

30Meanwhile, the king of Aram had issued these orders to his
chariot commanders: “Attack only the king of Israel! Don’t bother
with anyone else.” 31So when the Aramean chariot commanders saw
Jehoshaphat in his royal robes, they went after him. “There is the
king of Israel!” they shouted. But Jehoshaphat called out, and the
LORD saved him. God helped him by turning the attackers away
from him. 32As soon as the chariot commanders realized he was not
the king of Israel, they stopped chasing him.

33An Aramean soldier, however, randomly shot an arrow at the
Israelite troops and hit the king of Israel between the joints of his
armor. “Turn the horses* and get me out of here!” Ahab groaned to
the driver of the chariot. “I’m badly wounded!”

34The battle raged all that day, and the king of Israel propped
himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans. In the evening, just
as the sun was setting, he died.

2 Chronicles 19

JEHOSHAPHAT APPOINTS JUDGES

1When King Jehoshaphat of Judah arrived safely home in
Jerusalem, 2Jehu son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him.
“Why should you help the wicked and love those who hate the
LORD?” he asked the king. “Because of what you have done, the
LORD is very angry with you. 3Even so, there is some good in you,
for you have removed the Asherah poles throughout the land, and
you have committed yourself to seeking God.”

4Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, but he went out among the
people, traveling from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim,
encouraging the people to return to the LORD, the God of their
ancestors. 5He appointed judges throughout the nation in all the
fortified towns, 6and he said to them, “Always think carefully before

pronouncing judgment. Remember that you do not judge to please
people but to please the LORD. He will be with you when you
render the verdict in each case. 7Fear the LORD and judge with
integrity, for the LORD our God does not tolerate perverted justice,
partiality, or the taking of bribes."

8In Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and
priests and clan leaders in Israel to serve as judges* for cases
involving the LORD's regulations and for civil disputes. 9These were
his instructions to them: "You must always act in the fear of the
LORD, with faithfulness and an undivided heart. 10Whenever a case
comes to you from fellow citizens in an outlying town, whether a
murder case or some other violation of God's laws, commands,
decrees, or regulations, you must warn them not to sin against the
LORD, so that he will not be angry with you and them. Do this and
you will not be guilty.

11"Amariah the high priest will have final say in all cases involving
the LORD. Zebadiah son of Ishmael, a leader from the tribe of
Judah, will have final say in all civil cases. The Levites will assist
you in making sure that justice is served. Take courage as you fulfill
your duties, and may the LORD be with those who do what is
right."

2 Chronicles 20

WAR WITH SURROUNDING NATIONS

1After this, the armies of the Moabites, Ammonites, and some of the
Meunites* declared war on Jehoshaphat. 2Messengers came and told
Jehoshaphat, “A vast army from Edom* is marching against you
from beyond the Dead Sea.* They are already at Hazazon-tamar.”
(This was another name for En-gedi.)

3Jehoshaphat was terrified by this news and begged the LORD for
guidance. He also ordered everyone in Judah to begin fasting. 4So
people from all the towns of Judah came to Jerusalem to seek the
LORD’s help.

5Jehoshaphat stood before the community of Judah and Jerusalem
in front of the new courtyard at the Temple of the LORD. 6He
prayed, “O LORD, God of our ancestors, you alone are the God who
is in heaven. You are ruler of all the kingdoms of the earth. You are
powerful and mighty; no one can stand against you! 7O our God, did
you not drive out those who lived in this land when your people
Israel arrived? And did you not give this land forever to the
descendants of your friend Abraham? 8Your people settled here and
built this Temple to honor your name. 9They said, ‘Whenever we are
faced with any calamity such as war,* plague, or famine, we can
come to stand in your presence before this Temple where your
name is honored. We can cry out to you to save us, and you will
hear us and rescue us.’

10“And now see what the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir
are doing. You would not let our ancestors invade those nations
when Israel left Egypt, so they went around them and did not
destroy them. 11Now see how they reward us! For they have come
to throw us out of your land, which you gave us as an inheritance.
12O our God, won’t you stop them? We are powerless against this
mighty army that is about to attack us. We do not know what to do,
but we are looking to you for help.”

13As all the men of Judah stood before the LORD with their little
ones, wives, and children, 14the Spirit of the LORD came upon one
of the men standing there. His name was Jahaziel son of Zechariah,

son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite who was a descendant of Asaph.

15He said, “Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid! Don’t be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. 16Tomorrow, march out against them. You will find them coming up through the ascent of Ziz at the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel. 17But you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand still and watch the LORD’s victory. He is with you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you!”

18Then King Jehoshaphat bowed low with his face to the ground. And all the people of Judah and Jerusalem did the same, worshiping the LORD. 19Then the Levites from the clans of Kohath and Korah stood to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud shout.

20Early the next morning the army of Judah went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. On the way Jehoshaphat stopped and said, “Listen to me, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be able to stand firm. Believe in his prophets, and you will succeed.”

21After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the LORD and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: “Give thanks to the LORD; his faithful love endures forever!”

22At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves. 23The armies of Moab and Ammon turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them. After they had destroyed the army of Seir, they began attacking each other. 24So when the army of Judah arrived at the

lookout point in the wilderness, all they saw were dead bodies lying on the ground as far as they could see. Not a single one of the enemy had escaped.

25King Jehoshaphat and his men went out to gather the plunder. They found vast amounts of equipment, clothing,* and other valuables—more than they could carry. There was so much plunder that it took them three days just to collect it all! 26On the fourth day they gathered in the Valley of Blessing,* which got its name that day because the people praised and thanked the LORD there. It is still called the Valley of Blessing today.

27Then all the men returned to Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat leading them, overjoyed that the LORD had given them victory over their enemies. 28They marched into Jerusalem to the music of harps, lyres, and trumpets, and they proceeded to the Temple of the LORD.

29When all the surrounding kingdoms heard that the LORD himself had fought against the enemies of Israel, the fear of God came over them. 30So Jehoshaphat's kingdom was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.

SUMMARY OF JEHOSHAPHAT'S REIGN

31So Jehoshaphat ruled over the land of Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

32Jehoshaphat was a good king, following the ways of his father, Asa. He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight. 33During his reign, however, he failed to remove all the pagan shrines, and the people never fully committed themselves to follow the God of their ancestors.

34The rest of the events of Jehoshaphat's reign, from beginning to

end, are recorded in *The Record of Jehu Son of Hanani,* which is included in *The Book of the Kings of Israel.*

35Some time later King Jehoshaphat of Judah made an alliance with
King Ahaziah of Israel, who was very wicked.*36Together they built
a fleet of trading ships* at the port of Ezion-geber. 37Then Eliezer
son of Dodavahu from Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat.
He said, “Because you have allied yourself with King Ahaziah, the
LORD will destroy your work.” So the ships met with disaster and
never put out to sea.*

2 Chronicles 21

JEHORAM RULES IN JUDAH

1When Jehoshaphat died, he was buried with his ancestors in the
City of David. Then his son Jehoram became the next king.

2Jehoram's brothers—the other sons of Jehoshaphat—were Azariah,
Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these
were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Judah.*3Their father had
given each of them valuable gifts of silver, gold, and costly items,
and also some of Judah's fortified towns. However, he designated
Jehoram as the next king because he was the oldest. 4But when
Jehoram had become solidly established as king, he killed all his
brothers and some of the other leaders of Judah.

5Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem eight years. 6But Jehoram followed the
example of the kings of Israel and was as wicked as King Ahab, for
he had married one of Ahab's daughters. So Jehoram did what was
evil in the LORD's sight. 7But the LORD did not want to destroy

David's dynasty, for he had made a covenant with David and promised that his descendants would continue to rule, shining like a lamp forever.

THE TOWN OF LIBNAH

8During Jehoram's reign, the Edomites revolted against Judah and crowned their own king. 9So Jehoram went out with his full army and all his chariots. The Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, but he went out at night and attacked them* under cover of darkness. 10Even so, Edom has been independent from Judah to this day. The town of Libnah also revolted about that same time. All this happened because Jehoram had abandoned the LORD, the God of his ancestors. 11He had built pagan shrines in the hill country of Judah and had led the people of Jerusalem and Judah to give themselves to pagan gods and to go astray.

12Then Elijah the prophet wrote Jehoram this letter:

"This is what the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, says: You have not followed the good example of your father, Jehoshaphat, or your grandfather King Asa of Judah. 13Instead, you have been as evil as the kings of Israel. You have led the people of Jerusalem and Judah to worship idols, just as King Ahab did in Israel. And you have even killed your own brothers, men who were better than you. 14So now the LORD is about to strike you, your people, your children, your wives, and all that is yours with a heavy blow. 15You yourself will suffer with a severe intestinal disease that will get worse each day until your bowels come out."

16Then the LORD stirred up the Philistines and the Arabs, who lived near the Ethiopians,* to attack Jehoram. 17They marched against Judah, broke down its defenses, and carried away everything of value in the royal palace, including the king's sons and his wives.

Only his youngest son, Ahaziah,* was spared.

18After all this, the LORD struck Jehoram with an incurable
intestinal disease. 19The disease grew worse and worse, and at the
end of two years it caused his bowels to come out, and he died in
agony. His people did not build a great funeral fire to honor him as
they had done for his ancestors.

20Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem eight years. No one was sorry when he died.
They buried him in the City of David, but not in the royal cemetery.

2 Chronicles 22

AHAZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1Then the people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest
son, their next king, since the marauding bands who came with the
Arabs* had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram
reigned as king of Judah.

2Ahaziah was twenty-two* years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother was Athaliah, a
granddaughter of King Omri. 3Ahaziah also followed the evil
example of King Ahab's family, for his mother encouraged him in
doing wrong. 4He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as
Ahab's family had done. They even became his advisers after the
death of his father, and they led him to ruin.

5Following their evil advice, Ahaziah joined Joram,* the son of King
Ahab of Israel, in his war against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth-
gilead. When the Arameans* wounded Joram in the battle, 6he
returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he had received at
Ramoth.* Because Joram was wounded, King Ahaziah* of Judah
went to Jezreel to visit him.

7But God had decided that this visit would be Ahaziah's downfall.
While he was there, Ahaziah went out with Joram to meet Jehu
grandson of Nimshi,* whom the LORD had appointed to destroy the
dynasty of Ahab.

8While Jehu was executing judgment against the family of Ahab, he
happened to meet some of Judah's officials and Ahaziah's relatives*
who were traveling with Ahaziah. So Jehu killed them all. 9Then
Jehu's men searched for Ahaziah, and they found him hiding in the
city of Samaria. They brought him to Jehu, who killed him. Ahaziah
was given a decent burial because the people said, "He was the
grandson of Jehoshaphat—a man who sought the LORD with all his
heart." But none of the surviving members of Ahaziah's family was
capable of ruling the kingdom.

QUEEN ATHALIAH RULES IN JUDAH

10When Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah of Judah, learned that
her son was dead, she began to destroy the rest of Judah's royal
family. 11But Ahaziah's sister Jehosheba,* the daughter of King
Jehoram, took Ahaziah's infant son, Joash, and stole him away from
among the rest of the king's children, who were about to be killed.
She put Joash and his nurse in a bedroom. In this way, Jehosheba,
wife of Jehoiada the priest and sister of Ahaziah, hid the child so

that Athaliah could not murder him. 12Joash remained hidden in the Temple of God for six years while Athaliah ruled over the land.

2 Chronicles 23

REVOLT AGAINST ATHALIAH

1In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada the priest decided to act. He summoned his courage and made a pact with five army commanders: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri. 2These men traveled secretly throughout Judah and summoned the Levites and clan leaders in all the towns to come to Jerusalem. 3They all gathered at the Temple of God, where they made a solemn pact with Joash, the young king.

Jehoiada said to them, "Here is the king's son! The time has come for him to reign! The LORD has promised that a descendant of David will be our king. 4This is what you must do. When you priests and Levites come on duty on the Sabbath, a third of you will serve as gatekeepers. 5Another third will go over to the royal palace, and the final third will be at the Foundation Gate. Everyone else should stay in the courtyards of the LORD's Temple. 6Remember, only the priests and Levites on duty may enter the Temple of the LORD, for they are set apart as holy. The rest of the people must obey the LORD's instructions and stay outside. 7You Levites, form a bodyguard around the king and keep your weapons in hand. Kill anyone who tries to enter the Temple. Stay with the king wherever he goes."

8So the Levites and all the people of Judah did everything as Jehoiada the priest ordered. The commanders took charge of the men reporting for duty that Sabbath, as well as those who were going off duty. Jehoiada the priest did not let anyone go home after their shift ended. 9Then Jehoiada supplied the commanders with the spears and the large and small shields that had once belonged to King David and were stored in the Temple of God. 10He stationed all the people around the king, with their weapons ready. They formed

a line from the south side of the Temple around to the north side and all around the altar.

11Then Jehoiada and his sons brought out Joash, the king's son, placed the crown on his head, and presented him with a copy of God's laws.* They anointed him and proclaimed him king, and everyone shouted, "Long live the king!"

THE DEATH OF ATHALIAH

12When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and the shouts of praise to the king, she hurried to the LORD's Temple to see what was happening. 13When she arrived, she saw the newly crowned king standing in his place of authority by the pillar at the Temple entrance. The commanders and trumpeters were surrounding him, and people from all over the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Singers with musical instruments were leading the people in a great celebration. When Athaliah saw all this, she tore her clothes in despair and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"

14Then Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders who were in charge of the troops, "Take her to the soldiers in front of the Temple,* and kill anyone who tries to rescue her." For the priest had said, "She must not be killed in the Temple of the LORD." 15So they seized her and led her out to the entrance of the Horse Gate on the palace grounds, and they killed her there.

JEHOIADA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

16Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and the king and the people that they would be the LORD's people. 17And all the people went over to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They demolished the altars and smashed the idols, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

18 Jehoiada now put the priests and Levites in charge of the Temple
of the LORD, following all the directions given by David. He also
commanded them to present burnt offerings to the LORD, as
prescribed by the Law of Moses, and to sing and rejoice as David
had instructed. 19 He also stationed gatekeepers at the gates of the
LORD's Temple to keep out those who for any reason were
ceremonially unclean.

20 Then the commanders, nobles, rulers, and all the people of the
land escorted the king from the Temple of the LORD. They went
through the upper gate and into the palace, and they seated the
king on the royal throne. 21 So all the people of the land rejoiced,
and the city was peaceful because Athaliah had been killed.

2 Chronicles 24

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

1Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned in
Jerusalem forty years. His mother was Zibiah from Beersheba.
2Joash did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight throughout the
lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. 3Jehoiada chose two wives for Joash,
and he had sons and daughters.

4At one point Joash decided to repair and restore the Temple of the
LORD. 5He summoned the priests and Levites and gave them these
instructions: “Go to all the towns of Judah and collect the required
annual offerings, so that we can repair the Temple of your God. Do
not delay!” But the Levites did not act immediately.

6So the king called for Jehoiada the high priest and asked him,
“Why haven’t you demanded that the Levites go out and collect the
Temple taxes from the towns of Judah and from Jerusalem? Moses,
the servant of the LORD, levied this tax on the community of Israel
in order to maintain the Tabernacle of the Covenant.*”

7Over the years the followers of wicked Athaliah had broken into
the Temple of God, and they had used all the dedicated things from
the Temple of the LORD to worship the images of Baal.

8So now the king ordered a chest to be made and set outside the
gate leading to the Temple of the LORD. 9Then a proclamation was
sent throughout Judah and Jerusalem, telling the people to bring to
the LORD the tax that Moses, the servant of God, had required of
the Israelites in the wilderness. 10This pleased all the leaders and
the people, and they gladly brought their money and filled the chest
with it.

11Whenever the chest became full, the Levites would carry it to the
king’s officials. Then the court secretary and an officer of the high
priest would come and empty the chest and take it back to the
Temple again. This went on day after day, and a large amount of
money was collected. 12The king and Jehoiada gave the money to
the construction supervisors, who hired masons and carpenters to
restore the Temple of the LORD. They also hired metalworkers, who
made articles of iron and bronze for the LORD’s Temple.

13The men in charge of the renovation worked hard and made
steady progress. They restored the Temple of God according to its

original design and strengthened it. 14When all the repairs were finished, they brought the remaining money to the king and Jehoiada. It was used to make various articles for the Temple of the LORD—articles for worship services and for burnt offerings, including ladles and other articles made of gold and silver. And the burnt offerings were sacrificed continually in the Temple of the LORD during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest.

15Jehoiada lived to a very old age, finally dying at 130. 16He was buried among the kings in the City of David, because he had done so much good in Israel for God and his Temple.

JEHOIADA'S REFORMS REVERSED

17But after Jehoiada's death, the leaders of Judah came and bowed before King Joash and persuaded him to listen to their advice. 18They decided to abandon the Temple of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and they worshiped Asherah poles and idols instead! Because of this sin, divine anger fell on Judah and Jerusalem. 19Yet the LORD sent prophets to bring them back to him. The prophets warned them, but still the people would not listen.

20Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, "This is what God says: Why do you disobey the LORD's commands and keep yourselves from prospering? You have abandoned the LORD, and now he has abandoned you!"

21Then the leaders plotted to kill Zechariah, and King Joash ordered that they stone him to death in the courtyard of the LORD's Temple. 22That was how King Joash repaid Jehoiada for his loyalty—by killing his son. Zechariah's last words as he died were, "May the LORD see what they are doing and avenge my death!"

THE END OF JOASH'S REIGN

23In the spring of the year* the Aramean army marched against
Joash. They invaded Judah and Jerusalem and killed all the leaders
of the nation. Then they sent all the plunder back to their king in
Damascus. 24Although the Arameans attacked with only a small
army, the LORD helped them conquer the much larger army of
Judah. The people of Judah had abandoned the LORD, the God of
their ancestors, so judgment was carried out against Joash.

25The Arameans withdrew, leaving Joash severely wounded. But his
own officials plotted to kill him for murdering the son* of Jehoiada
the priest. They assassinated him as he lay in bed. Then he was
buried in the City of David, but not in the royal cemetery. 26The
assassins were Jozacar,* the son of an Ammonite woman named
Shimeath, and Jehozabad, the son of a Moabite woman named
Shomer.*

27The account of the sons of Joash, the prophecies about him, and
the record of his restoration of the Temple of God are written in *The
Commentary on the Book of the Kings.* His son Amaziah became the
next king.

2 Chronicles 25

AMAZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother was Jehoaddin*
from Jerusalem. 2Amaziah did what was pleasing in the LORD's
sight, but not wholeheartedly.

3When Amaziah was well established as king, he executed the
officials who had assassinated his father. 4However, he did not kill
the children of the assassins, for he obeyed the command of the
LORD as written by Moses in the Book of the Law: "Parents must
not be put to death for the sins of their children, nor children for
the sins of their parents. Those deserving to die must be put to
death for their own crimes."*

5Then Amaziah organized the army, assigning generals and
captains* for all Judah and Benjamin. He took a census and found
that he had an army of 300,000 select troops, twenty years old and
older, all trained in the use of spear and shield. 6He also paid about
7,500 pounds* of silver to hire 100,000 experienced fighting men
from Israel.

7But a man of God came to him and said, "Your Majesty, do not hire
troops from Israel, for the LORD is not with Israel. He will not help
those people of Ephraim! 8If you let them go with your troops into
battle, you will be defeated by the enemy no matter how well you
fight. God will overthrow you, for he has the power to help you or
to trip you up."

9Amaziah asked the man of God, "But what about all that silver I
paid to hire the army of Israel?"

The man of God replied, "The LORD is able to give you much more
than this!" 10So Amaziah discharged the hired troops and sent them
back to Ephraim. This made them very angry with Judah, and they

returned home in a great rage.

11Then Amaziah summoned his courage and led his army to the
Valley of Salt, where they killed 10,000 Edomite troops from Seir.
12They captured another 10,000 and took them to the top of a cliff
and threw them off, dashing them to pieces on the rocks below.

13Meanwhile, the hired troops that Amaziah had sent home raided
several of the towns of Judah between Samaria and Beth-horon.
They killed 3,000 people and carried off great quantities of plunder.

14When King Amaziah returned from slaughtering the Edomites, he
brought with him idols taken from the people of Seir. He set them
up as his own gods, bowed down in front of them, and offered
sacrifices to them! 15This made the LORD very angry, and he sent a
prophet to ask, “Why do you turn to gods who could not even save
their own people from you?”

16But the king interrupted him and said, “Since when have I made
you the king’s counselor? Be quiet now before I have you killed!”

So the prophet stopped with this warning: “I know that God has
determined to destroy you because you have done this and have
refused to accept my counsel.”

17After consulting with his advisers, King Amaziah of Judah sent
this challenge to Israel’s king Jehoash,* the son of Jehoahaz and
grandson of Jehu: “Come and meet me in battle!”*

18But King Jehoash of Israel replied to King Amaziah of Judah with
this story: “Out in the Lebanon mountains, a thistle sent a message
to a mighty cedar tree: ‘Give your daughter in marriage to my son.’
But just then a wild animal of Lebanon came by and stepped on the
thistle, crushing it!

19“You are saying, ‘I have defeated Edom,’ and you are very proud
of it. But my advice is to stay at home. Why stir up trouble that will
only bring disaster on you and the people of Judah?”

20But Amaziah refused to listen, for God was determined to destroy
him for turning to the gods of Edom. 21So King Jehoash of Israel
mobilized his army against King Amaziah of Judah. The two armies
drew up their battle lines at Beth-shemesh in Judah. 22Judah was
routed by the army of Israel, and its army scattered and fled for
home. 23King Jehoash of Israel captured Judah’s king, Amaziah son
of Joash and grandson of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh. Then he
brought him to Jerusalem, where he demolished 600 feet* of
Jerusalem’s wall, from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. 24He
carried off all the gold and silver and all the articles from the
Temple of God that had been in the care of Obed-edom. He also
seized the treasures of the royal palace, along with hostages, and
then returned to Samaria.

25King Amaziah of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of
King Jehoash of Israel. 26The rest of the events in Amaziah’s reign,
from beginning to end, are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of
Judah and Israel.*

27After Amaziah turned away from the LORD, there was a
conspiracy against his life in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But
his enemies sent assassins after him, and they killed him there.
28They brought his body back on a horse, and he was buried with
his ancestors in the City of David.*

2 Chronicles 26

UZZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1All the people of Judah had crowned Amaziah's sixteen-year-old
son, Uzziah, as king in place of his father. 2After his father's death,
Uzziah rebuilt the town of Elath* and restored it to Judah.

3Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned

in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother was Jecoliah from Jerusalem. 4He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, just as his father, Amaziah, had done. 5Uzziah sought God during the days of Zechariah, who taught him to fear God.* And as long as the king sought guidance from the LORD, God gave him success.

6Uzziah declared war on the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. Then he built new towns in the Ashdod area and in other parts of Philistia. 7God helped him in his wars against the Philistines, his battles with the Arabs of Gur,* and his wars with the Meunites. 8The Meunites* paid annual tribute to him, and his fame spread even to Egypt, for he had become very powerful.

9Uzziah built fortified towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the angle in the wall. 10He also constructed forts in the wilderness and dug many water cisterns, because he kept great herds of livestock in the foothills of Judah* and on the plains. He was also a man who loved the soil. He had many workers who cared for his farms and vineyards, both on the hillsides and in the fertile valleys.

11Uzziah had an army of well-trained warriors, ready to march into battle, unit by unit. This army had been mustered and organized by Jeiel, the secretary of the army, and his assistant, Maaseiah. They were under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king's officials. 12These regiments of mighty warriors were commanded by 2,600 clan leaders. 13The army consisted of 307,500 men, all elite troops. They were prepared to assist the king against any enemy.

14Uzziah provided the entire army with shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows, and sling stones. 15And he built structures on the walls of Jerusalem, designed by experts to protect those who shot arrows and hurled large stones* from the towers and the corners of the wall. His fame spread far and wide, for the LORD gave him marvelous help, and he became very powerful.

UZZIAH'S SIN AND PUNISHMENT

16But when he had become powerful, he also became proud, which
led to his downfall. He sinned against the LORD his God by entering
the sanctuary of the LORD's Temple and personally burning incense
on the incense altar. 17Azariah the high priest went in after him
with eighty other priests of the LORD, all brave men. 18They
confronted King Uzziah and said, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn
incense to the LORD. That is the work of the priests alone, the
descendants of Aaron who are set apart for this work. Get out of the
sanctuary, for you have sinned. The LORD God will not honor you
for this!"

19Uzziah, who was holding an incense burner, became furious. But
as he was standing there raging at the priests before the incense
altar in the LORD's Temple, leprosy* suddenly broke out on his
forehead. 20When Azariah the high priest and all the other priests
saw the leprosy, they rushed him out. And the king himself was
eager to get out because the LORD had struck him. 21So King Uzziah
had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in isolation in a separate
house, for he was excluded from the Temple of the LORD. His son
Jotham was put in charge of the royal palace, and he governed the
people of the land.

22The rest of the events of Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end,
are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 23When Uzziah
died, he was buried with his ancestors; his grave was in a nearby
burial field belonging to the kings, for the people said, "He had
leprosy." And his son Jotham became the next king.

2 Chronicles 27

JOTHAM RULES IN JUDAH

1 Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His mother was Jerusha, the
daughter of Zadok.

2 Jotham did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight. He did
everything his father, Uzziah, had done, except that Jotham did not
sin by entering the Temple of the LORD. But the people continued
in their corrupt ways.

3 Jotham rebuilt the upper gate of the Temple of the LORD. He also
did extensive rebuilding on the wall at the hill of Ophel. 4 He built
towns in the hill country of Judah and constructed fortresses and
towers in the wooded areas. 5 Jotham went to war against the
Ammonites and conquered them. Over the next three years he
received from them an annual tribute of 7,500 pounds* of silver,
50,000 bushels of wheat, and 50,000 bushels of barley.*

6 King Jotham became powerful because he was careful to live in
obedience to the LORD his God.

7 The rest of the events of Jotham's reign, including all his wars and
other activities, are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel and
Judah*. 8 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. 9 When Jotham died, he was
buried in the City of David. And his son Ahaz became the next king.

2 Chronicles 28

AHAZ RULES IN JUDAH

1Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned
in Jerusalem sixteen years. He did not do what was pleasing in the
sight of the LORD, as his ancestor David had done. 2Instead, he
followed the example of the kings of Israel. He cast metal images
for the worship of Baal. 3He offered sacrifices in the valley of Ben-
Hinnom, even sacrificing his own sons in the fire.* In this way, he
followed the detestable practices of the pagan nations the LORD
had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. 4He offered
sacrifices and burned incense at the pagan shrines and on the hills
and under every green tree.

5Because of all this, the LORD his God allowed the king of Aram to
defeat Ahaz and to exile large numbers of his people to Damascus.
The armies of the king of Israel also defeated Ahaz and inflicted
many casualties on his army. 6In a single day Pekah son of
Remaliah, Israel's king, killed 120,000 of Judah's troops, all of them
experienced warriors, because they had abandoned the LORD, the
God of their ancestors. 7Then Zicri, a warrior from Ephraim, killed
Maaseiah, the king's son; Azrikam, the king's palace commander;

and Elkanah, the king's second-in-command. 8The armies of Israel captured 200,000 women and children from Judah and seized tremendous amounts of plunder, which they took back to Samaria.

9But a prophet of the LORD named Oded was there in Samaria when the army of Israel returned home. He went out to meet them and said, "The LORD, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah and let you defeat them. But you have gone too far, killing them without mercy, and all heaven is disturbed. 10And now you are planning to make slaves of these people from Judah and Jerusalem. What about your own sins against the LORD your God? 11Listen to me and return these prisoners you have taken, for they are your own relatives. Watch out, because now the LORD's fierce anger has been turned against you!"

12Then some of the leaders of Israel*—Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berekiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai—agreed with this and confronted the men returning from battle. 13"You must not bring the prisoners here!" they declared. "We cannot afford to add to our sins and guilt. Our guilt is already great, and the LORD's fierce anger is already turned against Israel."

14So the warriors released the prisoners and handed over the plunder in the sight of the leaders and all the people. 15Then the four men just mentioned by name came forward and distributed clothes from the plunder to the prisoners who were naked. They provided clothing and sandals to wear, gave them enough food and drink, and dressed their wounds with olive oil. They put those who were weak on donkeys and took all the prisoners back to their own people in Jericho, the city of palms. Then they returned to Samaria.

AHAZ CLOSES THE TEMPLE

16At that time King Ahaz of Judah asked the king of Assyria for help. 17The armies of Edom had again invaded Judah and taken

captives. 18And the Philistines had raided towns located in the foothills of Judah* and in the Negev of Judah. They had already captured and occupied Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages. 19The LORD was humbling Judah because of King Ahaz of Judah,* for he had encouraged his people to sin and had been utterly unfaithful to the LORD.

20So when King Tiglath-pileser* of Assyria arrived, he attacked Ahaz instead of helping him. 21Ahaz took valuable items from the LORD's Temple, the royal palace, and from the homes of his officials and gave them to the king of Assyria as tribute. But this did not help him.

22Even during this time of trouble, King Ahaz continued to reject the LORD. 23He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus who had defeated him, for he said, "Since these gods helped the kings of Aram, they will help me, too, if I sacrifice to them." But instead, they led to his ruin and the ruin of all Judah.

24The king took the various articles from the Temple of God and broke them into pieces. He shut the doors of the LORD's Temple so that no one could worship there, and he set up altars to pagan gods in every corner of Jerusalem. 25He made pagan shrines in all the towns of Judah for offering sacrifices to other gods. In this way, he aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of his ancestors.

26The rest of the events of Ahaz's reign and everything he did, from beginning to end, are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.* 27When Ahaz died, he was buried in Jerusalem but not in the royal cemetery of the kings of Judah. Then his son Hezekiah became the next king.

2 Chronicles 29

HEZEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became the king of
Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother
was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. 2He did what was pleasing
in the LORD's sight, just as his ancestor David had done.

HEZEKIAH REOPENS THE TEMPLE

3In the very first month of the first year of his reign, Hezekiah
reopened the doors of the Temple of the LORD and repaired them.
4He summoned the priests and Levites to meet him at the courtyard
east of the Temple. 5He said to them, "Listen to me, you Levites!
Purify yourselves, and purify the Temple of the LORD, the God of
your ancestors. Remove all the defiled things from the sanctuary.
6Our ancestors were unfaithful and did what was evil in the sight of
the LORD our God. They abandoned the LORD and his dwelling
place; they turned their backs on him. 7They also shut the doors to
the Temple's entry room, and they snuffed out the lamps. They
stopped burning incense and presenting burnt offerings at the
sanctuary of the God of Israel.

8"That is why the LORD's anger has fallen upon Judah and
Jerusalem. He has made them an object of dread, horror, and
ridicule, as you can see with your own eyes. 9Because of this, our
fathers have been killed in battle, and our sons and daughters and
wives have been captured. 10But now I will make a covenant with
the LORD, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn away
from us. 11My sons, do not neglect your duties any longer! The
LORD has chosen you to stand in his presence, to minister to him,
and to lead the people in worship and present offerings to him."

12Then these Levites got right to work: From the clan of Kohath:
Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah.

From the clan of Merari: Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of
Jehallelel.
From the clan of Gershon: Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of

Joah.

13From the family of Elizaphan: Shimri and Jeiel.
From the family of Asaph: Zechariah and Mattaniah.

14From the family of Heman: Jehiel and Shimei.
From the family of Jeduthun: Shemaiah and Uzziel.

15These men called together their fellow Levites, and they all purified themselves. Then they began to cleanse the Temple of the LORD, just as the king had commanded. They were careful to follow all the LORD's instructions in their work. 16The priests went into the sanctuary of the Temple of the LORD to cleanse it, and they took out to the Temple courtyard all the defiled things they found. From there the Levites carted it all out to the Kidron Valley.

17They began the work in early spring, on the first day of the new year,* and in eight days they had reached the entry room of the LORD's Temple. Then they purified the Temple of the LORD itself, which took another eight days. So the entire task was completed in sixteen days.

THE TEMPLE REDEDICATION

18Then the Levites went to King Hezekiah and gave him this report: "We have cleansed the entire Temple of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the table of the Bread of the Presence with all its utensils. 19We have also recovered all the items discarded by King Ahaz when he was unfaithful and closed the Temple. They are now in front of the altar of the LORD, purified and ready for use."

20Early the next morning King Hezekiah gathered the city officials and went to the Temple of the LORD. 21They brought seven bulls, seven rams, and seven male lambs as a burnt offering, together with seven male goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, for the Temple, and for Judah. The king commanded the priests, who were descendants of Aaron, to sacrifice the animals on the altar of the

LORD.

22So they killed the bulls, and the priests took the blood and
sprinkled it on the altar. Next they killed the rams and sprinkled
their blood on the altar. And finally, they did the same with the
male lambs. 23The male goats for the sin offering were then brought
before the king and the assembly of people, who laid their hands on
them. 24The priests then killed the goats as a sin offering and
sprinkled their blood on the altar to make atonement for the sins of
all Israel. The king had specifically commanded that this burnt
offering and sin offering should be made for all Israel.

25King Hezekiah then stationed the Levites at the Temple of the
LORD with cymbals, lyres, and harps. He obeyed all the commands
that the LORD had given to King David through Gad, the king's
seer, and the prophet Nathan. 26The Levites then took their
positions around the Temple with the instruments of David, and the
priests took their positions with the trumpets.

27Then Hezekiah ordered that the burnt offering be placed on the
altar. As the burnt offering was presented, songs of praise to the
LORD were begun, accompanied by the trumpets and other
instruments of David, the former king of Israel. 28The entire
assembly worshiped the LORD as the singers sang and the trumpets
blew, until all the burnt offerings were finished. 29Then the king and
everyone with him bowed down in worship. 30King Hezekiah and
the officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the psalms
written by David and by Asaph the seer. So they offered joyous
praise and bowed down in worship.

31Then Hezekiah declared, "Now that you have consecrated
yourselves to the LORD, bring your sacrifices and thanksgiving
offerings to the Temple of the LORD." So the people brought their
sacrifices and thanksgiving offerings, and all whose hearts were
willing brought burnt offerings, too. 32The people brought to the
LORD 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 male lambs for burnt offerings.
33They also brought 600 cattle and 3,000 sheep and goats as sacred

offerings.

34But there were too few priests to prepare all the burnt offerings.
So their relatives the Levites helped them until the work was
finished and more priests had been purified, for the Levites had
been more conscientious about purifying themselves than the
priests had been. 35There was an abundance of burnt offerings,
along with the usual liquid offerings, and a great deal of fat from
the many peace offerings.

So the Temple of the LORD was restored to service. 36And Hezekiah
and all the people rejoiced because of what God had done for the
people, for everything had been accomplished so quickly.

PREPARATIONS FOR PASSOVER

1King Hezekiah now sent word to all Israel and Judah, and he wrote
letters of invitation to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh. He
asked everyone to come to the Temple of the LORD at Jerusalem to
celebrate the Passover of the LORD, the God of Israel. 2The king, his
officials, and all the community of Jerusalem decided to celebrate
Passover a month later than usual.* 3They were unable to celebrate
it at the prescribed time because not enough priests could be
purified by then, and the people had not yet assembled at
Jerusalem.

BOUNDARIES OF ISRAEL

4This plan for keeping the Passover seemed right to the king and all
the people. 5So they sent a proclamation throughout all Israel, from
Beersheba in the south to Dan in the north, inviting everyone to
come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover of the LORD, the God
of Israel. The people had not been celebrating it in great numbers as
required in the Law.

6At the king's command, runners were sent throughout Israel and
Judah. They carried letters that said:

"O people of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac,
and Israel,* so that he will return to the few of us who have
survived the conquest of the Assyrian kings. 7Do not be like your
ancestors and relatives who abandoned the LORD, the God of their
ancestors, and became an object of derision, as you yourselves can
see. 8Do not be stubborn, as they were, but submit yourselves to the
LORD. Come to his Temple, which he has set apart as holy forever.
Worship the LORD your God so that his fierce anger will turn away
from you.

9“For if you return to the LORD, your relatives and your children
will be treated mercifully by their captors, and they will be able to
return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful.
If you return to him, he will not continue to turn his face from
you.”

CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER

10The runners went from town to town throughout Ephraim and
Manasseh and as far as the territory of Zebulun. But most of the
people just laughed at the runners and made fun of them.
11However, some people from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun
humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem.

12At the same time, God’s hand was on the people in the land of
Judah, giving them all one heart to obey the orders of the king and
his officials, who were following the word of the LORD. 13So a huge
crowd assembled at Jerusalem in midspring* to celebrate the
Festival of Unleavened Bread. 14They set to work and removed the
pagan altars from Jerusalem. They took away all the incense altars
and threw them into the Kidron Valley.

15On the fourteenth day of the second month, one month later than
usual,* the people slaughtered the Passover lamb. This shamed the
priests and Levites, so they purified themselves and brought burnt
offerings to the Temple of the LORD. 16Then they took their places
at the Temple as prescribed in the Law of Moses, the man of God.
The Levites brought the sacrificial blood to the priests, who then
sprinkled it on the altar.

17Since many of the people had not purified themselves, the Levites
had to slaughter their Passover lamb for them, to set them apart for
the LORD. 18Most of those who came from Ephraim, Manasseh,
Issachar, and Zebulun had not purified themselves. But King
Hezekiah prayed for them, and they were allowed to eat the
Passover meal anyway, even though this was contrary to the
requirements of the Law. For Hezekiah said, “May the LORD, who is

good, pardon those 19who decide to follow the LORD, the God of
their ancestors, even though they are not properly cleansed for the
ceremony." 20And the LORD listened to Hezekiah's prayer and
healed the people.

21So the people of Israel who were present in Jerusalem joyously
celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. Each
day the Levites and priests sang to the LORD, accompanied by loud
instruments.*22Hezekiah encouraged all the Levites regarding the
skill they displayed as they served the LORD. The celebration
continued for seven days. Peace offerings were sacrificed, and the
people gave thanks to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

23The entire assembly then decided to continue the festival another
seven days, so they celebrated joyfully for another week. 24King
Hezekiah gave the people 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep and goats for
offerings, and the officials donated 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep
and goats. Meanwhile, many more priests purified themselves.

25The entire assembly of Judah rejoiced, including the priests, the
Levites, all who came from the land of Israel, the foreigners who
came to the festival, and all those who lived in Judah. 26There was
great joy in the city, for Jerusalem had not seen a celebration like
this one since the days of Solomon, King David's son. 27Then the
priests and Levites stood and blessed the people, and God heard
their prayer from his holy dwelling in heaven.

HEZEKIAH'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

1When the festival ended, the Israelites who attended went to all
the towns of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, and they
smashed all the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherah poles, and
removed the pagan shrines and altars. After this, the Israelites
returned to their own towns and homes.

2Hezekiah then organized the priests and Levites into divisions to
offer the burnt offerings and peace offerings, and to worship and
give thanks and praise to the LORD at the gates of the Temple. 3The
king also made a personal contribution of animals for the daily
morning and evening burnt offerings, the weekly Sabbath festivals,
the monthly new moon festivals, and the annual festivals as
prescribed in the Law of the LORD. 4In addition, he required the
people in Jerusalem to bring a portion of their goods to the priests
and Levites, so they could devote themselves fully to the Law of the
LORD.

5When the people of Israel heard these requirements, they
responded generously by bringing the first share of their grain, new
wine, olive oil, honey, and all the produce of their fields. They
brought a large quantity—a tithe of all they produced. 6The people
who had moved to Judah from Israel, and the people of Judah
themselves, brought in the tithes of their cattle, sheep, and goats
and a tithe of the things that had been dedicated to the LORD their
God, and they piled them up in great heaps. 7They began piling
them up in late spring, and the heaps continued to grow until early
autumn.* 8When Hezekiah and his officials came and saw these huge
piles, they thanked the LORD and his people Israel!

9"Where did all this come from?" Hezekiah asked the priests and
Levites.

10And Azariah the high priest, from the family of Zadok, replied,
"Since the people began bringing their gifts to the LORD's Temple,
we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare. The LORD has

blessed his people, and all this is left over.”

11Hezekiah ordered that storerooms be prepared in the Temple of
the LORD. When this was done, 12the people faithfully brought all
the gifts, tithes, and other items dedicated for use in the Temple.
Conaniah the Levite was put in charge, assisted by his brother
Shimei. 13The supervisors under them were Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath,
Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath, and Benaiah.
These appointments were made by King Hezekiah and Azariah, the
chief official in the Temple of God.

14Kore son of Imnah the Levite, who was the gatekeeper at the East
Gate, was put in charge of distributing the voluntary offerings given
to God, the gifts, and the things that had been dedicated to the
LORD. 15His faithful assistants were Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua,
Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah. They distributed the gifts
among the families of priests in their towns by their divisions,
dividing the gifts fairly among old and young alike. 16They
distributed the gifts to all males three years old or older, regardless
of their place in the genealogical records. The distribution went to
all who would come to the LORD’s Temple to perform their daily
duties according to their divisions. 17They distributed gifts to the
priests who were listed by their families in the genealogical records,
and to the Levites twenty years old or older who were listed
according to their jobs and their divisions. 18Food allotments were
also given to the families of all those listed in the genealogical
records, including their little babies, wives, sons, and daughters. For
they had all been faithful in purifying themselves.

19As for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who were living in
the open villages around the towns, men were appointed by name
to distribute portions to every male among the priests and to all the
Levites listed in the genealogical records.

20In this way, King Hezekiah handled the distribution throughout
all Judah, doing what was pleasing and good in the sight of the
LORD his God. 21In all that he did in the service of the Temple of

God and in his efforts to follow God's laws and commands, Hezekiah sought his God wholeheartedly. As a result, he was very successful.

2 Chronicles 32

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

1After Hezekiah had faithfully carried out this work, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified towns, giving orders for his army to break through their walls. 2When Hezekiah realized that Sennacherib also intended to attack Jerusalem, 3he consulted with his officials and military advisers, and they decided to stop the flow of the springs outside the city. 4They organized a huge work crew to stop the flow of the springs, cutting off the brook that ran through the fields. For they said, "Why should the kings of Assyria come here and find plenty of water?"

5Then Hezekiah worked hard at repairing all the broken sections of the wall, erecting towers, and constructing a second wall outside the first. He also reinforced the supporting terraces* in the City of

David and manufactured large numbers of weapons and shields. 6He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate. Then Hezekiah encouraged them by saying: 7"Be strong and courageous! Don't be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria or his mighty army, for there is a power far greater on our side! 8He may have a great army, but they are merely men. We have the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles for us!" Hezekiah's words greatly encouraged the people.

SENNACHERIB THREATENS JERUSALEM

9While King Sennacherib of Assyria was still besieging the town of Lachish, he sent his officers to Jerusalem with this message for Hezekiah and all the people in the city:

10"This is what King Sennacherib of Assyria says: What are you trusting in that makes you think you can survive my siege of Jerusalem? 11Hezekiah has said, 'The LORD our God will rescue us from the king of Assyria.' Surely Hezekiah is misleading you, sentencing you to death by famine and thirst! 12Don't you realize that Hezekiah is the very person who destroyed all the LORD's shrines and altars? He commanded Judah and Jerusalem to worship only at the altar at the Temple and to offer sacrifices on it alone.

13"Surely you must realize what I and the other kings of Assyria before me have done to all the people of the earth! Were any of the gods of those nations able to rescue their people from my power? 14Which of their gods was able to rescue its people from the destructive power of my predecessors? What makes you think your God can rescue you from me? 15Don't let Hezekiah deceive you! Don't let him fool you like this! I say it again—no god of any nation or kingdom has ever yet been able to rescue his people from me or my ancestors. How much less will your God rescue you from my power!"

16And Sennacherib's officers further mocked the LORD God and his servant Hezekiah, heaping insult upon insult. 17The king also sent letters scorning the LORD, the God of Israel. He wrote, "Just as the

gods of all the other nations failed to rescue their people from my power, so the God of Hezekiah will also fail." 18The Assyrian officials who brought the letters shouted this in Hebrew* to the people gathered on the walls of the city, trying to terrify them so it would be easier to capture the city. 19These officers talked about the God of Jerusalem as though he were one of the pagan gods, made by human hands.

20Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to God in heaven. 21And the LORD sent an angel who destroyed the Assyrian army with all its commanders and officers. So Sennacherib was forced to return home in disgrace to his own land. And when he entered the temple of his god, some of his own sons killed him there with a sword.

22That is how the LORD rescued Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from King Sennacherib of Assyria and from all the others who threatened them. So there was peace throughout the land. 23From then on King Hezekiah became highly respected among all the surrounding nations, and many gifts for the LORD arrived at Jerusalem, with valuable presents for King Hezekiah, too.

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

24About that time Hezekiah became deathly ill. He prayed to the LORD, who healed him and gave him a miraculous sign. 25But Hezekiah did not respond appropriately to the kindness shown him, and he became proud. So the LORD's anger came against him and against Judah and Jerusalem. 26Then Hezekiah humbled himself and repented of his pride, as did the people of Jerusalem. So the LORD's anger did not fall on them during Hezekiah's lifetime.

HEZEKIAH'S TUNNEL

27Hezekiah was very wealthy and highly honored. He built special
treasury buildings for his silver, gold, precious stones, and spices,
and for his shields and other valuable items. 28He also constructed
many storehouses for his grain, new wine, and olive oil; and he
made many stalls for his cattle and pens for his flocks of sheep and
goats. 29He built many towns and acquired vast flocks and herds, for
God had given him great wealth. 30He blocked up the upper spring
of Gihon and brought the water down through a tunnel to the west
side of the City of David. And so he succeeded in everything he did.

31However, when ambassadors arrived from Babylon to ask about
the remarkable events that had taken place in the land, God
withdrew from Hezekiah in order to test him and to see what was
really in his heart.

SUMMARY OF HEZEKIAH'S REIGN

32The rest of the events in Hezekiah's reign and his acts of devotion
are recorded in *The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah Son of Amoz,* which is
included in *The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.* 33When
Hezekiah died, he was buried in the upper area of the royal
cemetery, and all Judah and Jerusalem honored him at his death.
And his son Manasseh became the next king.

2 Chronicles 33

MANASSEH RULES IN JUDAH

1Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. 2He did what was evil in the
LORD's sight, following the detestable practices of the pagan
nations that the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the
Israelites. 3He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father, Hezekiah, had
broken down. He constructed altars for the images of Baal and set
up Asherah poles. He also bowed before all the powers of the
heavens and worshiped them.

4He built pagan altars in the Temple of the LORD, the place where
the LORD had said, "My name will remain in Jerusalem forever."
5He built these altars for all the powers of the heavens in both
courtyards of the LORD's Temple. 6Manasseh also sacrificed his own
sons in the fire* in the valley of Ben-Hinnom. He practiced sorcery,
divination, and witchcraft, and he consulted with mediums and
psychics. He did much that was evil in the LORD's sight, arousing
his anger.

7Manasseh even took a carved idol he had made and set it up in
God's Temple, the very place where God had told David and his son
Solomon: "My name will be honored forever in this Temple and in
Jerusalem—the city I have chosen from among all the tribes of
Israel. 8If the Israelites will be careful to obey my commands—all
the laws, decrees, and regulations given through Moses—I will not
send them into exile from this land that I set aside for your
ancestors." 9But Manasseh led the people of Judah and Jerusalem to
do even more evil than the pagan nations that the LORD had
destroyed when the people of Israel entered the land.

10The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they ignored all
his warnings. 11So the LORD sent the commanders of the Assyrian
armies, and they took Manasseh prisoner. They put a ring through

his nose, bound him in bronze chains, and led him away to Babylon. 12But while in deep distress, Manasseh sought the LORD his God and sincerely humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. 13And when he prayed, the LORD listened to him and was moved by his request. So the LORD brought Manasseh back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh finally realized that the LORD alone is God!

14After this Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, from west of the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley to the Fish Gate, and continuing around the hill of Ophel. He built the wall very high. And he stationed his military officers in all of the fortified towns of Judah. 15Manasseh also removed the foreign gods and the idol from the LORD's Temple. He tore down all the altars he had built on the hill where the Temple stood and all the altars that were in Jerusalem, and he dumped them outside the city. 16Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thanksgiving offerings on it. He also encouraged the people of Judah to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. 17However, the people still sacrificed at the pagan shrines, though only to the LORD their God.

18The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign, his prayer to God, and the words the seers spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel.* 19Manasseh's prayer, the account of the way God answered him, and an account of all his sins and unfaithfulness are recorded in *The Record of the Seers.* * It includes a list of the locations where he built pagan shrines and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself and repented. 20When Manasseh died, he was buried in his palace. Then his son Amon became the next king.

AMON RULES IN JUDAH

21Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. 22He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as his father, Manasseh, had done. He worshiped and sacrificed to all the idols his father had made. 23But unlike his

father, he did not humble himself before the LORD. Instead, Amon sinned even more.

24Then Amon's own officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace. 25But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah the next king.

2 Chronicles 34

JOSIAH RULES IN JUDAH

1Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in
Jerusalem thirty-one years. 2He did what was pleasing in the
LORD's sight and followed the example of his ancestor David. He
did not turn away from doing what was right.

3During the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young,
Josiah began to seek the God of his ancestor David. Then in the
twelfth year he began to purify Judah and Jerusalem, destroying all
the pagan shrines, the Asherah poles, and the carved idols and cast
images. 4He ordered that the altars of Baal be demolished and that
the incense altars which stood above them be broken down. He also
made sure that the Asherah poles, the carved idols, and the cast
images were smashed and scattered over the graves of those who
had sacrificed to them. 5He burned the bones of the pagan priests on
their own altars, and so he purified Judah and Jerusalem.

6He did the same thing in the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim, and

Simeon, even as far as Naphtali, and in the regions* all around them. 7He destroyed the pagan altars and the Asherah poles, and he crushed the idols into dust. He cut down all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel. Finally, he returned to Jerusalem.

8In the eighteenth year of his reign, after he had purified the land and the Temple, Josiah appointed Shaphan son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of Jerusalem, and Joah son of Joahaz, the royal historian, to repair the Temple of the LORD his God. 9They gave Hilkiah the high priest the money that had been collected by the Levites who served as gatekeepers at the Temple of God. The gifts were brought by people from Manasseh, Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel, as well as from all Judah, Benjamin, and the people of Jerusalem.

10He entrusted the money to the men assigned to supervise the restoration of the LORD's Temple. Then they paid the workers who did the repairs and renovation of the Temple. 11They hired carpenters and builders, who purchased finished stone for the walls and timber for the rafters and beams. They restored what earlier kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin.

12The workers served faithfully under the leadership of Jahath and Obadiah, Levites of the Merarite clan, and Zechariah and Meshullam, Levites of the Kohathite clan. Other Levites, all of whom were skilled musicians, 13were put in charge of the laborers of the various trades. Still others assisted as secretaries, officials, and gatekeepers.

HILKIAH DISCOVERS GOD'S LAW

14While they were bringing out the money collected at the LORD's Temple, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD that was written by Moses. 15Hilkiah said to Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the LORD's Temple!" Then Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan.

16Shaphan took the scroll to the king and reported, “Your officials
are doing everything they were assigned to do. 17The money that
was collected at the Temple of the LORD has been turned over to
the supervisors and workmen.” 18Shaphan also told the king,
“Hilkiah the priest has given me a scroll.” So Shaphan read it to the
king.

19When the king heard what was written in the Law, he tore his
clothes in despair. 20Then he gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam
son of Shaphan, Acbor son of Micaiah,* Shaphan the court
secretary, and Asaiah the king’s personal adviser: 21“Go to the
Temple and speak to the LORD for me and for all the remnant of
Israel and Judah. Inquire about the words written in the scroll that
has been found. For the LORD’s great anger has been poured out on
us because our ancestors have not obeyed the word of the LORD.
We have not been doing everything this scroll says we must do.”

22So Hilkiah and the other men went to the New Quarter* of
Jerusalem to consult with the prophet Huldah. She was the wife of
Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas,* the keeper of the Temple
wardrobe.

23She said to them, “The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken! Go
back and tell the man who sent you, 24‘This is what the LORD says: I
am going to bring disaster on this city* and its people. All the curses
written in the scroll that was read to the king of Judah will come
true. 25For my people have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to
pagan gods, and I am very angry with them for everything they
have done. My anger will be poured out on this place, and it will
not be quenched.’

26“But go to the king of Judah who sent you to seek the LORD and
tell him: ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning
the message you have just heard: 27You were sorry and humbled
yourself before God when you heard his words against this city and
its people. You humbled yourself and tore your clothing in despair

and wept before me in repentance. And I have indeed heard you, says the LORD. 28So I will not send the promised disaster until after you have died and been buried in peace. You yourself will not see the disaster I am going to bring on this city and its people.'"

So they took her message back to the king.

JOSIAH'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

29Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30And the king went up to the Temple of the LORD with all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, along with the priests and the Levites—all the people from the greatest to the least. There the king read to them the entire Book of the Covenant that had been found in the LORD's Temple. 31The king took his place of authority beside the pillar and renewed the covenant in the LORD's presence. He pledged to obey the LORD by keeping all his commands, laws, and decrees with all his heart and soul. He promised to obey all the terms of the covenant that were written in the scroll. 32And he required everyone in Jerusalem and the people of Benjamin to make a similar pledge. The people of Jerusalem did so, renewing their covenant with God, the God of their ancestors.

33So Josiah removed all detestable idols from the entire land of Israel and required everyone to worship the LORD their God. And throughout the rest of his lifetime, they did not turn away from the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

SKIP TO 35:20

2 Chronicles 35

JOSIAH CELEBRATES PASSOVER

1Then Josiah announced that the Passover of the LORD would be celebrated in Jerusalem, and so the Passover lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth day of the first month.*2Josiah also assigned the priests to their duties and encouraged them in their work at the Temple of the LORD. 3He issued this order to the Levites, who were

to teach all Israel and who had been set apart to serve the LORD:
“Put the holy Ark in the Temple that was built by Solomon son of
David, the king of Israel. You no longer need to carry it back and
forth on your shoulders. Now spend your time serving the LORD
your God and his people Israel. 4Report for duty according to the
family divisions of your ancestors, following the directions of King
David of Israel and the directions of his son Solomon.

5“Then stand in the sanctuary at the place appointed for your family
division and help the families assigned to you as they bring their
offerings to the Temple. 6Slaughter the Passover lambs, purify
yourselves, and prepare to help those who come. Follow all the
directions that the LORD gave through Moses.”

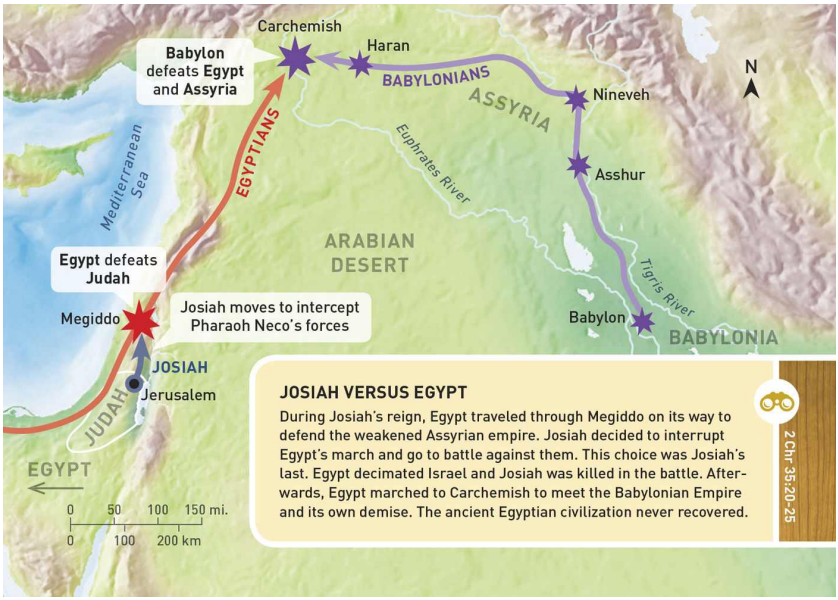
7Then Josiah provided 30,000 lambs and young goats for the
people’s Passover offerings, along with 3,000 cattle, all from the
king’s own flocks and herds. 8The king’s officials also made willing
contributions to the people, priests, and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah,
and Jehiel, the administrators of God’s Temple, gave the priests
2,600 lambs and young goats and 300 cattle as Passover offerings.
9The Levite leaders—Conaniah and his brothers Shemaiah and
Nethanel, as well as Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad—gave 5,000
lambs and young goats and 500 cattle to the Levites for their
Passover offerings.

10When everything was ready for the Passover celebration, the
priests and the Levites took their places, organized by their
divisions, as the king had commanded. 11The Levites then
slaughtered the Passover lambs and presented the blood to the
priests, who sprinkled the blood on the altar while the Levites
prepared the animals. 12They divided the burnt offerings among the
people by their family groups, so they could offer them to the LORD
as prescribed in the Book of Moses. They did the same with the
cattle. 13Then they roasted the Passover lambs as prescribed; and
they boiled the holy offerings in pots, kettles, and pans, and
brought them out quickly so the people could eat them.

14Afterward the Levites prepared Passover offerings for themselves
and for the priests—the descendants of Aaron—because the priests
had been busy from morning till night offering the burnt offerings
and the fat portions. The Levites took responsibility for all these
preparations.

15The musicians, descendants of Asaph, were in their assigned
places, following the commands that had been given by David,
Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, the king's seer. The gatekeepers
guarded the gates and did not need to leave their posts of duty, for
their Passover offerings were prepared for them by their fellow
Levites.

16The entire ceremony for the LORD's Passover was completed that
day. All the burnt offerings were sacrificed on the altar of the
LORD, as King Josiah had commanded. 17All the Israelites present in
Jerusalem celebrated Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread
for seven days. 18Never since the time of the prophet Samuel had
there been such a Passover. None of the kings of Israel had ever
kept a Passover as Josiah did, involving all the priests and Levites,
all the people of Jerusalem, and people from all over Judah and
Israel. 19This Passover was celebrated in the eighteenth year of
Josiah's reign.



JOSIAH VERSUS EGYPT

JOSIAH DIES IN BATTLE

20After Josiah had finished restoring the Temple, King Neco of
Egypt led his army up from Egypt to do battle at Carchemish on the
Euphrates River, and Josiah and his army marched out to fight
him.*21But King Neco sent messengers to Josiah with this message:

"What do you want with me, king of Judah? I have no quarrel with
you today! I am on my way to fight another nation, and God has
told me to hurry! Do not interfere with God, who is with me, or he
will destroy you."

22But Josiah refused to listen to Neco, to whom God had indeed
spoken, and he would not turn back. Instead, he disguised himself
and led his army into battle on the plain of Megiddo. 23But the
enemy archers hit King Josiah with their arrows and wounded him.
He cried out to his men, "Take me from the battle, for I am badly
wounded!"

24So they lifted Josiah out of his chariot and placed him in another
chariot. Then they brought him back to Jerusalem, where he died.
He was buried there in the royal cemetery. And all Judah and
Jerusalem mourned for him. 25The prophet Jeremiah composed
funeral songs for Josiah, and to this day choirs still sing these sad
songs about his death. These songs of sorrow have become a
tradition and are recorded in *The Book of Laments.*

26The rest of the events of Josiah's reign and his acts of devotion
(carried out according to what was written in the Law of the
LORD), 27from beginning to end—all are recorded in *The Book of the
Kings of Israel and Judah.*

2 Chronicles 36

JEHOAHAZ RULES IN JUDAH

1Then the people of the land took Josiah's son Jehoahaz and made
him the next king in Jerusalem.

2Jehoahaz* was twenty-three years old when he became king, and
he reigned in Jerusalem three months.

3Then he was deposed by the king of Egypt, who demanded that
Judah pay 7,500 pounds of silver and 75 pounds of gold* as tribute.

JEHOIAKIM RULES IN JUDAH

4The king of Egypt then installed Eliakim, the brother of Jehoahaz,
as the next king of Judah and Jerusalem, and he changed Eliakim's
name to Jehoiakim. Then Neco took Jehoahaz to Egypt as a
prisoner.

5Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

6Then King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and captured it, and he bound Jehoiakim in bronze chains and led him away to Babylon. 7Nebuchadnezzar also took some of the treasures from the Temple of the LORD, and he placed them in his palace* in Babylon.

8The rest of the events in Jehoiakim's reign, including all the evil things he did and everything found against him, are recorded in *The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.* Then his son Jehoiachin became the next king.

JEHOIACHIN RULES IN JUDAH

9Jehoiachin was eighteen* years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. Jehoiachin did what was evil in the LORD's sight.

10In the spring of the year* King Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon. Many treasures from the Temple of the LORD were also taken to Babylon at that time. And Nebuchadnezzar installed Jehoiachin's uncle,* Zedekiah, as the next king in Judah and Jerusalem.

ZEDEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

11Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. 12But Zedekiah did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and he refused to humble himself when the prophet Jeremiah spoke to him directly from the LORD. 13He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, even though he had taken an oath of loyalty in God's name. Zedekiah was a hard

and stubborn man, refusing to turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

14Likewise, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful. They followed all the pagan practices of the surrounding nations, desecrating the Temple of the LORD that had been consecrated in Jerusalem.

15The LORD, the God of their ancestors, repeatedly sent his prophets to warn them, for he had compassion on his people and his Temple. 16But the people mocked these messengers of God and despised their words. They scoffed at the prophets until the LORD's anger could no longer be restrained and nothing could be done.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

17So the LORD brought the king of Babylon against them. The Babylonians* killed Judah's young men, even chasing after them into the Temple. They had no pity on the people, killing both young men and young women, the old and the infirm. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar. 18The king took home to Babylon all the articles, large and small, used in the Temple of God, and the treasures from both the LORD's Temple and from the palace of the king and his officials. 19Then his army burned the Temple of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, burned all the palaces, and completely destroyed everything of value.*20The few who survived were taken as exiles to Babylon, and they became servants to the king and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

21So the message of the LORD spoken through Jeremiah was fulfilled. The land finally enjoyed its Sabbath rest, lying desolate until the seventy years were fulfilled, just as the prophet had said.

CYRUS ALLOWS THE EXILES TO RETURN

22In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia,* the LORD fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah.* He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom:

23"This is what King Cyrus of Persia says:
"The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Any of you who are his people may go there for this task. And may the LORD your God be with you!"

WELCOME TO

EZRA

The book of Ezra tells a story of coming home. After seventy years of exile in Babylon, God's people are permitted to return to their home country and the city of Jerusalem, where they start to rebuild the Temple. It's a story of celebrations and setbacks.

After a great deal of trouble and early failure, the Temple is finally finished and rededicated to the glory of God. Ezra's ministry as a

priest is a significant part of the story, including how he prayed to God for the wayward people of the restored community.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll touch down long enough to read the key story and catch the central theme of the book. The people rebuild the altar and begin rebuilding God's Temple so they can worship him once again. Your next stop is at Ezra 3:1.

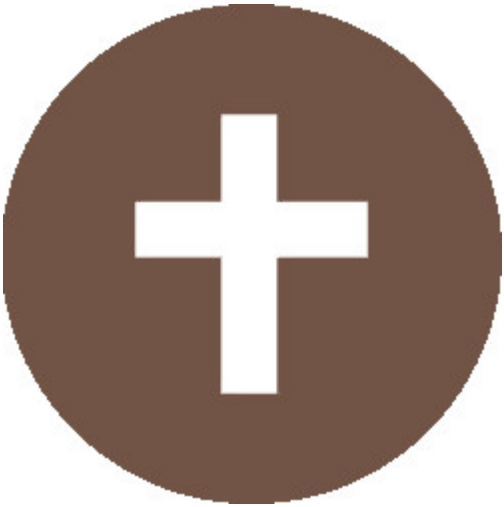
3 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: At the three stops on your route, you'll watch as the Jews return to Jerusalem, rebuild the Temple, and rededicate it to God. Your next stop is at Ezra 1:1.

4 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll cover almost sixty years of Jewish

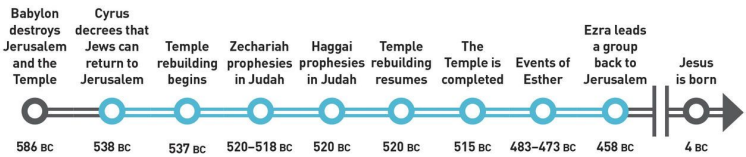
history after the Exile. The highlights on this route will show you how the Jews struggled against fierce opposition in order to rebuild God's Temple. Your next stop is at Ezra 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN EZRA

The story of restoration told in the book of Ezra would culminate centuries later in the coming of the people's King—Jesus. We can also glimpse Jesus in the rebuilding of the Temple, which had been destroyed seventy years earlier when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and exiled the people. Upon the Jews' return, Zerubbabel rallied workers to begin rebuilding—resurrecting—the Temple of God. In a similar way, Jesus' life and body were destroyed by the sins of the people around him. He bore the consequences of their sins. Like Zerubbabel's Temple, Jesus' body also was resurrected. But unlike Zerubbabel's Temple, Jesus would live forever.

EVENTS IN EZRA



Ezra 1

CYRUS ALLOWS THE EXILES TO RETURN

1In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia,* the LORD fulfilled the prophecy he had given through Jeremiah.* He stirred the heart of Cyrus to put this proclamation in writing and to send it throughout his kingdom:

2"This is what King Cyrus of Persia says:
"The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build him a Temple at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3Any of you who are his people may go to Jerusalem in Judah to rebuild this Temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, who lives in Jerusalem. And may your God be with you! 4Wherever this Jewish remnant is found, let their neighbors contribute toward their expenses by giving them silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock, as well as a voluntary offering for the Temple of God in Jerusalem."

5Then God stirred the hearts of the priests and Levites and the leaders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of the LORD. 6And all their neighbors assisted by giving them articles of silver and gold, supplies for the journey, and livestock. They gave them many valuable gifts in addition to all the voluntary offerings.

7King Cyrus himself brought out the articles that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the LORD's Temple in Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his own gods. 8Cyrus directed Mithredath, the treasurer of Persia, to count these items and present them to Sheshbazzar, the leader of the exiles returning to Judah.*9This is a list of the items that were returned:

30	gold basins
1,000	silver basins
29	silver incense burners *
30	gold bowls

silver bowls 410
other items 1,000

11In all, there were 5,400 articles of gold and silver. Sheshbazzar brought all of these along when the exiles went from Babylon to Jerusalem.

RETURNING TO THE PROMISED LAND

Ezra 2

EXILES WHO RETURNED WITH ZERUBBABEL

1Here is the list of the Jewish exiles of the provinces who returned from their captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar had deported them to Babylon, but now they returned to Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah where they originally lived. 2Their leaders were Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.

This is the number of the men of Israel who returned from exile:

SKIP TO 2:64

2,172 The family of Parosh

372 The family of Shephatiah
775 The family of Arah
2,812 The family of Pahath-moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab)
1,254 The family of Elam
945 The family of Zattu
760 The family of Zaccai
642 The family of Bani
623 The family of Bebai
1,222 The family of Azgad
666 The family of Adonikam
2,056 The family of Bigvai
454 The family of Adin
98 The family of Ater (descendants of Hezekiah)
323 The family of Bezai
112 The family of Jorah
223 The family of Hashum
95 The family of Gibbar
123 The people of Bethlehem
56 The people of Netophah
128 The people of Anathoth
42 The people of Beth-azmaveth*
743 The people of Kiriath-jearim,* Kephirah, and Beeroth
621 The people of Ramah and Geba
122 The people of Micmash
223 The people of Bethel and Ai
52 The citizens of Nebo
156 The citizens of Magbish
1,254 The citizens of West Elam*
320 The citizens of Harim
725 The citizens of Lod, Hadid, and Ono
345 The citizens of Jericho
3,630 The citizens of Senaah

36 These are the priests who returned from exile:

973 The family of Jedaiah (through the line of Jeshua)
1,052 The family of Immer
1,247 The family of Pashhur
1,017 The family of Harim

40These are the Levites who returned from exile:

71 The families of Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodaviah)
128 The singers of the family of Asaph
139 The gatekeepers of the families of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai

43The descendants of the following Temple servants returned from exile: Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,

44Keros, Siaha, Padon,

45Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub,

46Hagab, Shalmai,* Hanan,

47Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah,

48Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam,

49Uzza, Paseah, Besai,

50Asnah, Meunim, Nephusim,

51Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,

52Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha,

53Barkos, Sisera, Temah,

54Neziah, and Hatipha.

55The descendants of these servants of King Solomon returned from exile: Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda,

56Jaalah, Darkon, Giddel,

57Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth-hazzebaim, and Ami.

58In all, the Temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's

servants numbered 392.

59Another group returned at this time from the towns of Tel-melah,
Tel-harsha, Kerub, Addan, and Immer. However, they could not
prove that they or their families were descendants of Israel. 60This
group included the families of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda—a total
of 652 people.

61Three families of priests—Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai—also
returned. (This Barzillai had married a woman who was a
descendant of Barzillai of Gilead, and he had taken her family
name.) 62They searched for their names in the genealogical records,
but they were not found, so they were disqualified from serving as
priests. 63The governor told them not to eat the priests' share of
food from the sacrifices until a priest could consult the LORD about
the matter by using the Urim and Thummim—the sacred lots.

64So a total of 42,360 people returned to Judah, 65in addition to
7,337 servants and 200 singers, both men and women. 66They took
with them 736 horses, 245 mules, 67435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

68When they arrived at the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, some
of the family leaders made voluntary offerings toward the
rebuilding of God's Temple on its original site, 69and each leader
gave as much as he could. The total of their gifts came to 61,000
gold coins,* 6,250 pounds* of silver, and 100 robes for the priests.

70So the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, the
Temple servants, and some of the common people settled in villages
near Jerusalem. The rest of the people returned to their own towns
throughout Israel.

JESUS' FAMILY EZRA 3:1-13

Ezra 3

THE ALTAR IS REBUILT

1In early autumn,* when the Israelites had settled in their towns, all
the people assembled in Jerusalem with a unified purpose. 2Then
Jeshua son of Jehozadak* joined his fellow priests and Zerubbabel
son of Shealtiel with his family in rebuilding the altar of the God of
Israel. They wanted to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, as instructed
in the Law of Moses, the man of God. 3Even though the people were
afraid of the local residents, they rebuilt the altar at its old site.
Then they began to sacrifice burnt offerings on the altar to the
LORD each morning and evening.

4They celebrated the Festival of Shelters as prescribed in the Law,
sacrificing the number of burnt offerings specified for each day of
the festival. 5They also offered the regular burnt offerings and the
offerings required for the new moon celebrations and the annual
festivals as prescribed by the LORD. The people also gave voluntary
offerings to the LORD. 6Fifteen days before the Festival of Shelters
began,* the priests had begun to sacrifice burnt offerings to the
LORD. This was even before they had started to lay the foundation
of the LORD's Temple.

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

7Then the people hired masons and carpenters and bought cedar
logs from the people of Tyre and Sidon, paying them with food,

wine, and olive oil. The logs were brought down from the Lebanon mountains and floated along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea* to Joppa, for King Cyrus had given permission for this.

8The construction of the Temple of God began in midspring,* during the second year after they arrived in Jerusalem. The work force was made up of everyone who had returned from exile, including Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jehozadak and his fellow priests, and all the Levites. The Levites who were twenty years old or older were put in charge of rebuilding the LORD's Temple. 9The workers at the Temple of God were supervised by Jeshua with his sons and relatives, and Kadmiel and his sons, all descendants of Hodaviah.* They were helped in this task by the Levites of the family of Henadad.

10When the builders completed the foundation of the LORD's Temple, the priests put on their robes and took their places to blow their trumpets. And the Levites, descendants of Asaph, clashed their cymbals to praise the LORD, just as King David had prescribed. 11With praise and thanks, they sang this song to the LORD: "He is so good!

His faithful love for Israel endures forever!"

Then all the people gave a great shout, praising the LORD because the foundation of the LORD's Temple had been laid.

12But many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders who had seen the first Temple wept aloud when they saw the new Temple's foundation. The others, however, were shouting for joy. 13The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud noise that could be heard far in the distance.

Ezra 4

ENEMIES OPPOSE THE REBUILDING

1The enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were
rebuilding a Temple to the LORD, the God of Israel. 2So they
approached Zerubbabel and the other leaders and said, “Let us
build with you, for we worship your God just as you do. We have
sacrificed to him ever since King Esarhaddon of Assyria brought us
here.”

3But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other leaders of Israel replied,
“You may have no part in this work. We alone will build the
Temple for the LORD, the God of Israel, just as King Cyrus of Persia
commanded us.”

4Then the local residents tried to discourage and frighten the people
of Judah to keep them from their work. 5They bribed agents to work
against them and to frustrate their plans. This went on during the
entire reign of King Cyrus of Persia and lasted until King Darius of
Persia took the throne.*

LATER OPPOSITION UNDER XERXES AND ARTAXERXES

6Years later when Xerxes* began his reign, the enemies of Judah
wrote a letter of accusation against the people of Judah and
Jerusalem.

7Even later, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia,* the
enemies of Judah, led by Bishlam, Mithredath, and Tabeel, sent a
letter to Artaxerxes in the Aramaic language, and it was translated
for the king.

8*Rehum the governor and Shimshai the court secretary wrote the
letter, telling King Artaxerxes about the situation in Jerusalem.
9They greeted the king for all their colleagues—the judges and local
leaders, the people of Tarpel, the Persians, the Babylonians, and the
people of Erech and Susa (that is, Elam). 10They also sent greetings
from the rest of the people whom the great and noble Ashurbanipal*
had deported and relocated in Samaria and throughout the
neighboring lands of the province west of the Euphrates
River.*11This is a copy of their letter:

"To King Artaxerxes, from your loyal subjects in the province west
of the Euphrates River.

12"The king should know that the Jews who came here to Jerusalem
from Babylon are rebuilding this rebellious and evil city. They have
already laid the foundation and will soon finish its walls. 13And the
king should know that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are
completed, it will be much to your disadvantage, for the Jews will
then refuse to pay their tribute, customs, and tolls to you.

14"Since we are your loyal subjects* and do not want to see the king
dishonored in this way, we have sent the king this information.
15We suggest that a search be made in your ancestors' records,
where you will discover what a rebellious city this has been in the
past. In fact, it was destroyed because of its long and troublesome

history of revolt against the kings and countries who controlled it.
16We declare to the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are
completed, the province west of the Euphrates River will be lost to
you."

17Then King Artaxerxes sent this reply:

"To Rehum the governor, Shimshai the court secretary, and their
colleagues living in Samaria and throughout the province west of
the Euphrates River. Greetings.

18"The letter you sent has been translated and read to me. 19I
ordered a search of the records and have found that Jerusalem has
indeed been a hotbed of insurrection against many kings. In fact,
rebellion and revolt are normal there! 20Powerful kings have ruled
over Jerusalem and the entire province west of the Euphrates River,
receiving tribute, customs, and tolls. 21Therefore, issue orders to
have these men stop their work. That city must not be rebuilt
except at my express command. 22Be diligent, and don't neglect this
matter, for we must not permit the situation to harm the king's
interests."

23When this letter from King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum,
Shimshai, and their colleagues, they hurried to Jerusalem. Then,
with a show of strength, they forced the Jews to stop building.

THE REBUILDING RESUMES

24So the work on the Temple of God in Jerusalem had stopped, and
it remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of King
Darius of Persia.*

Ezra 5

1At that time the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo
prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. They prophesied in
the name of the God of Israel who was over them. 2Zerubbabel son
of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jehozadak* responded by starting

again to rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them and helped them.

3But Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River,* and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues soon arrived in Jerusalem and asked, “Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?” 4They also asked for* the names of all the men working on the Temple. 5But because their God was watching over them, the leaders of the Jews were not prevented from building until a report was sent to Darius and he returned his decision.

TATTENAI’S LETTER TO KING DARIUS

6This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai the governor, Shethar-bozenai, and the other officials of the province west of the Euphrates River sent to King Darius:

7“To King Darius. Greetings.

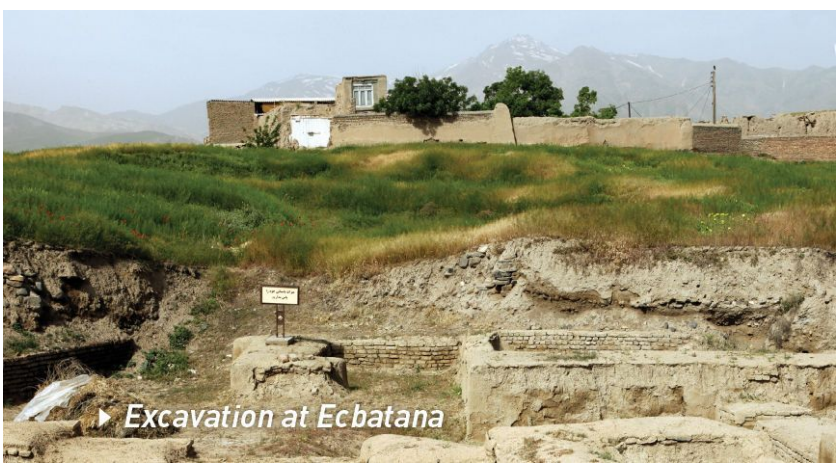
8“The king should know that we went to the construction site of the Temple of the great God in the province of Judah. It is being rebuilt with specially prepared stones, and timber is being laid in its walls. The work is going forward with great energy and success.

9“We asked the leaders, ‘Who gave you permission to rebuild this Temple and restore this structure?’ 10And we demanded their names so that we could tell you who the leaders were.

11“This was their answer: ‘We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the Temple that was built here many years ago by a great king of Israel. 12But because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he abandoned them to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon,* who destroyed this Temple and exiled the people to Babylonia. 13However, King Cyrus of Babylon,* during the first year of his reign, issued a decree that the Temple of God should be rebuilt. 14King Cyrus returned the gold and silver cups that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple of God in

Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of Babylon. These cups were taken from that temple and presented to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom King Cyrus appointed as governor of Judah. 15The king instructed him to return the cups to their place in Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple of God there on its original site. 16So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the Temple of God in Jerusalem. The people have been working on it ever since, though it is not yet completed.'

17"Therefore, if it pleases the king, we request that a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to discover whether King Cyrus ever issued a decree to rebuild God's Temple in Jerusalem. And then let the king send us his decision in this matter."



THE CITY OF ECBATANA

Ezra 6

DARIUS APPROVES THE REBUILDING

1So King Darius issued orders that a search be made in the

Babylonian archives, which were stored in the treasury. 2But it was at the fortress at Ecbatana in the province of Media that a scroll was found. This is what it said:

"Memorandum:

3"In the first year of King Cyrus's reign, a decree was sent out concerning the Temple of God at Jerusalem.
"Let the Temple be rebuilt on the site where Jews used to offer their sacrifices, using the original foundations. Its height will be ninety feet, and its width will be ninety feet.* 4Every three layers of specially prepared stones will be topped by a layer of timber. All expenses will be paid by the royal treasury. 5Furthermore, the gold and silver cups, which were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar from the Temple of God in Jerusalem, must be returned to Jerusalem and put back where they belong. Let them be taken back to the Temple of God."

6So King Darius sent this message:

"Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River,* and Shethar-bozenai, and your colleagues and other officials west of the Euphrates River—stay away from there! 7Do not disturb the construction of the Temple of God. Let it be rebuilt on its original site, and do not hinder the governor of Judah and the elders of the Jews in their work.

8"Moreover, I hereby decree that you are to help these elders of the Jews as they rebuild this Temple of God. You must pay the full construction costs, without delay, from my taxes collected in the province west of the Euphrates River so that the work will not be interrupted.

9"Give the priests in Jerusalem whatever is needed in the way of young bulls, rams, and male lambs for the burnt offerings presented to the God of heaven. And without fail, provide them with as much wheat, salt, wine, and olive oil as they need each day. 10Then they will be able to offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the welfare of the king and his sons.

11“Those who violate this decree in any way will have a beam
pulled from their house. Then they will be lifted up and impaled on
it, and their house will be reduced to a pile of rubble.*12May the
God who has chosen the city of Jerusalem as the place to honor his
name destroy any king or nation that violates this command and
destroys this Temple.
“I, Darius, have issued this decree. Let it be obeyed with all
diligence.”

THE TEMPLE’S DEDICATION

13Tattenai, governor of the province west of the Euphrates River,
and Shethar-bozenai and their colleagues complied at once with the
command of King Darius. 14So the Jewish elders continued their
work, and they were greatly encouraged by the preaching of the
prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo. The Temple was finally
finished, as had been commanded by the God of Israel and decreed
by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the kings of Persia. 15The Temple
was completed on March 12,* during the sixth year of King Darius’s
reign.

16The Temple of God was then dedicated with great joy by the
people of Israel, the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the people
who had returned from exile. 17During the dedication ceremony for
the Temple of God, 100 young bulls, 200 rams, and 400 male lambs
were sacrificed. And 12 male goats were presented as a sin offering
for the twelve tribes of Israel. 18Then the priests and Levites were
divided into their various divisions to serve at the Temple of God in
Jerusalem, as prescribed in the Book of Moses.

CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER

19On April 21* the returned exiles celebrated Passover. 20The priests
and Levites had purified themselves and were ceremonially clean.
So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles,
for their fellow priests, and for themselves. 21The Passover meal was

eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile and by the others in the land who had turned from their immoral customs to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. 22Then they celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. There was great joy throughout the land because the LORD had caused the king of Assyria* to be favorable to them, so that he helped them to rebuild the Temple of God, the God of Israel.

Ezra 7

EZRA ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM

1Many years later, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia,* there was a man named Ezra. He was the son* of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, 2son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of

Ahitub, 3son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son* of Meraioth, 4son of Zerahiah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, 5son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the high priest.*6This Ezra was a scribe who was well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given to the people of Israel. He came up to Jerusalem from Babylon, and the king gave him everything he asked for, because the gracious hand of the LORD his God was on him. 7Some of the people of Israel, as well as some of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and Temple servants, traveled up to Jerusalem with him in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes' reign.

8Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in August* of that year. 9He had arranged to leave Babylon on April 8, the first day of the new year,* and he arrived at Jerusalem on August 4,* for the gracious hand of his God was on him. 10This was because Ezra had determined to study and obey the Law of the LORD and to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel.

SKIP TO 8:15

ARTAXERXES' LETTER TO EZRA 11KING ARTAXERXES HAD GIVEN A COPY OF THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO EZRA, THE PRIEST AND SCRIBE WHO STUDIED AND TAUGHT THE COMMANDS AND DECREES OF THE LORD TO ISRAEL:

12*"From Artaxerxes, the king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the teacher of the law of the God of heaven. Greetings.

13"I decree that any of the people of Israel in my kingdom, including the priests and Levites, may volunteer to return to Jerusalem with you. 14I and my council of seven hereby instruct you to conduct an inquiry into the situation in Judah and Jerusalem, based on your God's law, which is in your hand. 15We also commission you to take with you silver and gold, which we are freely presenting as an offering to the God of Israel who lives in Jerusalem.

16“Furthermore, you are to take any silver and gold that you may
obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the voluntary
offerings of the people and the priests that are presented for the
Temple of their God in Jerusalem. 17These donations are to be used
specifically for the purchase of bulls, rams, male lambs, and the
appropriate grain offerings and liquid offerings, all of which will be
offered on the altar of the Temple of your God in Jerusalem. 18Any
silver and gold that is left over may be used in whatever way you
and your colleagues feel is the will of your God.

19“But as for the cups we are entrusting to you for the service of the
Temple of your God, deliver them all to the God of Jerusalem. 20If
you need anything else for your God’s Temple or for any similar
needs, you may take it from the royal treasury.

21“I, Artaxerxes the king, hereby send this decree to all the
treasurers in the province west of the Euphrates River*: ‘You are to
give Ezra, the priest and teacher of the law of the God of heaven,
whatever he requests of you. 22You are to give him up to 7,500
pounds* of silver, 500 bushels* of wheat, 550 gallons of wine, 550
gallons of olive oil,* and an unlimited supply of salt. 23Be careful to
provide whatever the God of heaven demands for his Temple, for
why should we risk bringing God’s anger against the realm of the
king and his sons? 24I also decree that no priest, Levite, singer,
gatekeeper, Temple servant, or other worker in this Temple of God
will be required to pay tribute, customs, or tolls of any kind.’

25“And you, Ezra, are to use the wisdom your God has given you to
appoint magistrates and judges who know your God’s laws to
govern all the people in the province west of the Euphrates River.
Teach the law to anyone who does not know it. 26Anyone who
refuses to obey the law of your God and the law of the king will be
punished immediately, either by death, banishment, confiscation of
goods, or imprisonment.”

EZRA PRAISES THE LORD

27Praise the LORD, the God of our ancestors, who made the king
want to beautify the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem! 28And praise
him for demonstrating such unfailing love to me by honoring me

before the king, his council, and all his mighty nobles! I felt encouraged because the gracious hand of the LORD my God was on me. And I gathered some of the leaders of Israel to return with me to Jerusalem.

Ezra 8

EXILES WHO RETURNED WITH EZRA 1**HERE IS A LIST OF THE FAMILY LEADERS AND THE GENEALOGIES OF THOSE WHO CAME WITH ME FROM BABYLON DURING THE REIGN OF KING ARTAXERXES:**

2From the family of Phinehas: Gershom.
From the family of Ithamar: Daniel.
From the family of David: Hattush, 3a descendant of Shecaniah.
From the family of Parosh: Zechariah and 150 other men were registered.

4From the family of Pahath-moab: Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah and 200 other men.

5From the family of Zattu*: Shecaniah son of Jahaziel and 300 other men.

6From the family of Adin: Ebed son of Jonathan and 50 other men.

7From the family of Elam: Jeshaiah son of Athaliah and 70 other men.

8From the family of Shephatiah: Zebadiah son of Michael and 80 other men.

9From the family of Joab: Obadiah son of Jehiel and 218 other men.

10From the family of Bani*: Shelomith son of Josiphiah and 160 other men.

11From the family of Bebai: Zechariah son of Bebai and 28 other men.

12From the family of Azgad: Johanan son of Hakkatan and 110 other men.

13From the family of Adonikam, who came later*: Eliphelet, Jeuel, Shemaiah, and 60 other men.

14From the family of Bigvai: Uthai, Zaccur,* and 70 other men.

THE AHAVA CANAL

EZRA'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

15I assembled the exiles at the Ahava Canal, and we camped there for three days while I went over the lists of the people and the priests who had arrived. I found that not one Levite had volunteered to come along. 16So I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, who were leaders of the people. I also sent for Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of discernment. 17I sent them to Iddo, the leader of the Levites at Casiphia, to ask him and his relatives and the Temple servants to send us ministers for the Temple of God at Jerusalem.

18Since the gracious hand of our God was on us, they sent us a man named Sherebiah, along with eighteen of his sons and brothers. He was a very astute man and a descendant of Mahli, who was a descendant of Levi son of Israel.*19They also sent Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiah from the descendants of Merari, and twenty of his sons and brothers, 20and 220 Temple servants. The Temple servants were assistants to the Levites—a group of Temple workers

first instituted by King David and his officials. They were all listed by name.

21And there by the Ahava Canal, I gave orders for all of us to fast and humble ourselves before our God. We prayed that he would give us a safe journey and protect us, our children, and our goods as we traveled. 22For I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen* to accompany us and protect us from enemies along the way. After all, we had told the king, “Our God’s hand of protection is on all who worship him, but his fierce anger rages against those who abandon him.” 23So we fasted and earnestly prayed that our God would take care of us, and he heard our prayer.

24I appointed twelve leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten other priests—25to be in charge of transporting the silver, the gold, the gold bowls, and the other items that the king, his council, his officials, and all the people of Israel had presented for the Temple of God. 26I weighed the treasure as I gave it to them and found the totals to be as follows: 24 tons* of silver, 7,500 pounds* of silver articles, 7,500 pounds of gold,

27 20 gold bowls, equal in value to 1,000 gold coins,*
2 fine articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold.

28And I said to these priests, “You and these treasures have been set apart as holy to the LORD. This silver and gold is a voluntary offering to the LORD, the God of our ancestors. 29Guard these treasures well until you present them to the leading priests, the Levites, and the leaders of Israel, who will weigh them at the storerooms of the LORD’s Temple in Jerusalem.” 30So the priests and the Levites accepted the task of transporting these treasures of silver and gold to the Temple of our God in Jerusalem.

31We broke camp at the Ahava Canal on April 19* and started off to Jerusalem. And the gracious hand of our God protected us and

saved us from enemies and bandits along the way. 32So we arrived safely in Jerusalem, where we rested for three days.

33On the fourth day after our arrival, the silver, gold, and other valuables were weighed at the Temple of our God and entrusted to Meremoth son of Uriah the priest and to Eleazar son of Phinehas, along with Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui—both of whom were Levites. 34Everything was accounted for by number and weight, and the total weight was officially recorded.

35Then the exiles who had come out of captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They presented twelve bulls for all the people of Israel, as well as ninety-six rams and seventy-seven male lambs. They also offered twelve male goats as a sin offering. All this was given as a burnt offering to the LORD. 36The king's decrees were delivered to his highest officers and the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River,* who then cooperated by supporting the people and the Temple of God.

Ezra 9

EZRA'S PRAYER CONCERNING INTERMARRIAGE

1When these things had been done, the Jewish leaders came to me and said, "Many of the people of Israel, and even some of the priests and Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the other peoples living in the land. They have taken up the detestable practices of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. 2For the men of Israel have married women from these people and have taken them

as wives for their sons. So the holy race has become polluted by these mixed marriages. Worse yet, the leaders and officials have led the way in this outrage."

3When I heard this, I tore my cloak and my shirt, pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat down utterly shocked. 4Then all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel came and sat with me because of this outrage committed by the returned exiles. And I sat there utterly appalled until the time of the evening sacrifice.

5At the time of the sacrifice, I stood up from where I had sat in mourning with my clothes torn. I fell to my knees and lifted my hands to the LORD my God. 6I prayed,

"O my God, I am utterly ashamed; I blush to lift up my face to you. For our sins are piled higher than our heads, and our guilt has reached to the heavens. 7From the days of our ancestors until now, we have been steeped in sin. That is why we and our kings and our priests have been at the mercy of the pagan kings of the land. We have been killed, captured, robbed, and disgraced, just as we are today.

8"But now we have been given a brief moment of grace, for the LORD our God has allowed a few of us to survive as a remnant. He has given us security in this holy place. Our God has brightened our eyes and granted us some relief from our slavery. 9For we were slaves, but in his unfailing love our God did not abandon us in our slavery. Instead, he caused the kings of Persia to treat us favorably. He revived us so we could rebuild the Temple of our God and repair its ruins. He has given us a protective wall in Judah and Jerusalem.

10"And now, O our God, what can we say after all of this? For once again we have abandoned your commands! 11Your servants the prophets warned us when they said, 'The land you are entering to possess is totally defiled by the detestable practices of the people living there. From one end to the other, the land is filled with corruption. 12Don't let your daughters marry their sons! Don't take their daughters as wives for your sons. Don't ever promote the

peace and prosperity of those nations. If you follow these instructions, you will be strong and will enjoy the good things the land produces, and you will leave this prosperity to your children forever.'

13"Now we are being punished because of our wickedness and our great guilt. But we have actually been punished far less than we deserve, for you, our God, have allowed some of us to survive as a remnant. 14But even so, we are again breaking your commands and intermarrying with people who do these detestable things. Won't your anger be enough to destroy us, so that even this little remnant no longer survives? 15O LORD, God of Israel, you are just. We come before you in our guilt as nothing but an escaped remnant, though in such a condition none of us can stand in your presence."

Ezra 10

THE PEOPLE CONFESS THEIR SIN

1While Ezra prayed and made this confession, weeping and lying face down on the ground in front of the Temple of God, a very large crowd of people from Israel—men, women, and children—gathered and wept bitterly with him. 2Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, a descendant of Elam, said to Ezra, "We have been unfaithful to our God, for we have married these pagan women of the land. But in spite of this there is hope for Israel. 3Let us now make a covenant with our God to divorce our pagan wives and to send them away with their children. We will follow the advice given by you and by the others who respect the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law of God. 4Get up, for it is your duty to tell us how to proceed in setting things straight. We are behind you, so be strong and take action."

5So Ezra stood up and demanded that the leaders of the priests and the Levites and all the people of Israel swear that they would do as Shecaniah had said. And they all swore a solemn oath. 6Then Ezra left the front of the Temple of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. He spent the night* there without eating or drinking anything. He was still in mourning because of the

unfaithfulness of the returned exiles.

7Then a proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem
that all the exiles should come to Jerusalem. 8Those who failed to
come within three days would, if the leaders and elders so decided,
forfeit all their property and be expelled from the assembly of the
exiles.

9Within three days, all the people of Judah and Benjamin had
gathered in Jerusalem. This took place on December 19,* and all the
people were sitting in the square before the Temple of God. They
were trembling both because of the seriousness of the matter and
because it was raining. 10Then Ezra the priest stood and said to
them: “You have committed a terrible sin. By marrying pagan
women, you have increased Israel’s guilt. 11So now confess your sin
to the LORD, the God of your ancestors, and do what he demands.
Separate yourselves from the people of the land and from these
pagan women.”

12Then the whole assembly raised their voices and answered, “Yes,
you are right; we must do as you say!” 13Then they added, “This
isn’t something that can be done in a day or two, for many of us are
involved in this extremely sinful affair. And this is the rainy season,
so we cannot stay out here much longer. 14Let our leaders act on
behalf of us all. Let everyone who has a pagan wife come at a
scheduled time, accompanied by the leaders and judges of his city,
so that the fierce anger of our God concerning this affair may be
turned away from us.”

15Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah opposed
this course of action, and they were supported by Meshullam and
Shabbethai the Levite.

16So this was the plan they followed. Ezra selected leaders to
represent their families, designating each of the representatives by

name. On December 29,* the leaders sat down to investigate the matter. 17By March 27, the first day of the new year,* they had finished dealing with all the men who had married pagan wives.

THOSE GUILTY OF INTERMARRIAGE

18These are the priests who had married pagan wives: From the family of Jeshua son of Jehozadak* and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. 19They vowed to divorce their wives, and they each acknowledged their guilt by offering a ram as a guilt offering.

20From the family of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah.

21From the family of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah.

22From the family of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23These are the Levites who were guilty: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (also called Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24This is the singer who was guilty: Eliashib.

These are the gatekeepers who were guilty: Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

25These are the other people of Israel who were guilty: From the family of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Hashabiah,* and Benaiah.

26From the family of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi,

Jeremoth, and Elijah.

27From the family of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth,
Zabad, and Aziza.

28From the family of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and
Athlai.

29From the family of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub,
Sheal, and Jeremoth.

30From the family of Pahath-moab: Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah,
Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh.

31From the family of Harim: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah,
Shimeon, 32Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

33From the family of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad,
Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

34From the family of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, 35Benaiah, Bedeiah,
Keluhi, 36Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, 37Mattaniah, Mattenai, and
Jaasu.

38From the family of Binnui*: Shimei, 39Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah,
40Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, 41Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah,
42Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

43From the family of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai,
Joel, and Benaiah.

44Each of these men had a pagan wife, and some even had children

by these wives.*

Nehemiah

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

WELCOME TO

NEHEMIAH

The book of Nehemiah picks up where Ezra left off, telling the story of the people who returned to Jerusalem. Ezra told the story of rebuilding and rededicating the Temple. Now Nehemiah tells the story of rebuilding the city walls.

Nehemiah, who is serving in the court of the king of Persia, is burdened by a report that the Jews who have returned from exile are not doing well. He returns to Jerusalem with the specific goal of rebuilding the city's walls. This project is significant and symbolic, since the walls around the city not only protected the people from enemies but also united them as a community. In spite of numerous obstacles from both inside and outside the community, the Jews rebuild the walls of the city in record time.

Although God punished the people with seventy years of exile, they show that they haven't changed much when they return to Jerusalem. They quickly fall back into old practices, intermarrying with the locals and ignoring God and his specific instructions for worship and living. Nehemiah and Ezra institute reforms to keep this small group of survivors focused on the Lord their God.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly over Nehemiah completely,

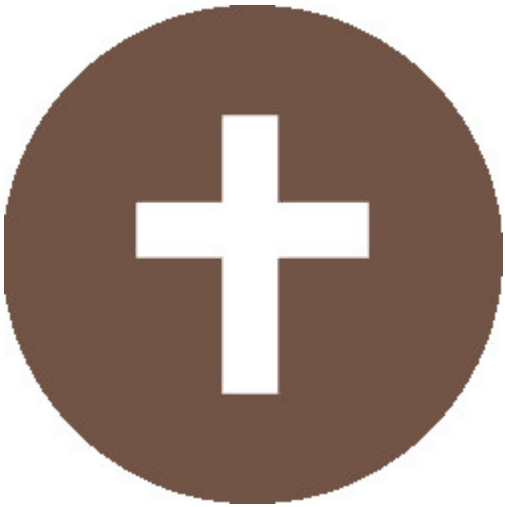
never making a stop. Your next stop is at Isaiah 11:1.

2 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your two brief stops in Nehemiah will give you a glimpse of the story of the Jews after the Babylonian exile, as they struggle to regain their identity as a nation in covenant with God. Your next stop is at Nehemiah 2:11.

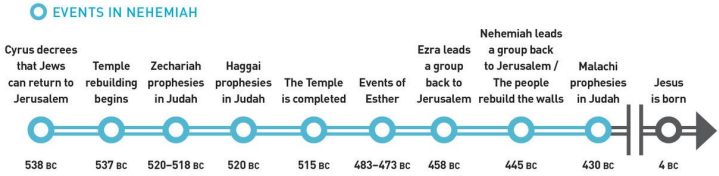
4 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The readings in Nehemiah recount Nehemiah's accomplishments and challenges in postexilic Jerusalem as well as Ezra's momentous reading of God's law to the people. Your next stop is at Nehemiah 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN NEHEMIAH

We can see Jesus in Nehemiah's response to the situation in Jerusalem. When Nehemiah heard that Jerusalem's people lived without protection, he wept. The city was far from what God had meant for it to be. When Jesus saw the city of Jerusalem, he responded the same way that Nehemiah did: He wept (Luke 19:41). He too saw a city that was spiritually broken, a shadow of what God wanted it to be.



THE CITY OF SUSA

Nehemiah 1

1These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah.

NEHEMIAH'S CONCERN FOR JERUSALEM

In late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign,* I was at the fortress of Susa. 2Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem.

3They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire."

4When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. 5Then I said,

“O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps
his covenant of unfailing love with those who love him and obey
his commands, 6listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying
night and day for your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned
against you. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned! 7We have
sinned terribly by not obeying the commands, decrees, and
regulations that you gave us through your servant Moses.

8“Please remember what you told your servant Moses: ‘If you are
unfaithful to me, I will scatter you among the nations. 9But if you
return to me and obey my commands and live by them, then even if
you are exiled to the ends of the earth,* I will bring you back to the
place I have chosen for my name to be honored.’

10“The people you rescued by your great power and strong hand are
your servants. 11O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers
of those of us who delight in honoring you. Please grant me success
today by making the king favorable to me.* Put it into his heart to
be kind to me.”

In those days I was the king’s cup-bearer.

Nehemiah 2

NEHEMIAH GOES TO JERUSALEM

1Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan,* during the
twentieth year of King Artaxerxes’ reign, I was serving the king his
wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. 2So the king
asked me, “Why are you looking so sad? You don’t look sick to me.
You must be deeply troubled.”

Then I was terrified, 3but I replied, “Long live the king! How can I
not be sad? For the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins,
and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

4The king asked, “Well, how can I help you?”

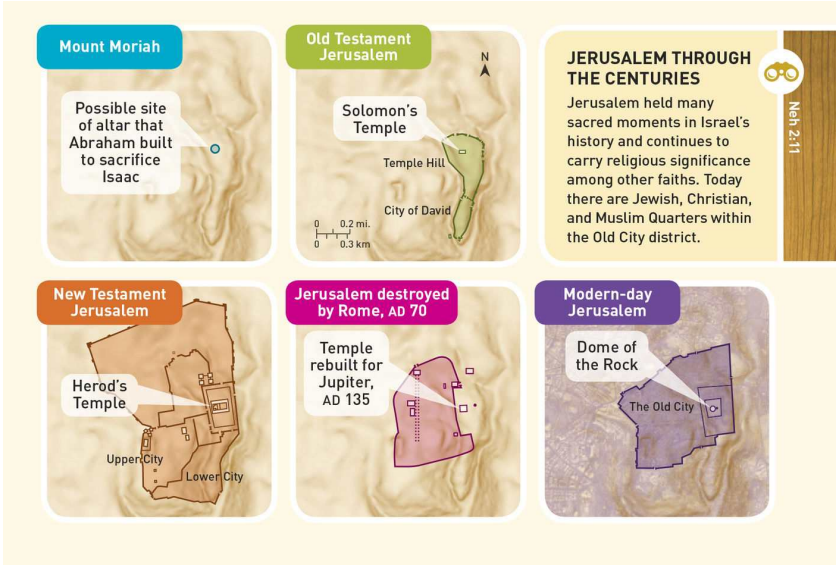
With a prayer to the God of heaven, 5I replied, “If it please the king,

and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried."

6The king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked, "How long will you be gone? When will you return?" After I told him how long I would be gone, the king agreed to my request.

7I also said to the king, "If it please the king, let me have letters addressed to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River,* instructing them to let me travel safely through their territories on my way to Judah. 8And please give me a letter addressed to Asaph, the manager of the king's forest, instructing him to give me timber. I will need it to make beams for the gates of the Temple fortress, for the city walls, and for a house for myself." And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

9When I came to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, I delivered the king's letters to them. The king, I should add, had sent along army officers and horsemen* to protect me. 10But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of my arrival, they were very displeased that someone had come to help the people of Israel.



JERUSALEM THROUGH THE CENTURIES

NEHEMIAH INSPECTS JERUSALEM'S WALL

11So I arrived in Jerusalem. Three days later, 12I slipped out during
the night, taking only a few others with me. I had not told anyone
about the plans God had put in my heart for Jerusalem. We took no
pack animals with us except the donkey I was riding. 13After dark I
went out through the Valley Gate, past the Jackal's Well,* and over
to the Dung Gate to inspect the broken walls and burned gates.
14Then I went to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but my
donkey couldn't get through the rubble. 15So, though it was still
dark, I went up the Kidron Valley* instead, inspecting the wall
before I turned back and entered again at the Valley Gate.

16The city officials did not know I had been out there or what I was
doing, for I had not yet said anything to anyone about my plans. I
had not yet spoken to the Jewish leaders—the priests, the nobles,
the officials, or anyone else in the administration. 17But now I said
to them, "You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem
lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us

rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!” 18Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king.

They replied at once, “Yes, let’s rebuild the wall!” So they began the good work.

19But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed contemptuously. “What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” they asked.

20I replied, “The God of heaven will help us succeed. We, his servants, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem.”

Nehemiah 3

REBUILDING THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

1Then Eliashib the high priest and the other priests started to rebuild at the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set up its doors, building the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and the Tower of Hananel. 2People from the town of Jericho worked next to them, and beyond them was Zaccur son of Imri.

3The Fish Gate was built by the sons of Hassenaah. They laid the beams, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars. 4Meremoth son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz repaired the next section of wall. Beside him were Meshullam son of Berekiah and grandson of Meshezabel, and then Zadok son of Baana. 5Next were the people from Tekoa, though their leaders refused to work with the construction supervisors.

6The Old City Gate* was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and

Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid the beams, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars. 7Next to them were Melatiah from Gibeon, Jadon from Meronoth, people from Gibeon, and people from Mizpah, the headquarters of the governor of the province west of the Euphrates River.*8Next was Uzziel son of Harhaiah, a goldsmith by trade, who also worked on the wall. Beyond him was Hananiah, a manufacturer of perfumes. They left out a section of Jerusalem as they built the Broad Wall.*

9Rephaiah son of Hur, the leader of half the district of Jerusalem, was next to them on the wall. 10Next Jedaiah son of Harumaph repaired the wall across from his own house, and next to him was Hattush son of Hashabneiah. 11Then came Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab, who repaired another section of the wall and the Tower of the Ovens. 12Shallum son of Hallohesh and his daughters repaired the next section. He was the leader of the other half of the district of Jerusalem.

13The Valley Gate was repaired by the people from Zanoah, led by Hanun. They set up its doors and installed its bolts and bars. They also repaired the 1,500 feet* of wall to the Dung Gate.

14The Dung Gate was repaired by Malkijah son of Recab, the leader of the Beth-hakkerem district. He rebuilt it, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars.

15The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shallum* son of Col-hozeh, the leader of the Mizpah district. He rebuilt it, roofed it, set up its doors, and installed its bolts and bars. Then he repaired the wall of the pool of Siloam* near the king's garden, and he rebuilt the wall as far as the stairs that descend from the City of David. 16Next to him was Nehemiah son of Azbuk, the leader of half the district of Beth-zur. He rebuilt the wall from a place across from the tombs of David's family as far as the water reservoir and the House of the Warriors.

17Next to him, repairs were made by a group of Levites working
under the supervision of Rehum son of Bani. Then came Hashabiah,
the leader of half the district of Keilah, who supervised the building
of the wall on behalf of his own district. 18Next down the line were
his countrymen led by Binnui* son of Henadad, the leader of the
other half of the district of Keilah.

19Next to them, Ezer son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired
another section of wall across from the ascent to the armory near
the angle in the wall. 20Next to him was Baruch son of Zabbai, who
zealously repaired an additional section from the angle to the door
of the house of Eliashib the high priest. 21Meremoth son of Uriah
and grandson of Hakkoz rebuilt another section of the wall
extending from the door of Eliashib's house to the end of the house.

22The next repairs were made by the priests from the surrounding
region. 23After them, Benjamin and Hasshub repaired the section
across from their house, and Azariah son of Maaseiah and grandson
of Ananiah repaired the section across from his house. 24Next was
Binnui son of Henadad, who rebuilt another section of the wall
from Azariah's house to the angle and the corner. 25Palal son of Uzai
carried on the work from a point opposite the angle and the tower
that projects up from the king's upper house beside the court of the
guard. Next to him were Pedaiah son of Parosh, 26with the Temple
servants living on the hill of Ophel, who repaired the wall as far as
a point across from the Water Gate to the east and the projecting
tower. 27Then came the people of Tekoa, who repaired another
section across from the great projecting tower and over to the wall
of Ophel.

28Above the Horse Gate, the priests repaired the wall. Each one
repaired the section immediately across from his own house. 29Next
Zadok son of Immer also rebuilt the wall across from his own house,
and beyond him was Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, the gatekeeper of
the East Gate. 30Next Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun, the
sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section, while Meshullam son
of Berekiah rebuilt the wall across from where he lived. 31Malkijah,

one of the goldsmiths, repaired the wall as far as the housing for the Temple servants and merchants, across from the Inspection Gate. Then he continued as far as the upper room at the corner. 32The other goldsmiths and merchants repaired the wall from that corner to the Sheep Gate.

Nehemiah 4

ENEMIES OPPOSE THE REBUILDING

1*Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall. He flew into a rage and mocked the Jews, 2saying in front of his friends and the Samarian army officers, "What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they're doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day by just offering a few sacrifices?* Do they actually think they can make something of stones from a rubbish heap—and charred ones at that?"

3Tobiah the Ammonite, who was standing beside him, remarked, "That stone wall would collapse if even a fox walked along the top of it!"

4Then I prayed, "Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked. May their scoffing fall back on their own heads, and may they themselves become captives in a foreign land! 5Do not ignore their guilt. Do not blot out their sins, for they have provoked you to anger here in front of* the builders."

6At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire

city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm.

7*But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs, Ammonites, and
Ashdodites heard that the work was going ahead and that the gaps
in the wall of Jerusalem were being repaired, they were furious.
8They all made plans to come and fight against Jerusalem and
throw us into confusion. 9But we prayed to our God and guarded
the city day and night to protect ourselves.

10Then the people of Judah began to complain, “The workers are
getting tired, and there is so much rubble to be moved. We will
never be able to build the wall by ourselves.”

11Meanwhile, our enemies were saying, “Before they know what’s
happening, we will swoop down on them and kill them and end
their work.”

12The Jews who lived near the enemy came and told us again and
again, “They will come from all directions and attack us!”*13So I
placed armed guards behind the lowest parts of the wall in the
exposed areas. I stationed the people to stand guard by families,
armed with swords, spears, and bows.

14Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles
and the rest of the people and said to them, “Don’t be afraid of the
enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for
your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your
homes!”

15When our enemies heard that we knew of their plans and that
God had frustrated them, we all returned to our work on the wall.
16But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half
stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. The
leaders stationed themselves behind the people of Judah 17who

were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. 18All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm.

19Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, “The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. 20When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!”

21We worked early and late, from sunrise to sunset. And half the men were always on guard. 22I also told everyone living outside the walls to stay in Jerusalem. That way they and their servants could help with guard duty at night and work during the day. 23During this time, none of us—not I, nor my relatives, nor my servants, nor the guards who were with me—ever took off our clothes. We carried our weapons with us at all times, even when we went for water.*

Nehemiah 5

NEHEMIAH DEFENDS THE OPPRESSED

1About this time some of the men and their wives raised a cry of protest against their fellow Jews. 2They were saying, “We have such large families. We need more food to survive.”

3Others said, “We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and homes to get food during the famine.”

4And others said, “We have had to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay our taxes. 5We belong to the same family as those who are wealthy, and our children are just like theirs. Yet we must sell our children into slavery just to get enough money to live. We have already sold some of our daughters, and we are helpless to do anything about it, for our fields and vineyards are already

mortgaged to others."

6When I heard their complaints, I was very angry. 7After thinking it
over, I spoke out against these nobles and officials. I told them,
"You are hurting your own relatives by charging interest when they
borrow money!" Then I called a public meeting to deal with the
problem.

8At the meeting I said to them, "We are doing all we can to redeem
our Jewish relatives who have had to sell themselves to pagan
foreigners, but you are selling them back into slavery again. How
often must we redeem them?" And they had nothing to say in their
defense.

9Then I pressed further, "What you are doing is not right! Should
you not walk in the fear of our God in order to avoid being mocked
by enemy nations? 10I myself, as well as my brothers and my
workers, have been lending the people money and grain, but now
let us stop this business of charging interest. 11You must restore
their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and homes to them this very
day. And repay the interest you charged when you lent them
money, grain, new wine, and olive oil."

12They replied, "We will give back everything and demand nothing
more from the people. We will do as you say." Then I called the
priests and made the nobles and officials swear to do what they had
promised.

13I shook out the folds of my robe and said, "If you fail to keep your
promise, may God shake you like this from your homes and from
your property!"

The whole assembly responded, "Amen," and they praised the
LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

14For the entire twelve years that I was governor of Judah—from
the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of the reign of King
Artaxerxes*—neither I nor my officials drew on our official food
allowance. 15The former governors, in contrast, had laid heavy
burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine,
besides forty pieces* of silver. Even their assistants took advantage
of the people. But because I feared God, I did not act that way.

16I also devoted myself to working on the wall and refused to
acquire any land. And I required all my servants to spend time
working on the wall. 17I asked for nothing, even though I regularly
fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from
other lands! 18The provisions I paid for each day included one ox,
six choice sheep or goats, and a large number of poultry. And every
ten days we needed a large supply of all kinds of wine. Yet I refused
to claim the governor's food allowance because the people already
carried a heavy burden.

19Remember, O my God, all that I have done for these people, and
bless me for it.

Nehemiah 6

CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO REBUILDING

1Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies
found out that I had finished rebuilding the wall and that no gaps
remained—though we had not yet set up the doors in the gates. 2So
Sanballat and Geshem sent a message asking me to meet them at
one of the villages* in the plain of Ono.

But I realized they were plotting to harm me, 3so I replied by
sending this message to them: "I am engaged in a great work, so I
can't come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with
you?"

4Four times they sent the same message, and each time I gave the
same reply. 5The fifth time, Sanballat's servant came with an open

letter in his hand, 6and this is what it said:

“There is a rumor among the surrounding nations, and Geshem* tells me it is true, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel and that is why you are building the wall. According to his reports, you plan to be their king. 7He also reports that you have appointed prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim about you, ‘Look! There is a king in Judah!’
“You can be very sure that this report will get back to the king, so I suggest that you come and talk it over with me.”

8I replied, “There is no truth in any part of your story. You are making up the whole thing.”

9They were just trying to intimidate us, imagining that they could discourage us and stop the work. So I continued the work with even greater determination.*

10Later I went to visit Shemaiah son of Delaiah and grandson of Mehetabel, who was confined to his home. He said, “Let us meet together inside the Temple of God and bolt the doors shut. Your enemies are coming to kill you tonight.”

11But I replied, “Should someone in my position run from danger? Should someone in my position enter the Temple to save his life? No, I won’t do it!” 12I realized that God had not spoken to him, but that he had uttered this prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 13They were hoping to intimidate me and make me sin. Then they would be able to accuse and discredit me.

14Remember, O my God, all the evil things that Tobiah and Sanballat have done. And remember Noadiah the prophet and all the prophets like her who have tried to intimidate me.

THE BUILDERS COMPLETE THE WALL

15So on October 2* the wall was finished—just fifty-two days after
we had begun. 16When our enemies and the surrounding nations
heard about it, they were frightened and humiliated. They realized
this work had been done with the help of our God.

17During those fifty-two days, many letters went back and forth
between Tobiah and the nobles of Judah. 18For many in Judah had
sworn allegiance to him because his father-in-law was Shecaniah
son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan was married to the daughter of
Meshullam son of Berekiah. 19They kept telling me about Tobiah's
good deeds, and then they told him everything I said. And Tobiah
kept sending threatening letters to intimidate me.

Nehemiah 7

1After the wall was finished and I had set up the doors in the gates,
the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites were appointed. 2I gave the
responsibility of governing Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, along
with Hananiah, the commander of the fortress, for he was a faithful
man who feared God more than most. 3I said to them, "Do not leave
the gates open during the hottest part of the day.* And even while
the gatekeepers are on duty, have them shut and bar the doors.
Appoint the residents of Jerusalem to act as guards, everyone on a
regular watch. Some will serve at sentry posts and some in front of
their own homes."

NEHEMIAH REGISTERS THE PEOPLE

4At that time the city was large and spacious, but the population
was small, and none of the houses had been rebuilt. 5So my God
gave me the idea to call together all the nobles and leaders of the
city, along with the ordinary citizens, for registration. I had found
the genealogical record of those who had first returned to Judah.
This is what was written there:

6Here is the list of the Jewish exiles of the provinces who returned
from their captivity. King Nebuchadnezzar had deported them to

Babylon, but now they returned to Jerusalem and the other towns
in Judah where they originally lived. 7Their leaders were
Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah,* Reelaiah,* Nahamani,
Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar,* Bigvai, Rehum,* and Baanah.
This is the number of the men of Israel who returned from exile:

8 2,172 The family of Parosh
9 372 The family of Shephatiah
10 652 The family of Arah
11 2,818 The family of Pahath-moab (descendants of Jeshua and Joab)
12 1,254 The family of Elam
13 845 The family of Zattu
14 760 The family of Zaccai
15 648 The family of Bani*
16 628 The family of Bebai
17 2,322 The family of Azgad
18 667 The family of Adonikam
19 2,067 The family of Bigvai
20 655 The family of Adin
21 98 The family of Ater (descendants of Hezekiah)
22 328 The family of Hashum
23 324 The family of Bezai
24 112 The family of Jorah*
25 95 The family of Gibbar*
26 188 The people of Bethlehem and Netophah
27 128 The people of Anathoth
28 42 The people of Beth-azmaveth
29 743 The people of Kiriath-jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth
30 621 The people of Ramah and Geba
31 122 The people of Micmash
32 123 The people of Bethel and Ai
33 52 The people of West Nebo*
34 1,254 The citizens of West Elam*
35 320 The citizens of Harim
36 345 The citizens of Jericho
37 721 The citizens of Lod, Hadid, and Ono
38 3,930 The citizens of Senaah

39These are the priests who returned from exile:

973 The family of Jedaiah (through the line of Jeshua)
1,052 The family of Immer
1,247 The family of Pashhur
1,017 The family of Harim

43These are the Levites who returned from exile:
74 The families of Jeshua and Kadmiel (descendants of Hodaviah *)
148 The singers of the family of Asaph
138 The gatekeepers of the families of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai

46The descendants of the following Temple servants returned from exile:
Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,

47Keros, Siaha,* Padon,

48Lebanah, Hagabah, Shalmai,

49Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,

50Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,

51Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,

52Besai, Meunim, Nephusim,*

53Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,

54Bazluth,* Mehida, Harsha,

55Barkos, Sisera, Temah,

56Neziah, and Hatipha.

57The descendants of these servants of King Solomon returned from exile:

Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda,*

58Jaalah,* Darkon, Giddel,

59Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth-hazzebaim, and Ami.*

60In all, the Temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants numbered 392.

61Another group returned at this time from the towns of Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Kerub, Addan,* and Immer. However, they could not prove that they or their families were descendants of Israel. 62This group included the families of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda—a total of 642 people.

63Three families of priests—Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai—also returned. (This Barzillai had married a woman who was a descendant of Barzillai of Gilead, and he had taken her family name.) 64They searched for their names in the genealogical records, but they were not found, so they were disqualified from serving as priests. 65The governor told them not to eat the priests' share of food from the sacrifices until a priest could consult the LORD about the matter by using the Urim and Thummim—the sacred lots.

66So a total of 42,360 people returned to Judah, 67in addition to 7,337 servants and 245 singers, both men and women. 68They took with them 736 horses, 245 mules,*69435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

70Some of the family leaders gave gifts for the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 gold coins,* 50 gold basins, and 530 robes for the priests. 71The other leaders gave to the treasury a total of 20,000 gold coins* and some 2,750 pounds* of silver for the work. 72The rest of the people gave 20,000 gold coins, about 2,500 pounds* of silver, and 67 robes for the priests.

73So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Temple servants, and some of the common people settled near Jerusalem. The rest of the people returned to their own towns throughout Israel. In October,* when the Israelites had settled in their towns, *

Nehemiah 8

EZRA READS THE LAW

8:1*all the people assembled with a unified purpose at the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had given for Israel to obey.

2So on October 8* Ezra the priest brought the Book of the Law before the assembly, which included the men and women and all the children old enough to understand. 3He faced the square just inside the Water Gate from early morning until noon and read aloud to everyone who could understand. All the people listened closely to the Book of the Law.

4Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform that had been made for the occasion. To his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah. To his left stood Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5Ezra stood on the platform in full view of all the people. When they saw him open the book, they all rose to their feet.

6Then Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and all the people chanted, “Amen! Amen!” as they lifted their hands. Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

7The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah—then instructed the people in the Law while everyone remained in their places. 8They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage.

9Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were interpreting for the people said to them, “Don’t mourn or weep on such a day as this! For today is a sacred day before the LORD your God.” For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

10And Nehemiah* continued, “Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!”

11And the Levites, too, quieted the people, telling them, “Hush! Don’t weep! For this is a sacred day.” 12So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food, and to celebrate with great joy because they had heard God’s words and understood them.

THE FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS

13On October 9* the family leaders of all the people, together with
the priests and Levites, met with Ezra the scribe to go over the Law
in greater detail. 14As they studied the Law, they discovered that the
LORD had commanded through Moses that the Israelites should live
in shelters during the festival to be held that month.*15He had said
that a proclamation should be made throughout their towns and in
Jerusalem, telling the people to go to the hills to get branches from
olive, wild olive,* myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees. They were to
use these branches to make shelters in which they would live
during the festival, as prescribed in the Law.

16So the people went out and cut branches and used them to build
shelters on the roofs of their houses, in their courtyards, in the
courtyards of God's Temple, or in the squares just inside the Water
Gate and the Ephraim Gate. 17So everyone who had returned from
captivity lived in these shelters during the festival, and they were
all filled with great joy! The Israelites had not celebrated like this
since the days of Joshua* son of Nun.

18Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God on each of the seven
days of the festival. Then on the eighth day they held a solemn
assembly, as was required by law.

Nehemiah 9

THE PEOPLE CONFESS THEIR SINS

1On October 31* the people assembled again, and this time they
fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads.
2Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners
as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors.
3They remained standing in place for three hours* while the Book of
the Law of the LORD their God was read aloud to them. Then for
three more hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the LORD
their God. 4The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni,
Sherebiah, Bani, and Kenani—stood on the stairway of the Levites
and cried out to the LORD their God with loud voices.

5Then the leaders of the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani,
Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah—called
out to the people: “Stand up and praise the LORD your God, for he
lives from everlasting to everlasting!” Then they prayed:

“May your glorious name be praised! May it be exalted above all
blessing and praise!

6“You alone are the LORD. You made the skies and the heavens and
all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in
them. You preserve them all, and the angels of heaven worship you.

7“You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him from
Ur of the Chaldeans and renamed him Abraham. 8When he had
proved himself faithful, you made a covenant with him to give him
and his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites,
Perizzites, Jebusites, and Girgashites. And you have done what you
promised, for you are always true to your word.

9“You saw the misery of our ancestors in Egypt, and you heard their
cries from beside the Red Sea.*10You displayed miraculous signs and
wonders against Pharaoh, his officials, and all his people, for you
knew how arrogantly they were treating our ancestors. You have a
glorious reputation that has never been forgotten. 11You divided the
sea for your people so they could walk through on dry land! And
then you hurled their enemies into the depths of the sea. They sank
like stones beneath the mighty waters. 12You led our ancestors by a
pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night so that

they could find their way.

13“You came down at Mount Sinai and spoke to them from heaven.
You gave them regulations and instructions that were just, and
decrees and commands that were good. 14You instructed them
concerning your holy Sabbath. And you commanded them, through
Moses your servant, to obey all your commands, decrees, and
instructions.

15“You gave them bread from heaven when they were hungry and
water from the rock when they were thirsty. You commanded them
to go and take possession of the land you had sworn to give them.

16“But our ancestors were proud and stubborn, and they paid no
attention to your commands. 17They refused to obey and did not
remember the miracles you had done for them. Instead, they
became stubborn and appointed a leader to take them back to their
slavery in Egypt.* But you are a God of forgiveness, gracious and
merciful, slow to become angry, and rich in unfailing love. You did
not abandon them, 18even when they made an idol shaped like a
calf and said, ‘This is your god who brought you out of Egypt!’ They
committed terrible blasphemies.

19“But in your great mercy you did not abandon them to die in the
wilderness. The pillar of cloud still led them forward by day, and
the pillar of fire showed them the way through the night. 20You sent
your good Spirit to instruct them, and you did not stop giving them
manna from heaven or water for their thirst. 21For forty years you
sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their
clothes did not wear out, and their feet did not swell!

22“Then you helped our ancestors conquer kingdoms and nations,
and you placed your people in every corner of the land.* They took
over the land of King Sihon of Heshbon and the land of King Og of
Bashan. 23You made their descendants as numerous as the stars in
the sky and brought them into the land you had promised to their
ancestors.

24“They went in and took possession of the land. You subdued
whole nations before them. Even the Canaanites, who inhabited the

land, were powerless! Your people could deal with these nations and their kings as they pleased. 25Our ancestors captured fortified cities and fertile land. They took over houses full of good things, with cisterns already dug and vineyards and olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate until they were full and grew fat and enjoyed themselves in all your blessings.

26"But despite all this, they were disobedient and rebelled against you. They turned their backs on your Law, they killed your prophets who warned them to return to you, and they committed terrible blasphemies. 27So you handed them over to their enemies, who made them suffer. But in their time of trouble they cried to you, and you heard them from heaven. In your great mercy, you sent them liberators who rescued them from their enemies.

28"But as soon as they were at peace, your people again committed evil in your sight, and once more you let their enemies conquer them. Yet whenever your people turned and cried to you again for help, you listened once more from heaven. In your wonderful mercy, you rescued them many times!

29"You warned them to return to your Law, but they became proud and obstinate and disobeyed your commands. They did not follow your regulations, by which people will find life if only they obey. They stubbornly turned their backs on you and refused to listen. 30In your love, you were patient with them for many years. You sent your Spirit, who warned them through the prophets. But still they wouldn't listen! So once again you allowed the peoples of the land to conquer them. 31But in your great mercy, you did not destroy them completely or abandon them forever. What a gracious and merciful God you are!

32"And now, our God, the great and mighty and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of unfailing love, do not let all the hardships we have suffered seem insignificant to you. Great trouble has come upon us and upon our kings and leaders and priests and prophets and ancestors—all of your people—from the days when the kings of Assyria first triumphed over us until now. 33Every time you punished us you were being just. We have sinned greatly, and you gave us only what we deserved. 34Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors did not obey your Law or listen to the warnings in your

commands and laws. 35Even while they had their own kingdom,
they did not serve you, though you showered your goodness on
them. You gave them a large, fertile land, but they refused to turn
from their wickedness.

36“So now today we are slaves in the land of plenty that you gave
our ancestors for their enjoyment! We are slaves here in this good
land. 37The lush produce of this land piles up in the hands of the
kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They have
power over us and our livestock. We serve them at their pleasure,
and we are in great misery.”

THE PEOPLE AGREE TO OBEY

38*The people responded, “In view of all this,* we are making a
solemn promise and putting it in writing. On this sealed document
are the names of our leaders and Levites and priests.”

Nehemiah 10

1*The document was ratified and sealed with the following names:
The governor: Nehemiah son of Hacaliah, and also Zedekiah.

2The following priests: Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, 3Pashhur,
Amariah, Malkijah, 4Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, 5Harim,
Meremoth, Obadiah, 6Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, 7Meshullam,
Abijah, Mijamin, 8Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah. These were the
priests.

9The following Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui from the
family of Henadad, Kadmiel, 10and their fellow Levites: Shebaniah,
Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, 11Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, 12Zaccur,
Sherebiah, Shebaniah, 13Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

14The following leaders: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,
15Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, 16Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, 17Ater, Hezekiah,

Azzur, 18Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, 19Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,
20Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, 21Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,
22Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, 23Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,
24Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, 25Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,
26Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, 27Malluch, Harim, and Baanah.

THE VOW OF THE PEOPLE

28Then the rest of the people—the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, Temple servants, and all who had separated themselves from the pagan people of the land in order to obey the Law of God, together with their wives, sons, daughters, and all who were old enough to understand—29joined their leaders and bound themselves with an oath. They swore a curse on themselves if they failed to obey the Law of God as issued by his servant Moses. They solemnly promised to carefully follow all the commands, regulations, and decrees of the LORD our Lord:

30"We promise not to let our daughters marry the pagan people of the land, and not to let our sons marry their daughters.

31"We also promise that if the people of the land should bring any merchandise or grain to be sold on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will refuse to buy it. Every seventh year we will let our land rest, and we will cancel all debts owed to us.

32"In addition, we promise to obey the command to pay the annual Temple tax of one-eighth of an ounce of silver* for the care of the Temple of our God. 33This will provide for the Bread of the Presence; for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings; for the offerings on the Sabbaths, the new moon celebrations, and the annual festivals; for the holy offerings; and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel. It will provide for everything necessary for the work of the Temple of our God.

34"We have cast sacred lots to determine when—at regular times each year—the families of the priests, Levites, and the common people should bring wood to God's Temple to be burned on the

altar of the LORD our God, as is written in the Law.

35“We promise to bring the first part of every harvest to the LORD’s
Temple year after year—whether it be a crop from the soil or from
our fruit trees. 36We agree to give God our oldest sons and the
firstborn of all our herds and flocks, as prescribed in the Law. We
will present them to the priests who minister in the Temple of our
God. 37We will store the produce in the storerooms of the Temple of
our God. We will bring the best of our flour and other grain
offerings, the best of our fruit, and the best of our new wine and
olive oil. And we promise to bring to the Levites a tenth of
everything our land produces, for it is the Levites who collect the
tithes in all our rural towns.

38“A priest—a descendant of Aaron—will be with the Levites as
they receive these tithes. And a tenth of all that is collected as tithes
will be delivered by the Levites to the Temple of our God and
placed in the storerooms. 39The people and the Levites must bring
these offerings of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the storerooms
and place them in the sacred containers near the ministering
priests, the gatekeepers, and the singers.
“We promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God.”

Nehemiah 11

THE PEOPLE OCCUPY JERUSALEM

1The leaders of the people were living in Jerusalem, the holy city. A
tenth of the people from the other towns of Judah and Benjamin
were chosen by sacred lots to live there, too, while the rest stayed
where they were. 2And the people commended everyone who
volunteered to resettle in Jerusalem.

3Here is a list of the names of the provincial officials who came to
live in Jerusalem. (Most of the people, priests, Levites, Temple
servants, and descendants of Solomon’s servants continued to live in
their own homes in the various towns of Judah, 4but some of the
people from Judah and Benjamin resettled in Jerusalem.) From the
tribe of Judah: Athaiah son of Uzziah, son of Zechariah, son of

Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel, of the family of
Perez. 5Also Maaseiah son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of
Hazaiah, son of Adaiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, of the
family of Shelah.*6There were 468 descendants of Perez who lived
in Jerusalem—all outstanding men.

7From the tribe of Benjamin: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Joed,
son of Pedaiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of
Jeshaiah. 8After him were Gabbai and Sallai and a total of 928
relatives. 9Their chief officer was Joel son of Zicri, who was assisted
by Judah son of Hassenuah, second-in-command over the city.

10From the priests: Jedaiah son of Joiarib; Jakin; 11and Seraiah son
of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of
Ahitub, the supervisor of the Temple of God. 12Also 822 of their
associates, who worked at the Temple. Also Adaiah son of Jeroham,
son of Pelaliah, son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son
of Malkijah, 13along with 242 of his associates, who were heads of
their families. Also Amashsai son of Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of
Meshillemoth, son of Immer, 14and 128 of his* outstanding
associates. Their chief officer was Zabdiel son of Haggedolim.

15From the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son
of Hashabiah, son of Bunni. 16Also Shabbethai and Jozabad, who
were in charge of the work outside the Temple of God. 17Also
Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zabdi, a descendant of Asaph, who
led in thanksgiving and prayer. Also Bakbukiah, who was
Mattaniah's assistant, and Abda son of Shammua, son of Galal, son
of Jeduthun. 18In all, there were 284 Levites in the holy city.

19From the gatekeepers: Akkub, Talmon, and 172 of their associates,
who guarded the gates.

20The other priests, Levites, and the rest of the Israelites lived
wherever their family inheritance was located in any of the towns
of Judah. 21The Temple servants, however, whose leaders were Ziha
and Gishpa, all lived on the hill of Ophel.

22The chief officer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani,
son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, a descendant of
Asaph, whose family served as singers at God's Temple. 23Their
daily responsibilities were carried out according to the terms of a
royal command.

24Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, a descendant of Zerah son of Judah,
was the royal adviser in all matters of public administration.

25As for the surrounding villages with their open fields, some of the
people of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba with its settlements, Dibon
with its settlements, and Jekabzeel with its villages. 26They also
lived in Jeshua, Moladah, Beth-pelet, 27Hazar-shual, Beersheba with
its settlements, 28Ziklag, and Meconah with its settlements. 29They
also lived in En-rimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, 30Zanoah, and Adullam
with their surrounding villages. They also lived in Lachish with its
nearby fields and Azekah with its surrounding villages. So the
people of Judah were living all the way from Beersheba in the south
to the valley of Hinnom.

31Some of the people of Benjamin lived at Geba, Micmash, Aija, and
Bethel with its settlements. 32They also lived in Anathoth, Nob,
Ananiah, 33Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, 34Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,
35Lod, Ono, and the Valley of Craftsmen.*36Some of the Levites who
lived in Judah were sent to live with the tribe of Benjamin.

Nehemiah 12

A HISTORY OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES

1Here is the list of the priests and Levites who returned with
Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the high priest: Seraiah,
Jeremiah, Ezra,

2Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,

3Shecaniah, Harim,* Meremoth,

4Iddo, Ginnethon,* Abijah,

5Miniamin, Moadiah,* Bilgah,

6Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,

7Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, and Jedaiah.

These were the leaders of the priests and their associates in the days of Jeshua.

8The Levites who returned with them were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with his associates was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. 9Their associates, Bakbukiah and Unni, stood opposite them during the service.

10Jeshua the high priest was the father of Joiakim.
Joiakim was the father of Eliashib.
Eliashib was the father of Joiada.

11Joiada was the father of Johanan.*
Johanan was the father of Jaddua.

12Now when Joiakim was high priest, the family leaders of the priests were as follows: Meraiah was leader of the family of Seraiah.

Hananiah was leader of the family of Jeremiah.

13Meshullam was leader of the family of Ezra.
Jehohanan was leader of the family of Amariah.

14Jonathan was leader of the family of Malluch.*

Joseph was leader of the family of Shecaniah.*

15Adna was leader of the family of Harim.
Helkai was leader of the family of Meremoth.*

16Zechariah was leader of the family of Iddo.
Meshullam was leader of the family of Ginnethon.

17Zicri was leader of the family of Abijah.
There was also a* leader of the family of Miniamin.
Piltai was leader of the family of Moadiah.

18Shammua was leader of the family of Bilgah.
Jehonathan was leader of the family of Shemaiah.

19Mattenai was leader of the family of Joiarib.
Uzzi was leader of the family of Jedaiah.

20Kallai was leader of the family of Sallu.*
Eber was leader of the family of Amok.

21Hashabiah was leader of the family of Hilkiah.
Nethanel was leader of the family of Jedaiah.

22A record of the Levite families was kept during the years when Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua served as high priest. Another record of the priests was kept during the reign of Darius the Persian.*23A record of the heads of the Levite families was kept in *The Book of History* down to the days of Johanan, the grandson* of Eliashib.

24These were the family leaders of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua, Binnui,* Kadmiel, and other associates, who stood opposite them during the ceremonies of praise and thanksgiving, one section responding to the other, as commanded by David, the man of God. 25This included Mattaniah, Bakbukiah,

and Obadiah.

Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were the gatekeepers in charge of
the storerooms at the gates. 26These all served in the days of
Joiakim son of Jeshua, son of Jehozadak,* and in the days of
Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest and scribe.

DEDICATION OF JERUSALEM'S WALL

27For the dedication of the new wall of Jerusalem, the Levites
throughout the land were asked to come to Jerusalem to assist in
the ceremonies. They were to take part in the joyous occasion with
their songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps,
and lyres. 28The singers were brought together from the region
around Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathites.
29They also came from Beth-gilgal and the rural areas near Geba
and Azmaveth, for the singers had built their own settlements
around Jerusalem. 30The priests and Levites first purified
themselves; then they purified the people, the gates, and the wall.

31I led the leaders of Judah to the top of the wall and organized two
large choirs to give thanks. One of the choirs proceeded southward*
along the top of the wall to the Dung Gate. 32Hoshaiah and half the
leaders of Judah followed them, 33along with Azariah, Ezra,
Meshullam, 34Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah. 35Then
came some priests who played trumpets, including Zechariah son of
Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of
Zaccur, a descendant of Asaph. 36And Zechariah's colleagues were
Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and
Hanani. They used the musical instruments prescribed by David, the
man of God. Ezra the scribe led this procession. 37At the Fountain
Gate they went straight up the steps on the ascent of the city wall
toward the City of David. They passed the house of David and then
proceeded to the Water Gate on the east.

38The second choir giving thanks went northward* around the other

way to meet them. I followed them, together with the other half of the people, along the top of the wall past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall, 39then past the Ephraim Gate to the Old City Gate,* past the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hananel, and on to the Tower of the Hundred. Then we continued on to the Sheep Gate and stopped at the Guard Gate.

40The two choirs that were giving thanks then proceeded to the Temple of God, where they took their places. So did I, together with the group of leaders who were with me. 41We went together with the trumpet-playing priests—Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah—42and the singers—Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam, and Ezer. They played and sang loudly under the direction of Jezrahiah the choir director.

43Many sacrifices were offered on that joyous day, for God had given the people cause for great joy. The women and children also participated in the celebration, and the joy of the people of Jerusalem could be heard far away.

PROVISIONS FOR TEMPLE WORSHIP

44On that day men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the offerings, the first part of the harvest, and the tithes. They were responsible to collect from the fields outside the towns the portions required by the Law for the priests and Levites. For all the people of Judah took joy in the priests and Levites and their work. 45They performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as commanded by David and his son Solomon, and so did the singers and the gatekeepers. 46The custom of having choir directors to lead the choirs in hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God began long ago in the days of David and Asaph. 47So now, in the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, all Israel brought a daily supply of food for the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Levites. The Levites, in turn, gave a portion of what they received to the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

Nehemiah 13

NEHEMIAH'S VARIOUS REFORMS

1On that same day, as the Book of Moses was being read to the
people, the passage was found that said no Ammonite or Moabite
should ever be permitted to enter the assembly of God.*2For they
had not provided the Israelites with food and water in the
wilderness. Instead, they hired Balaam to curse them, though our

God turned the curse into a blessing. 3When this passage of the Law was read, all those of foreign descent were immediately excluded from the assembly.

4Before this had happened, Eliashib the priest, who had been appointed as supervisor of the storerooms of the Temple of our God and who was also a relative of Tobiah, 5had converted a large storage room and placed it at Tobiah's disposal. The room had previously been used for storing the grain offerings, the frankincense, various articles for the Temple, and the tithes of grain, new wine, and olive oil (which were prescribed for the Levites, the singers, and the gatekeepers), as well as the offerings for the priests.

6I was not in Jerusalem at that time, for I had returned to King Artaxerxes of Babylon in the thirty-second year of his reign,* though I later asked his permission to return. 7When I arrived back in Jerusalem, I learned about Eliashib's evil deed in providing Tobiah with a room in the courtyards of the Temple of God. 8I became very upset and threw all of Tobiah's belongings out of the room. 9Then I demanded that the rooms be purified, and I brought back the articles for God's Temple, the grain offerings, and the frankincense.

10I also discovered that the Levites had not been given their prescribed portions of food, so they and the singers who were to conduct the worship services had all returned to work their fields. 11I immediately confronted the leaders and demanded, "Why has the Temple of God been neglected?" Then I called all the Levites back again and restored them to their proper duties. 12And once more all the people of Judah began bringing their tithes of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the Temple storerooms.

13I assigned supervisors for the storerooms: Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah, one of the Levites. And I appointed Hanan son of Zaccur and grandson of Mattaniah as their assistant. These men had an excellent reputation, and it was their job to make

honest distributions to their fellow Levites.

14Remember this good deed, O my God, and do not forget all that I have faithfully done for the Temple of my God and its services.

15In those days I saw men of Judah treading out their winepresses on the Sabbath. They were also bringing in grain, loading it on donkeys, and bringing their wine, grapes, figs, and all sorts of produce to Jerusalem to sell on the Sabbath. So I rebuked them for selling their produce on that day. 16Some men from Tyre, who lived in Jerusalem, were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise. They were selling it on the Sabbath to the people of Judah—and in Jerusalem at that!

17So I confronted the nobles of Judah. “Why are you profaning the Sabbath in this evil way?” I asked. 18“Wasn’t it just this sort of thing that your ancestors did that caused our God to bring all this trouble upon us and our city? Now you are bringing even more wrath upon Israel by permitting the Sabbath to be desecrated in this way!”

19Then I commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should be shut as darkness fell every Friday evening,* not to be opened until the Sabbath ended. I sent some of my own servants to guard the gates so that no merchandise could be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20The merchants and tradesmen with a variety of wares camped outside Jerusalem once or twice. 21But I spoke sharply to them and said, “What are you doing out here, camping around the wall? If you do this again, I will arrest you!” And that was the last time they came on the Sabbath. 22Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and to guard the gates in order to preserve the holiness of the Sabbath.

Remember this good deed also, O my God! Have compassion on me according to your great and unfailing love.

23About the same time I realized that some of the men of Judah had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. 24Furthermore,

half their children spoke the language of Ashdod or of some other people and could not speak the language of Judah at all. 25So I confronted them and called down curses on them. I beat some of them and pulled out their hair. I made them swear in the name of God that they would not let their children intermarry with the pagan people of the land.

26"Wasn't this exactly what led King Solomon of Israel into sin?" I demanded. "There was no king from any nation who could compare to him, and God loved him and made him king over all Israel. But even he was led into sin by his foreign wives. 27How could you even think of committing this sinful deed and acting unfaithfully toward God by marrying foreign women?"

28One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest had married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, so I banished him from my presence.

29Remember them, O my God, for they have defiled the priesthood and the solemn vows of the priests and Levites.

30So I purged out everything foreign and assigned tasks to the priests and Levites, making certain that each knew his work. 31I also made sure that the supply of wood for the altar and the first portions of the harvest were brought at the proper times.

Remember this in my favor, O my God.

Esther

WELCOME TO

ESTHER

With drama, intrigue, romance, and murder, the book of Esther tells of the near-destruction of the Jewish people. After the Persians defeat the Babylonians, the Jews become subject to the Persians. Esther and her cousin Mordecai are Jews living in Susa, the capital of the Persian Empire. Although under the rule of a pagan king, Esther and Mordecai remain obedient to God and their Jewish traditions. This enrages Haman, a prominent Persian official, who hatches a plot to destroy Mordecai and everyone else of Jewish heritage. However, God protects and blesses Mordecai and Esther, using them at a critical moment to spare the Jews from annihilation.

This story shows how God is in control of all things—historical events, nations, and rulers—and how he protects his beloved people. Although this book never mentions God's name, he is working in and through the events of this intriguing story, positioning people in the right place at the right time to save his chosen people.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: This time you won't stop in Esther. But you may want to take some time now to read this intriguing story on your own, or catch it on your next journey through the Bible. Your next stop is at Isaiah 11:1.

4 STOPS

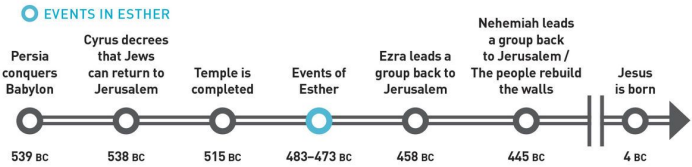
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The stops on your route cover the intriguing story of Esther, a Jewish queen in the Persian Empire who risks her life to save her people. Your next stop is at Esther 2:1.

5 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll witness the entirety of the drama that unfolds in the royal courts of the Persian Empire. Behind the scenes, our sovereign God protects the lives of Esther, Mordecai, and the Jewish people. Your next stop is at Esther 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN ESTHER

The actions of Esther and Mordecai in the face of the threat of total annihilation give us a picture of Jesus' care for, protection of, and salvation of his chosen people. When it seemed that there was no way to save God's people from the enemies who wanted to kill them, Mordecai and Esther were willing to submit to God's plan for saving his people. Similarly, Jesus humbly submitted to God's plan when, because of their sin, there seemed to be no way for them to be reconciled to God.



THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Esther 1

THE KING'S BANQUET

1 These events happened in the days of King Xerxes,* who reigned
over 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia.*2 At that time
Xerxes ruled his empire from his royal throne at the fortress of Susa.
3 In the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all his nobles
and officials. He invited all the military officers of Persia and Media
as well as the princes and nobles of the provinces. 4 The celebration
lasted 180 days—a tremendous display of the opulent wealth of his
empire and the pomp and splendor of his majesty.

5 When it was all over, the king gave a banquet for all the people,
from the greatest to the least, who were in the fortress of Susa. It
lasted for seven days and was held in the courtyard of the palace

garden. 6The courtyard was beautifully decorated with white cotton curtains and blue hangings, which were fastened with white linen cords and purple ribbons to silver rings embedded in marble pillars. Gold and silver couches stood on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and other costly stones.

7Drinks were served in gold goblets of many designs, and there was an abundance of royal wine, reflecting the king's generosity. 8By edict of the king, no limits were placed on the drinking, for the king had instructed all his palace officials to serve each man as much as he wanted.

9At the same time, Queen Vashti gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

QUEEN VASHTI DEPOSED

10On the seventh day of the feast, when King Xerxes was in high spirits because of the wine, he told the seven eunuchs who attended him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas—11to bring Queen Vashti to him with the royal crown on her head. He wanted the nobles and all the other men to gaze on her beauty, for she was a very beautiful woman. 12But when they conveyed the king's order to Queen Vashti, she refused to come. This made the king furious, and he burned with anger.

13He immediately consulted with his wise advisers, who knew all the Persian laws and customs, for he always asked their advice. 14The names of these men were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan—seven nobles of Persia and Media. They met with the king regularly and held the highest positions in the empire.

15"What must be done to Queen Vashti?" the king demanded. "What penalty does the law provide for a queen who refuses to obey the king's orders, properly sent through his eunuchs?"

16Memucan answered the king and his nobles, “Queen Vashti has
wronged not only the king but also every noble and citizen
throughout your empire. 17Women everywhere will begin to despise
their husbands when they learn that Queen Vashti has refused to
appear before the king. 18Before this day is out, the wives of all the
king’s nobles throughout Persia and Media will hear what the queen
did and will start treating their husbands the same way. There will
be no end to their contempt and anger.

19“So if it please the king, we suggest that you issue a written
decree, a law of the Persians and Medes that cannot be revoked. It
should order that Queen Vashti be forever banished from the
presence of King Xerxes, and that the king should choose another
queen more worthy than she. 20When this decree is published
throughout the king’s vast empire, husbands everywhere, whatever
their rank, will receive proper respect from their wives!”

21The king and his nobles thought this made good sense, so he
followed Memucan’s counsel. 22He sent letters to all parts of the
empire, to each province in its own script and language,
proclaiming that every man should be the ruler of his own home
and should say whatever he pleases.*

Esther 2

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

1But after Xerxes' anger had subsided, he began thinking about
Vashti and what she had done and the decree he had made. 2So his
personal attendants suggested, "Let us search the empire to find
beautiful young virgins for the king. 3Let the king appoint agents in
each province to bring these beautiful young women into the royal
harem at the fortress of Susa. Hegai, the king's eunuch in charge of
the harem, will see that they are all given beauty treatments. 4After
that, the young woman who most pleases the king will be made
queen instead of Vashti." This advice was very appealing to the
king, so he put the plan into effect.

5At that time there was a Jewish man in the fortress of Susa whose
name was Mordecai son of Jair. He was from the tribe of Benjamin
and was a descendant of Kish and Shimei. 6His family* had been
among those who, with King Jehoiachin* of Judah, had been exiled
from Jerusalem to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. 7This man had
a very beautiful and lovely young cousin, Hadassah, who was also
called Esther. When her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted
her into his family and raised her as his own daughter.

8As a result of the king's decree, Esther, along with many other
young women, was brought to the king's harem at the fortress of
Susa and placed in Hegai's care. 9Hegai was very impressed with
Esther and treated her kindly. He quickly ordered a special menu
for her and provided her with beauty treatments. He also assigned
her seven maids specially chosen from the king's palace, and he
moved her and her maids into the best place in the harem.

10Esther had not told anyone of her nationality and family
background, because Mordecai had directed her not to do so.
11Every day Mordecai would take a walk near the courtyard of the
harem to find out about Esther and what was happening to her.

12Before each young woman was taken to the king's bed, she was

given the prescribed twelve months of beauty treatments—six months with oil of myrrh, followed by six months with special perfumes and ointments. 13When it was time for her to go to the king's palace, she was given her choice of whatever clothing or jewelry she wanted to take from the harem. 14That evening she was taken to the king's private rooms, and the next morning she was brought to the second harem,* where the king's wives lived. There she would be under the care of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch in charge of the concubines. She would never go to the king again unless he had especially enjoyed her and requested her by name.

15Esther was the daughter of Abihail, who was Mordecai's uncle. (Mordecai had adopted his younger cousin Esther.) When it was Esther's turn to go to the king, she accepted the advice of Hegai, the eunuch in charge of the harem. She asked for nothing except what he suggested, and she was admired by everyone who saw her.

16Esther was taken to King Xerxes at the royal palace in early winter* of the seventh year of his reign. 17And the king loved Esther more than any of the other young women. He was so delighted with her that he set the royal crown on her head and declared her queen instead of Vashti. 18To celebrate the occasion, he gave a great banquet in Esther's honor for all his nobles and officials, declaring a public holiday for the provinces and giving generous gifts to everyone.

19Even after all the young women had been transferred to the second harem* and Mordecai had become a palace official,*20Esther continued to keep her family background and nationality a secret. She was still following Mordecai's directions, just as she did when she lived in his home.

MORDECAI'S LOYALTY TO THE KING

21One day as Mordecai was on duty at the king's gate, two of the

king's eunuchs, Bigthana* and Teresh—who were guards at the door of the king's private quarters—became angry at King Xerxes and plotted to assassinate him. 22But Mordecai heard about the plot and gave the information to Queen Esther. She then told the king about it and gave Mordecai credit for the report. 23When an investigation was made and Mordecai's story was found to be true, the two men were impaled on a sharpened pole. This was all recorded in *The Book of the History of King Xerxes' Reign.*

Esther 3

HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

1Some time later King Xerxes promoted Haman son of Hammedatha
the Agagite over all the other nobles, making him the most
powerful official in the empire. 2All the king's officials would bow
down before Haman to show him respect whenever he passed by,
for so the king had commanded. But Mordecai refused to bow down
or show him respect.

3Then the palace officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, "Why
are you disobeying the king's command?" 4They spoke to him day
after day, but still he refused to comply with the order. So they
spoke to Haman about this to see if he would tolerate Mordecai's
conduct, since Mordecai had told them he was a Jew.

5When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down or show
him respect, he was filled with rage. 6He had learned of Mordecai's
nationality, so he decided it was not enough to lay hands on
Mordecai alone. Instead, he looked for a way to destroy all the Jews
throughout the entire empire of Xerxes.

7So in the month of April,* during the twelfth year of King Xerxes' reign, lots were cast in Haman's presence (the lots were called *purim*) to determine the best day and month to take action. And the day selected was March 7, nearly a year later.*

8Then Haman approached King Xerxes and said, "There is a certain race of people scattered through all the provinces of your empire who keep themselves separate from everyone else. Their laws are different from those of any other people, and they refuse to obey the laws of the king. So it is not in the king's interest to let them live. 9If it please the king, issue a decree that they be destroyed, and I will give 10,000 large sacks* of silver to the government administrators to be deposited in the royal treasury."

10The king agreed, confirming his decision by removing his signet ring from his finger and giving it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11The king said, "The money and the people are both yours to do with as you see fit."

12So on April 17* the king's secretaries were summoned, and a decree was written exactly as Haman dictated. It was sent to the king's highest officers, the governors of the respective provinces, and the nobles of each province in their own scripts and languages. The decree was written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with the king's signet ring. 13Dispatches were sent by swift messengers into all the provinces of the empire, giving the order that all Jews—young and old, including women and children—must be killed, slaughtered, and annihilated on a single day. This was scheduled to happen on March 7 of the next year.* The property of the Jews would be given to those who killed them.

14A copy of this decree was to be issued as law in every province and proclaimed to all peoples, so that they would be ready to do their duty on the appointed day. 15At the king's command, the

decree went out by swift messengers, and it was also proclaimed in the fortress of Susa. Then the king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa fell into confusion.

Esther 4

MORDECAI REQUESTS ESTHER'S HELP

1When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went out into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail. 2He went as far as the gate of the palace, for no one was allowed to enter the palace gate while wearing clothes of mourning. 3And as news of the king's decree reached all the provinces, there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and wailed, and many people lay in burlap and ashes.

4When Queen Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was deeply distressed. She sent clothing to him to replace the burlap, but he refused it. 5Then Esther sent for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who had been appointed as her attendant. She ordered him to go to Mordecai and find out what was troubling him and why he was in mourning. 6So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the square in front of the palace gate.

7Mordecai told him the whole story, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. 8Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the decree issued in Susa that called for the death of all Jews. He asked Hathach to show it to Esther and explain the situation to her. He also asked Hathach to direct her to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her people. 9So Hathach returned to Esther with Mordecai's message.

10Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai: 11"All the king's officials and even the people in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his

inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold scepter. And the king has not called for me to come to him for thirty days.” 12So Hathach* gave Esther’s message to Mordecai.

13Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: “Don’t think for a moment that because you’re in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. 14If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?”

15Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16“Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.” 17So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Esther 5

ESTHER'S REQUEST TO THE KING

1On the third day of the fast, Esther put on her royal robes and
entered the inner court of the palace, just across from the king's
hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne, facing the entrance.
2When he saw Queen Esther standing there in the inner court, he
welcomed her and held out the gold scepter to her. So Esther

approached and touched the end of the scepter.

3Then the king asked her, “What do you want, Queen Esther? What
is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!”

4And Esther replied, “If it please the king, let the king and Haman
come today to a banquet I have prepared for the king.”

5The king turned to his attendants and said, “Tell Haman to come
quickly to a banquet, as Esther has requested.” So the king and
Haman went to Esther’s banquet.

6And while they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, “Now
tell me what you really want. What is your request? I will give it to
you, even if it is half the kingdom!”

7Esther replied, “This is my request and deepest wish. 8If I have
found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my
request and do what I ask, please come with Haman tomorrow to
the banquet I will prepare for you. Then I will explain what this is
all about.”

HAMAN’S PLAN TO KILL MORDECAI **9HAMAN WAS A HAPPY MAN AS HE LEFT THE BANQUET! BUT WHEN HE SAW MORDECAI SITTING AT THE PALACE GATE, NOT STANDING UP OR TREMBLING NERVOUSLY BEFORE HIM, HAMAN BECAME FURIOUS.** **10HOWEVER, HE RESTRAINED HIMSELF AND WENT ON HOME.**

Then Haman gathered together his friends and Zeresh, his wife,
11and boasted to them about his great wealth and his many
children. He bragged about the honors the king had given him and
how he had been promoted over all the other nobles and officials.

12Then Haman added, “And that’s not all! Queen Esther invited only

me and the king himself to the banquet she prepared for us. And she has invited me to dine with her and the king again tomorrow!”
13Then he added, “But this is all worth nothing as long as I see Mordecai the Jew just sitting there at the palace gate.”

14So Haman’s wife, Zeresh, and all his friends suggested, “Set up a sharpened pole that stands seventy-five feet* tall, and in the morning ask the king to impale Mordecai on it. When this is done, you can go on your merry way to the banquet with the king.” This pleased Haman, and he ordered the pole set up.

Esther 6

THE KING HONORS MORDECAI

1That night the king had trouble sleeping, so he ordered an attendant to bring the book of the history of his reign so it could be read to him. 2In those records he discovered an account of how Mordecai had exposed the plot of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the eunuchs who guarded the door to the king’s private quarters. They had plotted to assassinate King Xerxes.

3“What reward or recognition did we ever give Mordecai for this?” the king asked.

His attendants replied, “Nothing has been done for him.”

4“Who is that in the outer court?” the king inquired. As it

happened, Haman had just arrived in the outer court of the palace to ask the king to impale Mordecai on the pole he had prepared.

5So the attendants replied to the king, “Haman is out in the court.”

“Bring him in,” the king ordered. 6So Haman came in, and the king said, “What should I do to honor a man who truly pleases me?”

Haman thought to himself, “Whom would the king wish to honor more than me?” 7So he replied, “If the king wishes to honor someone, 8he should bring out one of the king’s own royal robes, as well as a horse that the king himself has ridden—one with a royal emblem on its head. 9Let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king’s most noble officials. And let him see that the man whom the king wishes to honor is dressed in the king’s robes and led through the city square on the king’s horse. Have the official shout as they go, ‘This is what the king does for someone he wishes to honor!’”

10“Excellent!” the king said to Haman. “Quick! Take the robes and my horse, and do just as you have said for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the gate of the palace. Leave out nothing you have suggested!”

11So Haman took the robes and put them on Mordecai, placed him on the king’s own horse, and led him through the city square, shouting, “This is what the king does for someone he wishes to honor!” 12Afterward Mordecai returned to the palace gate, but Haman hurried home dejected and completely humiliated.

13When Haman told his wife, Zeresh, and all his friends what had happened, his wise advisers and his wife said, “Since Mordecai—this man who has humiliated you—is of Jewish birth, you will never succeed in your plans against him. It will be fatal to continue opposing him.”

14While they were still talking, the king’s eunuchs arrived and

quickly took Haman to the banquet Esther had prepared.

Esther 7

THE KING EXECUTES HAMAN

1So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet. 2On this second occasion, while they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "Tell me what you want, Queen Esther. What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!"

3Queen Esther replied, "If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, I ask that my life and the lives of my people will be spared. 4For my people and I have been sold to those who would kill, slaughter, and annihilate us. If we had merely

been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet, for that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king."

5"Who would do such a thing?" King Xerxes demanded. "Who would be so presumptuous as to touch you?"

6Esther replied, "This wicked Haman is our adversary and our enemy." Haman grew pale with fright before the king and queen. 7Then the king jumped to his feet in a rage and went out into the palace garden.

Haman, however, stayed behind to plead for his life with Queen Esther, for he knew that the king intended to kill him. 8In despair he fell on the couch where Queen Esther was reclining, just as the king was returning from the palace garden.

The king exclaimed, "Will he even assault the queen right here in the palace, before my very eyes?" And as soon as the king spoke, his attendants covered Haman's face, signaling his doom.

9Then Harbona, one of the king's eunuchs, said, "Haman has set up a sharpened pole that stands seventy-five feet* tall in his own courtyard. He intended to use it to impale Mordecai, the man who saved the king from assassination."

"Then impale Haman on it!" the king ordered. 10So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai, and the king's anger subsided.

Esther 8

A DECREE TO HELP THE JEWS

1On that same day King Xerxes gave the property of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther. Then Mordecai was brought before the king, for Esther had told the king how they were related. 2The king took off his signet ring—which he had taken back from

Haman—and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed Mordecai to be in charge of Haman's property.

3Then Esther went again before the king, falling down at his feet and begging him with tears to stop the evil plot devised by Haman the Agagite against the Jews. 4Again the king held out the gold scepter to Esther. So she rose and stood before him.

5Esther said, "If it please the king, and if I have found favor with him, and if he thinks it is right, and if I am pleasing to him, let there be a decree that reverses the orders of Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, who ordered that Jews throughout all the king's provinces should be destroyed. 6For how can I endure to see my people and my family slaughtered and destroyed?"

7Then King Xerxes said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "I have given Esther the property of Haman, and he has been impaled on a pole because he tried to destroy the Jews. 8Now go ahead and send a message to the Jews in the king's name, telling them whatever you want, and seal it with the king's signet ring. But remember that whatever has already been written in the king's name and sealed with his signet ring can never be revoked."

9So on June 25* the king's secretaries were summoned, and a decree was written exactly as Mordecai dictated. It was sent to the Jews and to the highest officers, the governors, and the nobles of all the 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia.* The decree was written in the scripts and languages of all the peoples of the empire, including that of the Jews. 10The decree was written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with the king's signet ring. Mordecai sent the dispatches by swift messengers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king's service.

11The king's decree gave the Jews in every city authority to unite to defend their lives. They were allowed to kill, slaughter, and annihilate anyone of any nationality or province who might attack

them or their children and wives, and to take the property of their enemies. 12The day chosen for this event throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes was March 7 of the next year.*

13A copy of this decree was to be issued as law in every province and proclaimed to all peoples, so that the Jews would be ready to take revenge on their enemies on the appointed day. 14So urged on by the king's command, the messengers rode out swiftly on fast horses bred for the king's service. The same decree was also proclaimed in the fortress of Susa.

15Then Mordecai left the king's presence, wearing the royal robe of blue and white, the great crown of gold, and an outer cloak of fine linen and purple. And the people of Susa celebrated the new decree. 16The Jews were filled with joy and gladness and were honored everywhere. 17In every province and city, wherever the king's decree arrived, the Jews rejoiced and had a great celebration and declared a public festival and holiday. And many of the people of the land became Jews themselves, for they feared what the Jews might do to them.

Esther 9

THE VICTORY OF THE JEWS

1So on March 7* the two decrees of the king were put into effect. On
that day, the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them,
but quite the opposite happened. It was the Jews who overpowered
their enemies. 2The Jews gathered in their cities throughout all the
king's provinces to attack anyone who tried to harm them. But no
one could make a stand against them, for everyone was afraid of
them. 3And all the nobles of the provinces, the highest officers, the
governors, and the royal officials helped the Jews for fear of
Mordecai. 4For Mordecai had been promoted in the king's palace,
and his fame spread throughout all the provinces as he became
more and more powerful.

5So the Jews went ahead on the appointed day and struck down
their enemies with the sword. They killed and annihilated their
enemies and did as they pleased with those who hated them. 6In the
fortress of Susa itself, the Jews killed 500 men. 7They also killed
Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, 8Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha,
9Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha—10the ten sons of Haman
son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not take

any plunder.

11That very day, when the king was informed of the number of
people killed in the fortress of Susa, 12he called for Queen Esther.
He said, “The Jews have killed 500 men in the fortress of Susa
alone, as well as Haman’s ten sons. If they have done that here,
what has happened in the rest of the provinces? But now, what
more do you want? It will be granted to you; tell me and I will do
it.”

13Esther responded, “If it please the king, give the Jews in Susa
permission to do again tomorrow as they have done today, and let
the bodies of Haman’s ten sons be impaled on a pole.”

14So the king agreed, and the decree was announced in Susa. And
they impaled the bodies of Haman’s ten sons. 15Then the Jews at
Susa gathered together on March 8* and killed 300 more men, and
again they took no plunder.

16Meanwhile, the other Jews throughout the king’s provinces had
gathered together to defend their lives. They gained relief from all
their enemies, killing 75,000 of those who hated them. But they did
not take any plunder. 17This was done throughout the provinces on
March 7, and on March 8 they rested,* celebrating their victory
with a day of feasting and gladness. 18(The Jews at Susa killed their
enemies on March 7 and again on March 8, then rested on March
9,* making that their day of feasting and gladness.) 19So to this day,
rural Jews living in remote villages celebrate an annual festival and
holiday on the appointed day in late winter,* when they rejoice and
send gifts of food to each other.

THE FESTIVAL OF PURIM

20Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to the Jews near
and far, throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes, 21calling on
them to celebrate an annual festival on these two days.*22He told
them to celebrate these days with feasting and gladness and by

giving gifts of food to each other and presents to the poor. This would commemorate a time when the Jews gained relief from their enemies, when their sorrow was turned into gladness and their mourning into joy.

23So the Jews accepted Mordecai's proposal and adopted this annual
custom. 24Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the
Jews, had plotted to crush and destroy them on the date determined
by casting lots (the lots were called *purim*). 25But when Esther came
before the king, he issued a decree causing Haman's evil plot to
backfire, and Haman and his sons were impaled on a sharpened
pole. 26That is why this celebration is called Purim, because it is the
ancient word for casting lots.

So because of Mordecai's letter and because of what they had
experienced, 27the Jews throughout the realm agreed to inaugurate
this tradition and to pass it on to their descendants and to all who
became Jews. They declared they would never fail to celebrate
these two prescribed days at the appointed time each year. 28These
days would be remembered and kept from generation to generation
and celebrated by every family throughout the provinces and cities
of the empire. This Festival of Purim would never cease to be
celebrated among the Jews, nor would the memory of what
happened ever die out among their descendants.

29Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai
the Jew, wrote another letter putting the queen's full authority
behind Mordecai's letter to establish the Festival of Purim. 30Letters
wishing peace and security were sent to the Jews throughout the
127 provinces of the empire of Xerxes. 31These letters established
the Festival of Purim—an annual celebration of these days at the
appointed time, decreed by both Mordecai the Jew and Queen
Esther. (The people decided to observe this festival, just as they had
decided for themselves and their descendants to establish the times
of fasting and mourning.) 32So the command of Esther confirmed
the practices of Purim, and it was all written down in the records.

Esther 10

THE GREATNESS OF XERXES AND MORDECAI 1**KING XERXES IMPOSED A TRIBUTE THROUGHOUT HIS EMPIRE, EVEN TO THE DISTANT COASTLANDS.** 2**HIS GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE GREATNESS OF MORDECAI, WHOM THE KING HAD PROMOTED, ARE RECORDED IN *THE BOOK OF THE HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF MEDIA AND PERSIA*.** 3**MORDECAI THE JEW BECAME THE PRIME MINISTER, WITH AUTHORITY NEXT TO THAT OF KING XERXES HIMSELF. HE WAS VERY GREAT AMONG THE JEWS, WHO HELD HIM IN HIGH ESTEEM, BECAUSE HE CONTINUED TO WORK FOR THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE AND TO SPEAK UP FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL THEIR DESCENDANTS.**

Job

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42

WELCOME TO

JOB

The book of Job helps us as we ponder universal questions: Why is there sin and suffering in the world? Why do good people suffer? In the opening scene we get a glimpse of a conversation between God and Satan in heaven, which leads to Job, a righteous man, being plagued by destruction and death and losing almost everything he treasures. How he and his friends try to understand the meaning of

the situation takes up most of the book. Finally, God himself breaks into the story to speak with Job directly, and Job recognizes that we don't need the "answers" to life's problems so much as we need God himself.

Reading Job's story teaches us that suffering can't always be explained in ways that make sense to us. We may not know why something happens, but we must trust God, who loves us and sees much more than we do.

0 STOPS

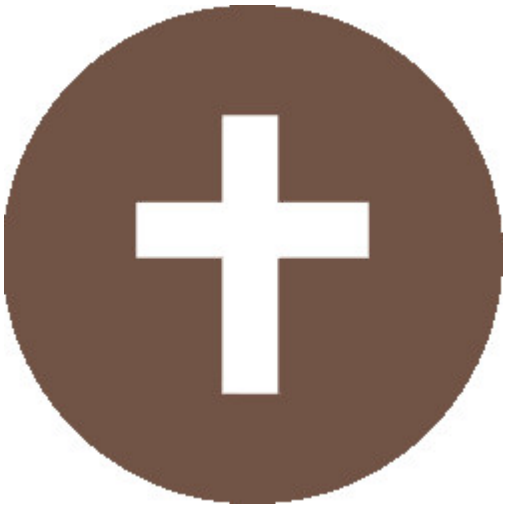
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll travel along your route without making a stop here, but if you linger you may find a fresh perspective on suffering and God's faithfulness. Your next stop is at Isaiah 11:1.

3 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your route will take you through three important highlights of this book: Job's hardships, God's conversation with him, and the resolution of the situation. Your next stop is at Job 1:1.

5 STOPS

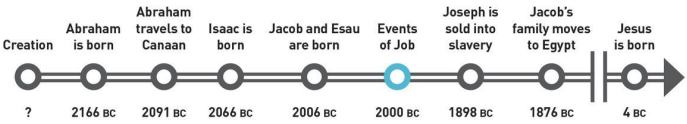
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: In these stops you'll see Job's story play out: his pain and loss, the debates with his friends, God's challenge to him, and the resolution of his suffering. Your next stop is at Job 1:1.



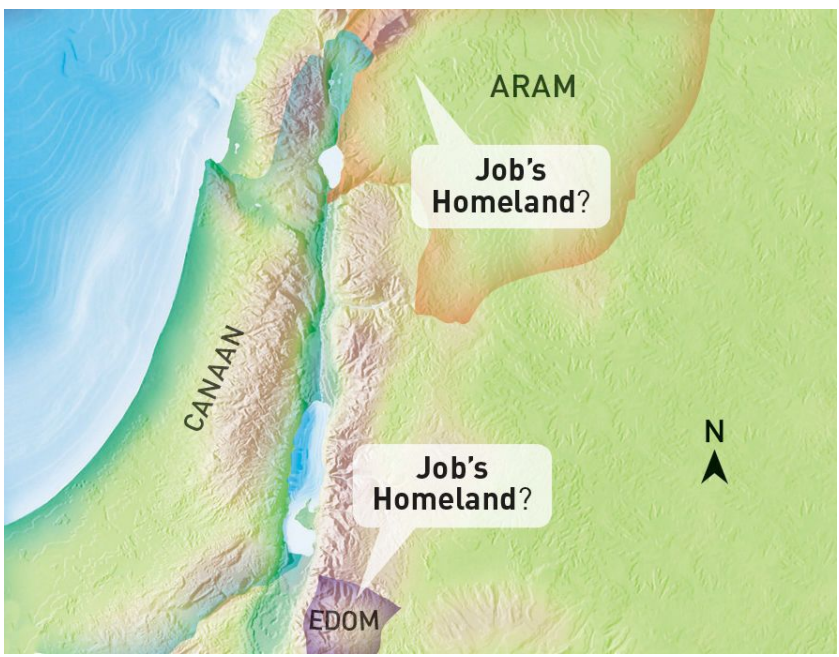
FINDING JESUS IN JOB

We get a glimpse of Jesus in the suffering experienced by Job. Job was faithful to God, yet he suffered great pain and loss. Just as Job's suffering seems unjustified, the suffering that Jesus endured seems even more unjust. Jesus' suffering went further than Job's: Jesus was brutally beaten and killed. But through his death and resurrection, Jesus showed that he was the person of whom Job had spoken: a living Redeemer who has set things right (19:25-26). Jesus is that Redeemer for all who put their trust in him as their Savior.

EVENTS IN JOB



DEMONS JOB 1–2



THE LAND OF UZ

Job 1

PROLOGUE

1There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. 2He had seven sons and three daughters. 3He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, and 500 female donkeys. He also had many servants. He was, in fact, the richest person in that entire area.

4Job's sons would take turns preparing feasts in their homes, and they would also invite their three sisters to celebrate with them. 5When these celebrations ended—sometimes after several days—Job would purify his children. He would get up early in the morning and offer a burnt offering for each of them. For Job said to himself, "Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular practice.

JOB'S FIRST TEST

6One day the members of the heavenly court* came to present themselves before the LORD, and the Accuser, Satan,* came with them. 7"Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan.

Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

8Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil."

9Satan replied to the LORD, "Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God. 10You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is! 11But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

12"All right, you may test him," the LORD said to Satan. "Do

whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically." So Satan left the LORD's presence.

13One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting at the oldest brother's house, 14a messenger arrived at Job's home with this news: "Your oxen were plowing, with the donkeys feeding beside them, 15when the Sabeans raided us. They stole all the animals and killed all the farmhands. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

16While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: "The fire of God has fallen from heaven and burned up your sheep and all the shepherds. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

17While he was still speaking, a third messenger arrived with this news: "Three bands of Chaldean raiders have stolen your camels and killed your servants. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

18While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived with this news: "Your sons and daughters were feasting in their oldest brother's home. 19Suddenly, a powerful wind swept in from the wilderness and hit the house on all sides. The house collapsed, and all your children are dead. I am the only one who escaped to tell you."

20Job stood up and tore his robe in grief. Then he shaved his head and fell to the ground to worship. 21He said, "I came naked from my mother's womb, and I will be naked when I leave.

The LORD gave me what I had, and the LORD has taken it away. Praise the name of the LORD!"

22In all of this, Job did not sin by blaming God.

Job 2

JOB'S SECOND TEST

1One day the members of the heavenly court* came again to present themselves before the LORD, and the Accuser, Satan,* came with them. 2"Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan.

Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

3Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause."

4Satan replied to the LORD, "Skin for skin! A man will give up everything he has to save his life. 5But reach out and take away his health, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

6"All right, do with him as you please," the LORD said to Satan. "But spare his life." 7So Satan left the LORD's presence, and he struck Job with terrible boils from head to foot.

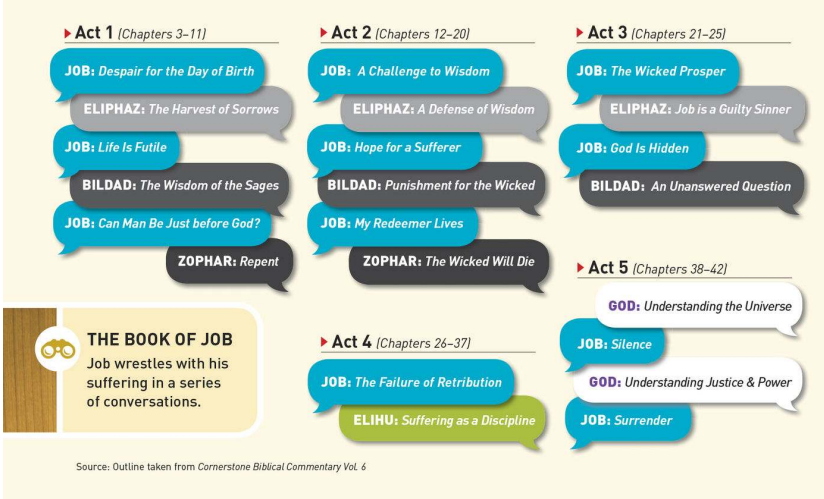
8Job scraped his skin with a piece of broken pottery as he sat among the ashes. 9His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die."

10But Job replied, "You talk like a foolish woman. Should we accept only good things from the hand of God and never anything bad?" So in all this, Job said nothing wrong.

JOB'S THREE FRIENDS SHARE HIS ANGUISH

11When three of Job's friends heard of the tragedy he had suffered, they got together and traveled from their homes to comfort and

console him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. 12When they saw Job from a distance, they scarcely recognized him. Wailing loudly, they tore their robes and threw dust into the air over their heads to show their grief. 13Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and nights. No one said a word to Job, for they saw that his suffering was too great for words.



THE BOOK OF JOB

Job 3

JOB'S FIRST SPEECH

1 At last Job spoke, and he cursed the day of his birth. 2 He said:

3 "Let the day of my birth be erased, and the night I was conceived.

4 Let that day be turned to darkness.
Let it be lost even to God on high, and let no light shine on it.

5 Let the darkness and utter gloom claim that day for its own.
Let a black cloud overshadow it, and let the darkness terrify it.

6 Let that night be blotted off the calendar, never again to be counted among the days of the year, never again to appear among the months.

7 Let that night be childless.
Let it have no joy.

8Let those who are experts at cursing— whose cursing could rouse
Leviathan*— curse that day.

9Let its morning stars remain dark.
Let it hope for light, but in vain; may it never see the morning light.

10Curse that day for failing to shut my mother's womb, for letting
me be born to see all this trouble.

11"Why wasn't I born dead?
Why didn't I die as I came from the womb?

12Why was I laid on my mother's lap?
Why did she nurse me at her breasts?

13Had I died at birth, I would now be at peace.
I would be asleep and at rest.

14I would rest with the world's kings and prime ministers, whose
great buildings now lie in ruins.

15I would rest with princes, rich in gold, whose palaces were filled
with silver.

16Why wasn't I buried like a stillborn child, like a baby who never
lives to see the light?

17For in death the wicked cause no trouble, and the weary are at
rest.

18Even captives are at ease in death, with no guards to curse them.

19Rich and poor are both there, and the slave is free from his
master.

20"Oh, why give light to those in misery, and life to those who are
bitter?

21They long for death, and it won't come.
They search for death more eagerly than for hidden treasure.

22They're filled with joy when they finally die, and rejoice when

they find the grave.

23Why is life given to those with no future, those God has
surrounded with difficulties?

24I cannot eat for sighing; my groans pour out like water.

25What I always feared has happened to me.
What I dreaded has come true.

26I have no peace, no quietness.
I have no rest; only trouble comes.”

Job 4

ELIPHAZ’S FIRST RESPONSE TO JOB

1Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied to Job:

2“Will you be patient and let me say a word?
For who could keep from speaking out?

3“In the past you have encouraged many people; you have
strengthened those who were weak.

4Your words have supported those who were falling; you
encouraged those with shaky knees.

5But now when trouble strikes, you lose heart.
You are terrified when it touches you.

6Doesn’t your reverence for God give you confidence?
Doesn’t your life of integrity give you hope?

7“Stop and think! Do the innocent die?
When have the upright been destroyed?

8My experience shows that those who plant trouble and cultivate
evil will harvest the same.

9A breath from God destroys them.
They vanish in a blast of his anger.

10The lion roars and the wildcat snarls, but the teeth of strong lions will be broken.

11The fierce lion will starve for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness will be scattered.

12“This truth was given to me in secret, as though whispered in my ear.

13It came to me in a disturbing vision at night, when people are in a deep sleep.

14Fear gripped me, and my bones trembled.

15A spirit* swept past my face, and my hair stood on end.*

16The spirit stopped, but I couldn’t see its shape.
There was a form before my eyes.
In the silence I heard a voice say,

17‘Can a mortal be innocent before God?
Can anyone be pure before the Creator?’

18“If God does not trust his own angels and has charged his messengers with foolishness,

19how much less will he trust people made of clay!
They are made of dust, crushed as easily as a moth.

20They are alive in the morning but dead by evening, gone forever without a trace.

21Their tent-cords are pulled and the tent collapses, and they die in ignorance.

Job 5

ELIPHAZ'S RESPONSE CONTINUES

1"Cry for help, but will anyone answer you?
Which of the angels* will help you?

2Surely resentment destroys the fool, and jealousy kills the simple.

3I have seen that fools may be successful for the moment, but then comes sudden disaster.

4Their children are abandoned far from help; they are crushed in court with no one to defend them.

5The hungry devour their harvest, even when it is guarded by brambles.*
The thirsty pant after their wealth.*

6But evil does not spring from the soil, and trouble does not sprout from the earth.

7People are born for trouble as readily as sparks fly up from a fire.

8"If I were you, I would go to God and present my case to him.

9He does great things too marvelous to understand.
He performs countless miracles.

10He gives rain for the earth and water for the fields.

11He gives prosperity to the poor and protects those who suffer.

12He frustrates the plans of schemers so the work of their hands will not succeed.

13He traps the wise in their own cleverness so their cunning schemes are thwarted.

14They find it is dark in the daytime, and they grope at noon as if it were night.

15He rescues the poor from the cutting words of the strong, and rescues them from the clutches of the powerful.

16And so at last the poor have hope, and the snapping jaws of the wicked are shut.

17"But consider the joy of those corrected by God!
Do not despise the discipline of the Almighty when you sin.

18For though he wounds, he also bandages.
He strikes, but his hands also heal.

19From six disasters he will rescue you; even in the seventh, he will keep you from evil.

20He will save you from death in time of famine, from the power of the sword in time of war.

21You will be safe from slander and have no fear when destruction comes.

22You will laugh at destruction and famine; wild animals will not terrify you.

23You will be at peace with the stones of the field, and its wild animals will be at peace with you.

24You will know that your home is safe.
When you survey your possessions, nothing will be missing.

25You will have many children; your descendants will be as
plentiful as grass!

26You will go to the grave at a ripe old age, like a sheaf of grain
harvested at the proper time!

27"We have studied life and found all this to be true.
Listen to my counsel, and apply it to yourself."

Job 6

JOB'S SECOND SPEECH: A RESPONSE TO ELIPHAZ

1Then Job spoke again:

2"If my misery could be weighed and my troubles be put on the
scales,

3they would outweigh all the sands of the sea.
That is why I spoke impulsively.

4For the Almighty has struck me down with his arrows.
Their poison infects my spirit.
God's terrors are lined up against me.

5Don't I have a right to complain?
Don't wild donkeys bray when they find no grass, and oxen bellow
when they have no food?

6Don't people complain about unsalted food?
Does anyone want the tasteless white of an egg?*

7My appetite disappears when I look at it; I gag at the thought of
eating it!

8"Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant my
desire.

9I wish he would crush me.

I wish he would reach out his hand and kill me.

10At least I can take comfort in this: Despite the pain, I have not
denied the words of the Holy One.

11But I don't have the strength to endure.
I have nothing to live for.

12Do I have the strength of a stone?
Is my body made of bronze?

13No, I am utterly helpless, without any chance of success.

14"One should be kind to a fainting friend, but you accuse me
without any fear of the Almighty.*

15My brothers, you have proved as unreliable as a seasonal brook
that overflows its banks in the spring

16when it is swollen with ice and melting snow.

17But when the hot weather arrives, the water disappears.
The brook vanishes in the heat.

18The caravans turn aside to be refreshed, but there is nothing to
drink, so they die.

19The caravans from Tema search for this water; the travelers from
Sheba hope to find it.

20They count on it but are disappointed.
When they arrive, their hopes are dashed.

21You, too, have given no help.
You have seen my calamity, and you are afraid.

22But why? Have I ever asked you for a gift?
Have I begged for anything of yours for myself?

23Have I asked you to rescue me from my enemies, or to save me
from ruthless people?

24Teach me, and I will keep quiet.
Show me what I have done wrong.

25Honest words can be painful, but what do your criticisms amount to?

26Do you think your words are convincing when you disregard my cry of desperation?

27You would even send an orphan into slavery*
or sell a friend.

28Look at me!
Would I lie to your face?

29Stop assuming my guilt, for I have done no wrong.

30Do you think I am lying?
Don't I know the difference between right and wrong?

Job 7

1"Is not all human life a struggle?
Our lives are like that of a hired hand,

2like a worker who longs for the shade, like a servant waiting to be paid.

3I, too, have been assigned months of futility, long and weary nights of misery.

4Lying in bed, I think, 'When will it be morning?'
But the night drags on, and I toss till dawn.

5My body is covered with maggots and scabs.
My skin breaks open, oozing with pus.

JOB CRIES OUT TO GOD

6"My days fly faster than a weaver's shuttle.

They end without hope.

7O God, remember that my life is but a breath, and I will never
again feel happiness.

8You see me now, but not for long.
You will look for me, but I will be gone.

9Just as a cloud dissipates and vanishes, those who die* will not
come back.

10They are gone forever from their home— never to be seen again.

11“I cannot keep from speaking.
I must express my anguish.
My bitter soul must complain.

12Am I a sea monster or a dragon that you must place me under
guard?

13I think, ‘My bed will comfort me, and sleep will ease my misery,’

14but then you shatter me with dreams and terrify me with visions.

15I would rather be strangled— rather die than suffer like this.

16I hate my life and don’t want to go on living.
Oh, leave me alone for my few remaining days.

17“What are people, that you should make so much of us, that you
should think of us so often?

18For you examine us every morning and test us every moment.

19Why won’t you leave me alone, at least long enough for me to
swallow!

20If I have sinned, what have I done to you, O watcher of all
humanity?
Why make me your target?

Am I a burden to you?*

21Why not just forgive my sin and take away my guilt?
For soon I will lie down in the dust and die.
When you look for me, I will be gone."

Job 8

BILDAD'S FIRST RESPONSE TO JOB

1Then Bildad the Shuhite replied to Job:

2"How long will you go on like this?
You sound like a blustering wind.

3Does God twist justice?
Does the Almighty twist what is right?

4Your children must have sinned against him, so their punishment was well deserved.

5But if you pray to God and seek the favor of the Almighty,

6and if you are pure and live with integrity, he will surely rise up and restore your happy home.

7And though you started with little, you will end with much.

8"Just ask the previous generation.
Pay attention to the experience of our ancestors.

9For we were born but yesterday and know nothing.
Our days on earth are as fleeting as a shadow.

10But those who came before us will teach you.
They will teach you the wisdom of old.

11"Can papyrus reeds grow tall without a marsh?
Can marsh grass flourish without water?

12While they are still flowering, not ready to be cut, they begin to

wither more quickly than grass.

13The same happens to all who forget God.
The hopes of the godless evaporate.

14Their confidence hangs by a thread.
They are leaning on a spider's web.

15They cling to their home for security, but it won't last.
They try to hold it tight, but it will not endure.

16The godless seem like a lush plant growing in the sunshine, its branches spreading across the garden.

17Its roots grow down through a pile of stones; it takes hold on a bed of rocks.

18But when it is uprooted, it's as though it never existed!

19That's the end of its life, and others spring up from the earth to replace it.

20"But look, God will not reject a person of integrity, nor will he lend a hand to the wicked.

21He will once again fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy.

22Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the home of the wicked will be destroyed."

Job 9

JOB'S THIRD SPEECH: A RESPONSE TO BILDAD

1Then Job spoke again:

2"Yes, I know all this is true in principle.
But how can a person be declared innocent in God's sight?

3If someone wanted to take God to court,*
would it be possible to answer him even once in a thousand times?

4For God is so wise and so mighty.
Who has ever challenged him successfully?

5“Without warning, he moves the mountains, overturning them in his anger.

6He shakes the earth from its place, and its foundations tremble.

7If he commands it, the sun won’t rise and the stars won’t shine.

8He alone has spread out the heavens and marches on the waves of the sea.

9He made all the stars—the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the southern sky.

10He does great things too marvelous to understand.
He performs countless miracles.

11“Yet when he comes near, I cannot see him.
When he moves by, I do not see him go.

12If he snatches someone in death, who can stop him?
Who dares to ask, ‘What are you doing?’

13And God does not restrain his anger.
Even the monsters of the sea* are crushed beneath his feet.

14“So who am I, that I should try to answer God or even reason with him?

15Even if I were right, I would have no defense.
I could only plead for mercy.

16And even if I summoned him and he responded, I’m not sure he would listen to me.

17For he attacks me with a storm and repeatedly wounds me

without cause.

18He will not let me catch my breath, but fills me instead with bitter sorrows.

19If it's a question of strength, he's the strong one.
If it's a matter of justice, who dares to summon him* to court?

20Though I am innocent, my own mouth would pronounce me guilty.
Though I am blameless, it* would prove me wicked.

21"I am innocent, but it makes no difference to me— I despise my life.

22Innocent or wicked, it is all the same to God.
That's why I say, 'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.'

23When a plague* sweeps through, he laughs at the death of the innocent.

24The whole earth is in the hands of the wicked, and God blinds the eyes of the judges.
If he's not the one who does it, who is?

25"My life passes more swiftly than a runner.
It flees away without a glimpse of happiness.

26It disappears like a swift papyrus boat, like an eagle swooping down on its prey.

27If I decided to forget my complaints, to put away my sad face and be cheerful,

28I would still dread all the pain, for I know you will not find me innocent, O God.

29Whatever happens, I will be found guilty.
So what's the use of trying?

30Even if I were to wash myself with soap and clean my hands with lye,

31you would plunge me into a muddy ditch, and my own filthy clothing would hate me.

32“God is not a mortal like me, so I cannot argue with him or take him to trial.

33If only there were a mediator between us, someone who could bring us together.

34The mediator could make God stop beating me, and I would no longer live in terror of his punishment.

35Then I could speak to him without fear, but I cannot do that in my own strength.

Job 10

JOB FRAMES HIS PLEA TO GOD

1“I am disgusted with my life.
Let me complain freely.
My bitter soul must complain.

2I will say to God, ‘Don’t simply condemn me— tell me the charge you are bringing against me.

3What do you gain by oppressing me?
Why do you reject me, the work of your own hands, while smiling on the schemes of the wicked?

4Are your eyes like those of a human?
Do you see things only as people see them?

5Is your lifetime only as long as ours?
Is your life so short

6that you must quickly probe for my guilt and search for my sin?

7Although you know I am not guilty, no one can rescue me from your hands.

8“‘You formed me with your hands; you made me, yet now you completely destroy me.

9Remember that you made me from dust— will you turn me back to dust so soon?

10You guided my conception and formed me in the womb.*

11You clothed me with skin and flesh, and you knit my bones and sinews together.

12You gave me life and showed me your unfailing love.
My life was preserved by your care.

13“‘Yet your real motive— your true intent—

14was to watch me, and if I sinned, you would not forgive my guilt.

15If I am guilty, too bad for me; and even if I’m innocent, I can’t hold my head high, because I am filled with shame and misery.

16And if I hold my head high, you hunt me like a lion and display your awesome power against me.

17Again and again you witness against me.
You pour out your growing anger on me and bring fresh armies against me.

18“‘Why, then, did you deliver me from my mother’s womb?
Why didn’t you let me die at birth?

19It would be as though I had never existed, going directly from the womb to the grave.

20I have only a few days left, so leave me alone, that I may have a moment of comfort

21before I leave—never to return— for the land of darkness and

utter gloom.

22It is a land as dark as midnight, a land of gloom and confusion,
where even the light is dark as midnight.'"

Job 11

ZOPHAR'S FIRST RESPONSE TO JOB

1Then Zophar the Naamathite replied to Job:

2"Shouldn't someone answer this torrent of words?
Is a person proved innocent just by a lot of talking?

3Should I remain silent while you babble on?
When you mock God, shouldn't someone make you ashamed?

4You claim, 'My beliefs are pure,'
and 'I am clean in the sight of God.'

5If only God would speak; if only he would tell you what he thinks!

6If only he would tell you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom is not a simple matter.
Listen! God is doubtless punishing you far less than you deserve!

7"Can you solve the mysteries of God?
Can you discover everything about the Almighty?

8Such knowledge is higher than the heavens— and who are you?
It is deeper than the underworld*— what do you know?

9It is broader than the earth and wider than the sea.

10If God comes and puts a person in prison or calls the court to order, who can stop him?

11For he knows those who are false, and he takes note of all their sins.

12An empty-headed person won't become wise any more than a wild donkey can bear a human child.*

13"If only you would prepare your heart and lift up your hands to him in prayer!

14Get rid of your sins, and leave all iniquity behind you.

15Then your face will brighten with innocence.
You will be strong and free of fear.

16You will forget your misery; it will be like water flowing away.

17Your life will be brighter than the noonday.
Even darkness will be as bright as morning.

18Having hope will give you courage.
You will be protected and will rest in safety.

19You will lie down unafraid, and many will look to you for help.

20But the wicked will be blinded.
They will have no escape.
Their only hope is death."

Job 12

JOB'S FOURTH SPEECH: A RESPONSE TO ZOPHAR

1Then Job spoke again:

2"You people really know everything, don't you?
And when you die, wisdom will die with you!

3Well, I know a few things myself— and you're no better than I am.
Who doesn't know these things you've been saying?

4Yet my friends laugh at me, for I call on God and expect an answer.

I am a just and blameless man, yet they laugh at me.

5People who are at ease mock those in trouble.
They give a push to people who are stumbling.

6But robbers are left in peace, and those who provoke God live in safety— though God keeps them in his power.*

7“Just ask the animals, and they will teach you.
Ask the birds of the sky, and they will tell you.

8Speak to the earth, and it will instruct you.
Let the fish in the sea speak to you.

9For they all know that my disaster* has come from the hand of the LORD.

10For the life of every living thing is in his hand, and the breath of every human being.

11The ear tests the words it hears just as the mouth distinguishes between foods.

12Wisdom belongs to the aged, and understanding to the old.

13“But true wisdom and power are found in God; counsel and understanding are his.

14What he destroys cannot be rebuilt.
When he puts someone in prison, there is no escape.

15If he holds back the rain, the earth becomes a desert.
If he releases the waters, they flood the earth.

16Yes, strength and wisdom are his; deceivers and deceived are both in his power.

17He leads counselors away, stripped of good judgment; wise judges become fools.

18He removes the royal robe of kings.
They are led away with ropes around their waist.

19He leads priests away, stripped of status; he overthrows those with long years in power.

20He silences the trusted adviser and removes the insight of the elders.

21He pours disgrace upon princes and disarms the strong.

22“He uncovers mysteries hidden in darkness; he brings light to the deepest gloom.

23He builds up nations, and he destroys them.
He expands nations, and he abandons them.

24He strips kings of understanding and leaves them wandering in a pathless wasteland.

25They grope in the darkness without a light.
He makes them stagger like drunkards.

Job 13

JOB WANTS TO ARGUE HIS CASE WITH GOD

1“Look, I have seen all this with my own eyes and heard it with my own ears, and now I understand.

2I know as much as you do.
You are no better than I am.

3As for me, I would speak directly to the Almighty.
I want to argue my case with God himself.

4As for you, you smear me with lies.
As physicians, you are worthless quacks.

5If only you could be silent!
That’s the wisest thing you could do.

6Listen to my charge; pay attention to my arguments.

7“Are you defending God with lies?
Do you make your dishonest arguments for his sake?

8Will you slant your testimony in his favor?
Will you argue God’s case for him?

9What will happen when he finds out what you are doing?
Can you fool him as easily as you fool people?

10No, you will be in trouble with him if you secretly slant your testimony in his favor.

11Doesn’t his majesty terrify you?
Doesn’t your fear of him overwhelm you?

12Your platitudes are as valuable as ashes.
Your defense is as fragile as a clay pot.

13“Be silent now and leave me alone.
Let me speak, and I will face the consequences.

14Why should I put myself in mortal danger*
and take my life in my own hands?

15God might kill me, but I have no other hope.*
I am going to argue my case with him.

16But this is what will save me—I am not godless.
If I were, I could not stand before him.

17“Listen closely to what I am about to say.
Hear me out.

18I have prepared my case; I will be proved innocent.

19Who can argue with me over this?
And if you prove me wrong, I will remain silent and die.

JOB ASKS HOW HE HAS SINNED

20“O God, grant me these two things, and then I will be able to face
you.

21Remove your heavy hand from me, and don’t terrify me with your
awesome presence.

22Now summon me, and I will answer!
Or let me speak to you, and you reply.

23Tell me, what have I done wrong?
Show me my rebellion and my sin.

24Why do you turn away from me?
Why do you treat me as your enemy?

25Would you terrify a leaf blown by the wind?
Would you chase dry straw?

26“You write bitter accusations against me and bring up all the sins
of my youth.

27You put my feet in stocks.
You examine all my paths.
You trace all my footprints.

28I waste away like rotting wood, like a moth-eaten coat.

Job 14

1“How frail is humanity!
How short is life, how full of trouble!

2We blossom like a flower and then wither.
Like a passing shadow, we quickly disappear.

3Must you keep an eye on such a frail creature and demand an
accounting from me?

4Who can bring purity out of an impure person?
No one!

5You have decided the length of our lives.
You know how many months we will live, and we are not given a minute longer.

6So leave us alone and let us rest!
We are like hired hands, so let us finish our work in peace.

7“Even a tree has more hope!
If it is cut down, it will sprout again and grow new branches.

8Though its roots have grown old in the earth and its stump decays,

9at the scent of water it will bud and sprout again like a new seedling.

10“But when people die, their strength is gone.
They breathe their last, and then where are they?

11As water evaporates from a lake and a river disappears in drought,

12people are laid to rest and do not rise again.
Until the heavens are no more, they will not wake up nor be roused from their sleep.

13“I wish you would hide me in the grave*
and forget me there until your anger has passed.
But mark your calendar to think of me again!

14Can the dead live again?
If so, this would give me hope through all my years of struggle, and I would eagerly await the release of death.

15You would call and I would answer, and you would yearn for me, your handiwork.

16For then you would guard my steps, instead of watching for my sins.

17My sins would be sealed in a pouch, and you would cover my guilt.

18“But instead, as mountains fall and crumble and as rocks fall from a cliff,

19as water wears away the stones and floods wash away the soil, so you destroy people’s hope.

20You always overpower them, and they pass from the scene.
You disfigure them in death and send them away.

21They never know if their children grow up in honor or sink to insignificance.

22They suffer painfully; their life is full of trouble.”

Job 15

ELIPHAZ’S SECOND RESPONSE TO JOB

1Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2“A wise man wouldn’t answer with such empty talk!
You are nothing but a windbag.

3The wise don’t engage in empty chatter.
What good are such words?

4Have you no fear of God, no reverence for him?

5Your sins are telling your mouth what to say.
Your words are based on clever deception.

6Your own mouth condemns you, not I.
Your own lips testify against you.

7“Were you the first person ever born?
Were you born before the hills were made?

8Were you listening at God’s secret council?

Do you have a monopoly on wisdom?

9What do you know that we don't?
What do you understand that we do not?

10On our side are aged, gray-haired men much older than your father!

11"Is God's comfort too little for you?
Is his gentle word not enough?

12What has taken away your reason?
What has weakened your vision,*

13that you turn against God and say all these evil things?

14Can any mortal be pure?
Can anyone born of a woman be just?

15Look, God does not even trust the angels.*
Even the heavens are not absolutely pure in his sight.

16How much less pure is a corrupt and sinful person with a thirst for wickedness!

17"If you will listen, I will show you.
I will answer you from my own experience.

18And it is confirmed by the reports of wise men who have heard the same thing from their fathers—

19from those to whom the land was given long before any foreigners arrived.

20"The wicked writhe in pain throughout their lives.
Years of trouble are stored up for the ruthless.

21The sound of terror rings in their ears, and even on good days they fear the attack of the destroyer.

22They dare not go out into the darkness for fear they will be murdered.

23They wander around, saying, ‘Where can I find bread?’*
They know their day of destruction is near.

24That dark day terrifies them.
They live in distress and anguish, like a king preparing for battle.

25For they shake their fists at God, defying the Almighty.

26Holding their strong shields, they defiantly charge against him.

27“These wicked people are heavy and prosperous; their waists bulge with fat.

28But their cities will be ruined.
They will live in abandoned houses that are ready to tumble down.

29Their riches will not last, and their wealth will not endure.
Their possessions will no longer spread across the horizon.

30“They will not escape the darkness.
The burning sun will wither their shoots, and the breath of God will destroy them.

31Let them no longer fool themselves by trusting in empty riches,
for emptiness will be their only reward.

32They will be cut down in the prime of life; their branches will never again be green.

33They will be like a vine whose grapes are harvested too early, like an olive tree that loses its blossoms before the fruit can form.

34For the godless are barren.
Their homes, enriched through bribery, will burn.

35They conceive trouble and give birth to evil.
Their womb produces deceit.”

Job 16

JOB'S FIFTH SPEECH: A RESPONSE TO ELIPHAZ

1Then Job spoke again:

2"I have heard all this before.
What miserable comforters you are!

3Won't you ever stop blowing hot air?
What makes you keep on talking?

4I could say the same things if you were in my place.
I could spout off criticism and shake my head at you.

5But if it were me, I would encourage you.
I would try to take away your grief.

6Instead, I suffer if I defend myself, and I suffer no less if I refuse to speak.

7"O God, you have ground me down and devastated my family.

8As if to prove I have sinned, you've reduced me to skin and bones.
My gaunt flesh testifies against me.

9God hates me and angrily tears me apart.
He snaps his teeth at me and pierces me with his eyes.

10People jeer and laugh at me.
They slap my cheek in contempt.
A mob gathers against me.

11God has handed me over to sinners.
He has tossed me into the hands of the wicked.

12"I was living quietly until he shattered me.
He took me by the neck and broke me in pieces.
Then he set me up as his target,

13and now his archers surround me.
His arrows pierce me without mercy.
The ground is wet with my blood.*

14Again and again he smashes against me, charging at me like a warrior.

15I wear burlap to show my grief.
My pride lies in the dust.

16My eyes are red with weeping; dark shadows circle my eyes.

17Yet I have done no wrong, and my prayer is pure.

18"O earth, do not conceal my blood.
Let it cry out on my behalf.

19Even now my witness is in heaven.
My advocate is there on high.

20My friends scorn me, but I pour out my tears to God.

21I need someone to mediate between God and me, as a person mediates between friends.

22For soon I must go down that road from which I will never return.

Job 17

JOB CONTINUES TO DEFEND HIS INNOCENCE

1"My spirit is crushed, and my life is nearly snuffed out.
The grave is ready to receive me.

2I am surrounded by mockers.
I watch how bitterly they taunt me.

3"You must defend my innocence, O God, since no one else will stand up for me.

4You have closed their minds to understanding, but do not let them

triumph.

5They betray their friends for their own advantage, so let their
children faint with hunger.

6“God has made a mockery of me among the people; they spit in my
face.

7My eyes are swollen with weeping, and I am but a shadow of my
former self.

8The virtuous are horrified when they see me.
The innocent rise up against the ungodly.

9The righteous keep moving forward, and those with clean hands
become stronger and stronger.

10“As for all of you, come back with a better argument, though I
still won’t find a wise man among you.

11My days are over.
My hopes have disappeared.
My heart’s desires are broken.

12These men say that night is day; they claim that the darkness is
light.

13What if I go to the grave*
and make my bed in darkness?

14What if I call the grave my father, and the maggot my mother or
my sister?

15Where then is my hope?
Can anyone find it?

16No, my hope will go down with me to the grave.
We will rest together in the dust!”

Job 18

BILDAD'S SECOND RESPONSE TO JOB

1Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

2"How long before you stop talking?
Speak sense if you want us to answer!

3Do you think we are mere animals?
Do you think we are stupid?

4You may tear out your hair in anger, but will that destroy the earth?
Will it make the rocks tremble?

5"Surely the light of the wicked will be snuffed out.
The sparks of their fire will not glow.

6The light in their tent will grow dark.
The lamp hanging above them will be quenched.

7The confident stride of the wicked will be shortened.
Their own schemes will be their downfall.

8The wicked walk into a net.
They fall into a pit.

9A trap grabs them by the heel.
A snare holds them tight.

10A noose lies hidden on the ground.
A rope is stretched across their path.

11"Terrors surround the wicked and trouble them at every step.

12Hunger depletes their strength, and calamity waits for them to stumble.

13Disease eats their skin; death devours their limbs.

14They are torn from the security of their homes and are brought down to the king of terrors.

15The homes of the wicked will burn down; burning sulfur rains on
their houses.

16Their roots will dry up, and their branches will wither.

17All memory of their existence will fade from the earth; no one will
remember their names.

18They will be thrust from light into darkness, driven from the
world.

19They will have neither children nor grandchildren, nor any
survivor in the place where they lived.

20People in the west are appalled at their fate; people in the east are
horrified.

21They will say, ‘This was the home of a wicked person, the place of
one who rejected God.’”

Job 19

JOB’S SIXTH SPEECH: A RESPONSE TO BILDAD

1Then Job spoke again:

2“How long will you torture me?
How long will you try to crush me with your words?

3You have already insulted me ten times.
You should be ashamed of treating me so badly.

4Even if I have sinned, that is my concern, not yours.

5You think you’re better than I am, using my humiliation as evidence of my sin.

6But it is God who has wronged me, capturing me in his net.*

7“I cry out, ‘Help!’ but no one answers me.
I protest, but there is no justice.

8God has blocked my way so I cannot move.
He has plunged my path into darkness.

9He has stripped me of my honor and removed the crown from my head.

10He has demolished me on every side, and I am finished.
He has uprooted my hope like a fallen tree.

11His fury burns against me; he counts me as an enemy.

12His troops advance.
They build up roads to attack me.
They camp all around my tent.

13“My relatives stay far away, and my friends have turned against me.

14My family is gone, and my close friends have forgotten me.

15My servants and maids consider me a stranger.
I am like a foreigner to them.

16When I call my servant, he doesn’t come; I have to plead with

him!

17My breath is repulsive to my wife.
I am rejected by my own family.

18Even young children despise me.
When I stand to speak, they turn their backs on me.

19My close friends detest me.
Those I loved have turned against me.

20I have been reduced to skin and bones and have escaped death by the skin of my teeth.

21“Have mercy on me, my friends, have mercy, for the hand of God has struck me.

22Must you also persecute me, like God does?
Haven’t you chewed me up enough?

23“Oh, that my words could be recorded.
Oh, that they could be inscribed on a monument,

24carved with an iron chisel and filled with lead, engraved forever in the rock.

25“But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last.

26And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God!*

27I will see him for myself.
Yes, I will see him with my own eyes.
I am overwhelmed at the thought!

28“How dare you go on persecuting me, saying, ‘It’s his own fault’?

29You should fear punishment yourselves, for your attitude deserves punishment.
Then you will know that there is indeed a judgment.”

Job 20

ZOPHAR'S SECOND RESPONSE TO JOB

1Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

2"I must reply because I am greatly disturbed.

3I've had to endure your insults, but now my spirit prompts me to reply.

4"Don't you realize that from the beginning of time, ever since people were first placed on the earth,

5the triumph of the wicked has been short lived and the joy of the godless has been only temporary?

6Though the pride of the godless reaches to the heavens and their heads touch the clouds,

7yet they will vanish forever, thrown away like their own dung.
Those who knew them will ask, 'Where are they?'

8They will fade like a dream and not be found.
They will vanish like a vision in the night.

9Those who once saw them will see them no more.
Their families will never see them again.

10Their children will beg from the poor, for they must give back their stolen riches.

11Though they are young, their bones will lie in the dust.

12“They enjoyed the sweet taste of wickedness, letting it melt under their tongue.

13They savored it, holding it long in their mouths.

14But suddenly the food in their bellies turns sour, a poisonous venom in their stomach.

15They will vomit the wealth they swallowed.
God won’t let them keep it down.

16They will suck the poison of cobras.
The viper will kill them.

17They will never again enjoy streams of olive oil or rivers of milk and honey.

18They will give back everything they worked for.
Their wealth will bring them no joy.

19For they oppressed the poor and left them destitute.
They foreclosed on their homes.

20They were always greedy and never satisfied.
Nothing remains of all the things they dreamed about.

21Nothing is left after they finish gorging themselves.
Therefore, their prosperity will not endure.

22“In the midst of plenty, they will run into trouble and be overcome by misery.

23May God give them a bellyful of trouble.
May God rain down his anger upon them.

24When they try to escape an iron weapon, a bronze-tipped arrow will pierce them.

25The arrow is pulled from their back, and the arrowhead glistens

with blood.*
The terrors of death are upon them.

26Their treasures will be thrown into deepest darkness.
A wildfire will devour their goods, consuming all they have left.

27The heavens will reveal their guilt, and the earth will testify
against them.

28A flood will sweep away their house.
God's anger will descend on them in torrents.

29This is the reward that God gives the wicked.
It is the inheritance decreed by God."

Job 21

JOB'S SEVENTH SPEECH: A RESPONSE TO ZOPHAR

1Then Job spoke again:

2"Listen closely to what I am saying.
That's one consolation you can give me.

3Bear with me, and let me speak.
After I have spoken, you may resume mocking me.

4"My complaint is with God, not with people.
I have good reason to be so impatient.

5Look at me and be stunned.
Put your hand over your mouth in shock.

6When I think about what I am saying, I shudder.
My body trembles.

7"Why do the wicked prosper, growing old and powerful?

8They live to see their children grow up and settle down, and they
enjoy their grandchildren.

9Their homes are safe from every fear, and God does not punish them.

10Their bulls never fail to breed.
Their cows bear calves and never miscarry.

11They let their children frisk about like lambs.
Their little ones skip and dance.

12They sing with tambourine and harp.
They celebrate to the sound of the flute.

13They spend their days in prosperity, then go down to the grave* in peace.

14And yet they say to God, ‘Go away.
We want no part of you and your ways.

15Who is the Almighty, and why should we obey him?
What good will it do us to pray?’

16(They think their prosperity is of their own doing, but I will have nothing to do with that kind of thinking.)

17“Yet the light of the wicked never seems to be extinguished.
Do they ever have trouble?
Does God distribute sorrows to them in anger?

18Are they driven before the wind like straw?
Are they carried away by the storm like chaff?
Not at all!

19“‘Well,’ you say, ‘at least God will punish their children!’
But I say he should punish the ones who sin, so that they understand his judgment.

20Let them see their destruction with their own eyes.
Let them drink deeply of the anger of the Almighty.

21For they will not care what happens to their family after they are dead.

22“But who can teach a lesson to God, since he judges even the most
powerful?

23One person dies in prosperity, completely comfortable and secure,

24the picture of good health, vigorous and fit.

25Another person dies in bitter poverty, never having tasted the
good life.

26But both are buried in the same dust, both eaten by the same
maggots.

27“Look, I know what you’re thinking.
I know the schemes you plot against me.

28You will tell me of rich and wicked people whose houses have
vanished because of their sins.

29But ask those who have been around, and they will tell you the
truth.

30Evil people are spared in times of calamity and are allowed to
escape disaster.

31No one criticizes them openly or pays them back for what they
have done.

32When they are carried to the grave, an honor guard keeps watch
at their tomb.

33A great funeral procession goes to the cemetery.
Many pay their respects as the body is laid to rest, and the earth
gives sweet repose.

34“How can your empty clichés comfort me?
All your explanations are lies!”

Job 22

ELIPHAZ’S THIRD RESPONSE TO JOB

1Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2“Can a person do anything to help God?
Can even a wise person be helpful to him?

3Is it any advantage to the Almighty if you are righteous?
Would it be any gain to him if you were perfect?

4Is it because you’re so pious that he accuses you and brings judgment against you?

5No, it’s because of your wickedness!
There’s no limit to your sins.

6“For example, you must have lent money to your friend and demanded clothing as security.
Yes, you stripped him to the bone.

7You must have refused water for the thirsty and food for the hungry.

8You probably think the land belongs to the powerful and only the privileged have a right to it!

9You must have sent widows away empty-handed and crushed the hopes of orphans.

10That is why you are surrounded by traps and tremble from sudden fears.

11That is why you cannot see in the darkness, and waves of water cover you.

12“God is so great—higher than the heavens, higher than the farthest stars.

13But you reply, ‘That’s why God can’t see what I am doing!
How can he judge through the thick darkness?

14For thick clouds swirl about him, and he cannot see us.
He is way up there, walking on the vault of heaven.’

15“Will you continue on the old paths where evil people have
walked?

16They were snatched away in the prime of life, the foundations of
their lives washed away.

17For they said to God, ‘Leave us alone!
What can the Almighty do to us?’

18Yet he was the one who filled their homes with good things, so I
will have nothing to do with that kind of thinking.

19“The righteous will be happy to see the wicked destroyed, and the
innocent will laugh in contempt.

20They will say, ‘See how our enemies have been destroyed.
The last of them have been consumed in the fire.’

21“Submit to God, and you will have peace; then things will go well
for you.

22Listen to his instructions, and store them in your heart.

23If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored— so clean up
your life.

24If you give up your lust for money and throw your precious gold
into the river,

25the Almighty himself will be your treasure.
He will be your precious silver!

26“Then you will take delight in the Almighty and look up to God.

27You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will fulfill
your vows to him.

28You will succeed in whatever you choose to do, and light will
shine on the road ahead of you.

29If people are in trouble and you say, ‘Help them,’
God will save them.

30Even sinners will be rescued; they will be rescued because your
hands are pure.”

Job 23

JOB’S EIGHTH SPEECH: A RESPONSE TO ELIPHAZ

1Then Job spoke again:

2“My complaint today is still a bitter one, and I try hard not to
groan aloud.

3If only I knew where to find God, I would go to his court.

4I would lay out my case and present my arguments.

5Then I would listen to his reply and understand what he says to
me.

6Would he use his great power to argue with me?
No, he would give me a fair hearing.

7Honest people can reason with him, so I would be forever
acquitted by my judge.

8I go east, but he is not there.
I go west, but I cannot find him.

9I do not see him in the north, for he is hidden.
I look to the south, but he is concealed.

10“But he knows where I am going.
And when he tests me, I will come out as pure as gold.

11For I have stayed on God’s paths; I have followed his ways and
not turned aside.

12I have not departed from his commands, but have treasured his
words more than daily food.

13But once he has made his decision, who can change his mind?

Whatever he wants to do, he does.

14So he will do to me whatever he has planned.
He controls my destiny.

15No wonder I am so terrified in his presence.
When I think of it, terror grips me.

16God has made me sick at heart; the Almighty has terrified me.

17Darkness is all around me; thick, impenetrable darkness is everywhere.

Job 24

JOB ASKS WHY THE WICKED ARE NOT PUNISHED

1“Why doesn’t the Almighty bring the wicked to judgment?
Why must the godly wait for him in vain?

2Evil people steal land by moving the boundary markers.
They steal livestock and put them in their own pastures.

3They take the orphan’s donkey and demand the widow’s ox as security for a loan.

4The poor are pushed off the path; the needy must hide together for safety.

5Like wild donkeys in the wilderness, the poor must spend all their time looking for food, searching even in the desert for food for their children.

6They harvest a field they do not own, and they glean in the vineyards of the wicked.

7All night they lie naked in the cold, without clothing or covering.

8They are soaked by mountain showers, and they huddle against the rocks for want of a home.

9“The wicked snatch a widow’s child from her breast, taking the
baby as security for a loan.

10The poor must go about naked, without any clothing.
They harvest food for others while they themselves are starving.

11They press out olive oil without being allowed to taste it, and they
tread in the winepress as they suffer from thirst.

12The groans of the dying rise from the city, and the wounded cry
for help, yet God ignores their moaning.

13“Wicked people rebel against the light.
They refuse to acknowledge its ways or stay in its paths.

14The murderer rises in the early dawn to kill the poor and needy;
at night he is a thief.

15The adulterer waits for the twilight, saying, ‘No one will see me
then.’
He hides his face so no one will know him.

16Thieves break into houses at night and sleep in the daytime.
They are not acquainted with the light.

17The black night is their morning.
They ally themselves with the terrors of the darkness.

18“But they disappear like foam down a river.
Everything they own is cursed, and they are afraid to enter their
own vineyards.

19The grave* consumes sinners just as drought and heat consume
snow.

20Their own mothers will forget them.
Maggots will find them sweet to eat.
No one will remember them.
Wicked people are broken like a tree in the storm.

21They cheat the woman who has no son to help her.

They refuse to help the needy widow.

22“God, in his power, drags away the rich.
They may rise high, but they have no assurance of life.

23They may be allowed to live in security, but God is always watching them.

24And though they are great now, in a moment they will be gone like all others, cut off like heads of grain.

25Can anyone claim otherwise?
Who can prove me wrong?”

Job 25

BILDAD’S THIRD RESPONSE TO JOB

1Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

2“God is powerful and dreadful.
He enforces peace in the heavens.

3Who is able to count his heavenly army?
Doesn’t his light shine on all the earth?

4How can a mortal be innocent before God?
Can anyone born of a woman be pure?

5God is more glorious than the moon; he shines brighter than the stars.

6In comparison, people are maggots; we mortals are mere worms.”

Job 26

JOB’S NINTH SPEECH: A RESPONSE TO BILDAD

1Then Job spoke again:

2“How you have helped the powerless!
How you have saved the weak!

3How you have enlightened my stupidity!
What wise advice you have offered!

4Where have you gotten all these wise sayings?
Whose spirit speaks through you?

5“The dead tremble— those who live beneath the waters.

6The underworld* is naked in God’s presence.
The place of destruction* is uncovered.

7God stretches the northern sky over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.

8He wraps the rain in his thick clouds, and the clouds don’t burst with the weight.

9He covers the face of the moon,*
shrouding it with his clouds.

10He created the horizon when he separated the waters; he set the boundary between day and night.

11The foundations of heaven tremble; they shudder at his rebuke.

12By his power the sea grew calm.
By his skill he crushed the great sea monster.*

13His Spirit made the heavens beautiful, and his power pierced the gliding serpent.

14These are just the beginning of all that he does, merely a whisper of his power.
Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of his power?”

Job 27

JOB'S FINAL SPEECH

1Job continued speaking:

2"I vow by the living God, who has taken away my rights, by the
Almighty who has embittered my soul—

3As long as I live, while I have breath from God,

4my lips will speak no evil, and my tongue will speak no lies.

5I will never concede that you are right; I will defend my integrity
until I die.

6I will maintain my innocence without wavering.
My conscience is clear for as long as I live.

7"May my enemy be punished like the wicked, my adversary like
those who do evil.

ANCIENT WRITINGS ABOUT SUFFERING

8For what hope do the godless have when God cuts them off and
takes away their life?

9Will God listen to their cry when trouble comes upon them?

10Can they take delight in the Almighty?
Can they call to God at any time?

11I will teach you about God's power.
I will not conceal anything concerning the Almighty.

12But you have seen all this, yet you say all these useless things to
me.

13“This is what the wicked will receive from God; this is their
inheritance from the Almighty.

14They may have many children, but the children will die in war or
starve to death.

15Those who survive will die of a plague, and not even their widows
will mourn them.

16“Evil people may have piles of money and may store away
mounds of clothing.

17But the righteous will wear that clothing, and the innocent will
divide that money.

18The wicked build houses as fragile as a spider’s web,*
as flimsy as a shelter made of branches.

19The wicked go to bed rich but wake to find that all their wealth is
gone.

20Terror overwhelms them like a flood, and they are blown away in
the storms of the night.

21The east wind carries them away, and they are gone.
It sweeps them away.

22It whirls down on them without mercy.
They struggle to flee from its power.

23But everyone jeers at them and mocks them.

Job 28

JOB SPEAKS OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING

1“People know where to mine silver and how to refine gold.

2They know where to dig iron from the earth and how to smelt
copper from rock.

3They know how to shine light in the darkness and explore the farthest regions of the earth as they search in the dark for ore.

4They sink a mine shaft into the earth far from where anyone lives. They descend on ropes, swinging back and forth.

5Food is grown on the earth above, but down below, the earth is melted as by fire.

6Here the rocks contain precious lapis lazuli, and the dust contains gold.

7These are treasures no bird of prey can see, no falcon's eye observe.

8No wild animal has walked upon these treasures; no lion has ever set his paw there.

9People know how to tear apart flinty rocks and overturn the roots of mountains.

10They cut tunnels in the rocks and uncover precious stones.

11They dam up the trickling streams and bring to light the hidden treasures.

12"But do people know where to find wisdom?
Where can they find understanding?

13No one knows where to find it,*
for it is not found among the living.

14'It is not here,' says the ocean.
'Nor is it here,' says the sea.

15It cannot be bought with gold.
It cannot be purchased with silver.

16It's worth more than all the gold of Ophir, greater than precious onyx or lapis lazuli.

17Wisdom is more valuable than gold and crystal.
It cannot be purchased with jewels mounted in fine gold.

18Coral and jasper are worthless in trying to get it.
The price of wisdom is far above rubies.

19Precious peridot from Ethiopia* cannot be exchanged for it.
It's worth more than the purest gold.

20"But do people know where to find wisdom?
Where can they find understanding?

21It is hidden from the eyes of all humanity.
Even the sharp-eyed birds in the sky cannot discover it.

22Destruction* and Death say, 'We've heard only rumors of where wisdom can be found.'

23"God alone understands the way to wisdom; he knows where it can be found,

24for he looks throughout the whole earth and sees everything under the heavens.

25He decided how hard the winds should blow and how much rain should fall.

26He made the laws for the rain and laid out a path for the lightning.

27Then he saw wisdom and evaluated it.
He set it in place and examined it thoroughly.

28And this is what he says to all humanity: 'The fear of the Lord is true wisdom; to forsake evil is real understanding.'"

Job 29

JOB SPEAKS OF HIS FORMER BLESSINGS

1Job continued speaking:

2“I long for the years gone by when God took care of me,

3when he lit up the way before me and I walked safely through the darkness.

4When I was in my prime, God’s friendship was felt in my home.

5The Almighty was still with me, and my children were around me.

6My steps were awash in cream, and the rocks gushed olive oil for me.

7“Those were the days when I went to the city gate and took my place among the honored leaders.

8The young stepped aside when they saw me, and even the aged rose in respect at my coming.

9The princes stood in silence and put their hands over their mouths.

10The highest officials of the city stood quietly, holding their tongues in respect.

11“All who heard me praised me.
All who saw me spoke well of me.

12For I assisted the poor in their need and the orphans who required help.

13I helped those without hope, and they blessed me.
And I caused the widows’ hearts to sing for joy.

14Everything I did was honest.
Righteousness covered me like a robe, and I wore justice like a turban.

15I served as eyes for the blind and feet for the lame.

16I was a father to the poor and assisted strangers who needed help.

17I broke the jaws of godless oppressors and plucked their victims
from their teeth.

18“I thought, ‘Surely I will die surrounded by my family after a long,
good life.*

19For I am like a tree whose roots reach the water, whose branches
are refreshed with the dew.

20New honors are constantly bestowed on me, and my strength is
continually renewed.’

21“Everyone listened to my advice.
They were silent as they waited for me to speak.

22And after I spoke, they had nothing to add, for my counsel
satisfied them.

23They longed for me to speak as people long for rain.
They drank my words like a refreshing spring rain.

24When they were discouraged, I smiled at them.
My look of approval was precious to them.

25Like a chief, I told them what to do.
I lived like a king among his troops and comforted those who
mourned.

Job 30

JOB SPEAKS OF HIS ANGUISH

1“But now I am mocked by people younger than I, by young men
whose fathers are not worthy to run with my sheepdogs.

2A lot of good they are to me— those worn-out wretches!

3They are gaunt from poverty and hunger.
They claw the dry ground in desolate wastelands.

4They pluck wild greens from among the bushes and eat from the
roots of broom trees.

5They are driven from human society, and people shout at them as
if they were thieves.

6So now they live in frightening ravines, in caves and among the
rocks.

7They sound like animals howling among the bushes, huddled
together beneath the nettles.

8They are nameless fools, outcasts from society.

9“And now they mock me with vulgar songs!
They taunt me!

10They despise me and won’t come near me, except to spit in my
face.

11For God has cut my bowstring.
He has humbled me, so they have thrown off all restraint.

12These outcasts oppose me to my face.
They send me sprawling and lay traps in my path.

13They block my road and do everything they can to destroy me.
They know I have no one to help me.

14They come at me from all directions.
They jump on me when I am down.

15I live in terror now.
My honor has blown away in the wind, and my prosperity has
vanished like a cloud.

16“And now my life seeps away.
Depression haunts my days.

17At night my bones are filled with pain, which gnaws at me
relentlessly.

18With a strong hand, God grabs my shirt.*
He grips me by the collar of my coat.

19He has thrown me into the mud.
I'm nothing more than dust and ashes.

20"I cry to you, O God, but you don't answer.
I stand before you, but you don't even look.

21You have become cruel toward me.
You use your power to persecute me.

22You throw me into the whirlwind and destroy me in the storm.

23And I know you are sending me to my death— the destination of all who live.

24"Surely no one would turn against the needy when they cry for help in their trouble.

25Did I not weep for those in trouble?
Was I not deeply grieved for the needy?

26So I looked for good, but evil came instead.
I waited for the light, but darkness fell.

27My heart is troubled and restless.
Days of suffering torment me.

28I walk in gloom, without sunlight.
I stand in the public square and cry for help.

29Instead, I am considered a brother to jackals and a companion to owls.

30My skin has turned dark, and my bones burn with fever.

31My harp plays sad music, and my flute accompanies those who weep.

Job 31

JOB'S FINAL PROTEST OF INNOCENCE

1"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman.

2For what has God above chosen for us?
What is our inheritance from the Almighty on high?

3Isn't it calamity for the wicked and misfortune for those who do evil?

4Doesn't he see everything I do and every step I take?

5"Have I lied to anyone or deceived anyone?

6Let God weigh me on the scales of justice, for he knows my integrity.

7If I have strayed from his pathway, or if my heart has lusted for what my eyes have seen, or if I am guilty of any other sin,

8then let someone else eat the crops I have planted.
Let all that I have planted be uprooted.

9"If my heart has been seduced by a woman, or if I have lusted for my neighbor's wife,

10then let my wife serve* another man; let other men sleep with her.

11For lust is a shameful sin, a crime that should be punished.

12It is a fire that burns all the way to hell.*
It would wipe out everything I own.

13"If I have been unfair to my male or female servants when they brought their complaints to me,

14how could I face God?
What could I say when he questioned me?

15For God created both me and my servants.
He created us both in the womb.

16“Have I refused to help the poor, or crushed the hopes of widows?

17Have I been stingy with my food and refused to share it with orphans?

18No, from childhood I have cared for orphans like a father, and all my life I have cared for widows.

19Whenever I saw the homeless without clothes and the needy with nothing to wear,

20did they not praise me for providing wool clothing to keep them warm?

21“If I raised my hand against an orphan, knowing the judges would take my side,

22then let my shoulder be wrenched out of place!
Let my arm be torn from its socket!

23That would be better than facing God’s judgment.
For if the majesty of God opposes me, what hope is there?

24“Have I put my trust in money or felt secure because of my gold?

25Have I gloated about my wealth and all that I own?

26“Have I looked at the sun shining in the skies, or the moon walking down its silver pathway,

27and been secretly enticed in my heart to throw kisses at them in worship?

28If so, I should be punished by the judges, for it would mean I had denied the God of heaven.

29“Have I ever rejoiced when disaster struck my enemies, or become excited when harm came their way?

30No, I have never sinned by cursing anyone or by asking for
revenge.

31“My servants have never said, ‘He let others go hungry.’

32I have never turned away a stranger but have opened my doors to
everyone.

33“Have I tried to hide my sins like other people do, concealing my
guilt in my heart?

34Have I feared the crowd or the contempt of the masses, so that I
kept quiet and stayed indoors?

35“If only someone would listen to me!
Look, I will sign my name to my defense.
Let the Almighty answer me.
Let my accuser write out the charges against me.

36I would face the accusation proudly.
I would wear it like a crown.

37For I would tell him exactly what I have done.
I would come before him like a prince.

38“If my land accuses me and all its furrows cry out together,

39or if I have stolen its crops or murdered its owners,

40then let thistles grow on that land instead of wheat, and weeds
instead of barley.”

Job’s words are ended.

Job 32

ELIHU RESPONDS TO JOB’S FRIENDS

1Job’s three friends refused to reply further to him because he kept
insisting on his innocence.

2Then Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the clan of Ram, became
angry. He was angry because Job refused to admit that he had
sinned and that God was right in punishing him. 3He was also angry
with Job's three friends, for they made God* appear to be wrong by
their inability to answer Job's arguments. 4Elihu had waited for the
others to speak to Job because they were older than he. 5But when
he saw that they had no further reply, he spoke out angrily. 6Elihu
son of Barakel the Buzite said, "I am young and you are old, so I
held back from telling you what I think.

7I thought, 'Those who are older should speak, for wisdom comes
with age.'

8But there is a spirit* within people, the breath of the Almighty
within them, that makes them intelligent.

9Sometimes the elders are not wise.
Sometimes the aged do not understand justice.

10So listen to me, and let me tell you what I think.

11"I have waited all this time, listening very carefully to your
arguments, listening to you grope for words.

12I have listened, but not one of you has refuted Job or answered
his arguments.

13And don't tell me, 'He is too wise for us.
Only God can convince him.'

14If Job had been arguing with me, I would not answer with your
kind of logic!

15You sit there baffled, with nothing more to say.

16Should I continue to wait, now that you are silent?
Must I also remain silent?

17No, I will say my piece.
I will speak my mind.

18For I am full of pent-up words, and the spirit within me urges me on.

19I am like a cask of wine without a vent, like a new wineskin ready to burst!

20I must speak to find relief, so let me give my answers.

21I won't play favorites or try to flatter anyone.

22For if I tried flattery, my Creator would soon destroy me.

Job 33

ELIHU PRESENTS HIS CASE AGAINST JOB

1"Listen to my words, Job; pay attention to what I have to say.

2Now that I have begun to speak, let me continue.

3I speak with all sincerity; I speak the truth.

4For the Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

5Answer me, if you can; make your case and take your stand.

6Look, you and I both belong to God.
I, too, was formed from clay.

7So you don't need to be afraid of me.
I won't come down hard on you.

8"You have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard your very words.

9You said, 'I am pure; I am without sin; I am innocent; I have no guilt.

10God is picking a quarrel with me, and he considers me his enemy.

11He puts my feet in the stocks and watches my every move.'

12“But you are wrong, and I will show you why.
For God is greater than any human being.

13So why are you bringing a charge against him?
Why say he does not respond to people’s complaints?

14For God speaks again and again, though people do not recognize it.

15He speaks in dreams, in visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they lie in their beds.

16He whispers in their ears and terrifies them with warnings.

17He makes them turn from doing wrong; he keeps them from pride.

18He protects them from the grave, from crossing over the river of death.

19“Or God disciplines people with pain on their sickbeds, with ceaseless aching in their bones.

20They lose their appetite for even the most delicious food.

21Their flesh wastes away, and their bones stick out.

22They are at death’s door; the angels of death wait for them.

23“But if an angel from heaven appears— a special messenger to intercede for a person and declare that he is upright—

24he will be gracious and say, ‘Rescue him from the grave, for I have found a ransom for his life.’

25Then his body will become as healthy as a child’s, firm and youthful again.

26When he prays to God, he will be accepted.
And God will receive him with joy and restore him to good standing.

27He will declare to his friends, ‘I sinned and twisted the truth, but
it was not worth it.*

28God rescued me from the grave, and now my life is filled with
light.’

29“Yes, God does these things again and again for people.

30He rescues them from the grave so they may enjoy the light of
life.

31Mark this well, Job. Listen to me, for I have more to say.

32But if you have anything to say, go ahead.
Speak, for I am anxious to see you justified.

33But if not, then listen to me.
Keep silent and I will teach you wisdom!”

Job 34

ELIHU ACCUSES JOB OF ARROGANCE

1Then Elihu said:

2“Listen to me, you wise men.
Pay attention, you who have knowledge.

3Job said, ‘The ear tests the words it hears just as the mouth
distinguishes between foods.’

4So let us discern for ourselves what is right; let us learn together
what is good.

5For Job also said, ‘I am innocent, but God has taken away my
rights.

6I am innocent, but they call me a liar.
My suffering is incurable, though I have not sinned.’

7“Tell me, has there ever been a man like Job, with his thirst for

irreverent talk?

8He chooses evil people as companions.
He spends his time with wicked men.

9He has even said, ‘Why waste time trying to please God?’

10“Listen to me, you who have understanding.
Everyone knows that God doesn’t sin!
The Almighty can do no wrong.

11He repays people according to their deeds.
He treats people as they deserve.

12Truly, God will not do wrong.
The Almighty will not twist justice.

13Did someone else put the world in his care?
Who set the whole world in place?

14If God were to take back his spirit and withdraw his breath,

15all life would cease, and humanity would turn again to dust.

16“Now listen to me if you are wise.
Pay attention to what I say.

17Could God govern if he hated justice?
Are you going to condemn the almighty judge?

18For he says to kings, ‘You are wicked,’
and to nobles, ‘You are unjust.’

19He doesn’t care how great a person may be, and he pays no more attention to the rich than to the poor.
He made them all.

20In a moment they die.
In the middle of the night they pass away; the mighty are removed without human hand.

21“For God watches how people live; he sees everything they do.

22No darkness is thick enough to hide the wicked from his eyes.

23We don't set the time when we will come before God in judgment.

24He brings the mighty to ruin without asking anyone, and he sets up others in their place.

25He knows what they do, and in the night he overturns and destroys them.

26He strikes them down because they are wicked, doing it openly for all to see.

27For they turned away from following him.
They have no respect for any of his ways.

28They cause the poor to cry out, catching God's attention.
He hears the cries of the needy.

29But if he chooses to remain quiet, who can criticize him?
When he hides his face, no one can find him, whether an individual or a nation.

30He prevents the godless from ruling so they cannot be a snare to the people.

31"Why don't people say to God, 'I have sinned, but I will sin no more'?

32Or 'I don't know what evil I have done—tell me.
If I have done wrong, I will stop at once'?

33"Must God tailor his justice to your demands?
But you have rejected him!
The choice is yours, not mine.
Go ahead, share your wisdom with us.

34After all, bright people will tell me, and wise people will hear me say,

35'Job speaks out of ignorance; his words lack insight.'

36Job, you deserve the maximum penalty for the wicked way you have talked.

37For you have added rebellion to your sin; you show no respect, and you speak many angry words against God.”

Job 35

ELIHU REMINDS JOB OF GOD’S JUSTICE

1Then Elihu said:

2“Do you think it is right for you to claim, ‘I am righteous before God’?

3For you also ask, ‘What’s in it for me?
What’s the use of living a righteous life?’

4“I will answer you and all your friends, too.

5Look up into the sky, and see the clouds high above you.

6If you sin, how does that affect God?
Even if you sin again and again, what effect will it have on him?

7If you are good, is this some great gift to him?
What could you possibly give him?

8No, your sins affect only people like yourself, and your good deeds also affect only humans.

9“People cry out when they are oppressed.
They groan beneath the power of the mighty.

10Yet they don’t ask, ‘Where is God my Creator, the one who gives songs in the night?

11Where is the one who makes us smarter than the animals and

wiser than the birds of the sky?’

12And when they cry out, God does not answer because of their pride.

13But it is wrong to say God doesn’t listen, to say the Almighty isn’t concerned.

14You say you can’t see him, but he will bring justice if you will only wait.*

15You say he does not respond to sinners with anger and is not greatly concerned about wickedness.*

16But you are talking nonsense, Job.
You have spoken like a fool.”

SUFFERING JOB 36:1-21

Job 36

1Elihu continued speaking:

2“Let me go on, and I will show you the truth.
For I have not finished defending God!

3I will present profound arguments for the righteousness of my Creator.

4I am telling you nothing but the truth, for I am a man of great knowledge.

5“God is mighty, but he does not despise anyone!
He is mighty in both power and understanding.

6He does not let the wicked live but gives justice to the afflicted.

7He never takes his eyes off the innocent, but he sets them on thrones with kings and exalts them forever.

8If they are bound in chains and caught up in a web of trouble,

9he shows them the reason.
He shows them their sins of pride.

10He gets their attention and commands that they turn from evil.

11“If they listen and obey God, they will be blessed with prosperity throughout their lives.
All their years will be pleasant.

12But if they refuse to listen to him, they will cross over the river of death, dying from lack of understanding.

13For the godless are full of resentment.
Even when he punishes them, they refuse to cry out to him for help.

14They die when they are young, after wasting their lives in immoral living.

15But by means of their suffering, he rescues those who suffer.
For he gets their attention through adversity.

16“God is leading you away from danger, Job, to a place free from distress.
He is setting your table with the best food.

17But you are obsessed with whether the godless will be judged.
Don't worry, judgment and justice will be upheld.

18But watch out, or you may be seduced by wealth.*
Don't let yourself be bribed into sin.

19Could all your wealth*
or all your mighty efforts keep you from distress?

20Do not long for the cover of night, for that is when people will be destroyed.*

21Be on guard! Turn back from evil, for God sent this suffering to keep you from a life of evil.

ELIHU REMINDS JOB OF GOD'S POWER

22"Look, God is all-powerful.

Who is a teacher like him?

23No one can tell him what to do, or say to him, 'You have done wrong.'

24Instead, glorify his mighty works, singing songs of praise.

25Everyone has seen these things, though only from a distance.

26"Look, God is greater than we can understand.
His years cannot be counted.

27He draws up the water vapor and then distills it into rain.

28The rain pours down from the clouds, and everyone benefits.

29Who can understand the spreading of the clouds and the thunder that rolls forth from heaven?

30See how he spreads the lightning around him and how it lights up the depths of the sea.

31By these mighty acts he nourishes* the people, giving them food
in abundance.

32He fills his hands with lightning bolts and hurls each at its target.

33The thunder announces his presence; the storm announces his
indignant anger.*

Job 37

1“My heart pounds as I think of this.
It trembles within me.

2Listen carefully to the thunder of God’s voice as it rolls from his
mouth.

3It rolls across the heavens, and his lightning flashes in every
direction.

4Then comes the roaring of the thunder— the tremendous voice of
his majesty.
He does not restrain it when he speaks.

5God’s voice is glorious in the thunder.
We can’t even imagine the greatness of his power.

6“He directs the snow to fall on the earth and tells the rain to pour
down.

7Then everyone stops working so they can watch his power.

8The wild animals take cover and stay inside their dens.

9The stormy wind comes from its chamber, and the driving winds
bring the cold.

10God’s breath sends the ice, freezing wide expanses of water.

11He loads the clouds with moisture, and they flash with his lightning.

12The clouds churn about at his direction.
They do whatever he commands throughout the earth.

13He makes these things happen either to punish people or to show his unfailing love.

14“Pay attention to this, Job.
Stop and consider the wonderful miracles of God!

15Do you know how God controls the storm and causes the lightning to flash from his clouds?

16Do you understand how he moves the clouds with wonderful perfection and skill?

17When you are sweltering in your clothes and the south wind dies down and everything is still,

18he makes the skies reflect the heat like a bronze mirror.
Can you do that?

19“So teach the rest of us what to say to God.
We are too ignorant to make our own arguments.

20Should God be notified that I want to speak?
Can people even speak when they are confused?*

21We cannot look at the sun, for it shines brightly in the sky when the wind clears away the clouds.

22So also, golden splendor comes from the mountain of God.*
He is clothed in dazzling splendor.

23We cannot imagine the power of the Almighty; but even though he is just and righteous, he does not destroy us.

24No wonder people everywhere fear him.
All who are wise show him reverence.*”

Job 38

THE LORD CHALLENGES JOB

1Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

2“Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words?

3Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you,
and you must answer them.

4“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell me, if you know so much.

5Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying
line?

6What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone

7as the morning stars sang together and all the angels* shouted for
joy?

8“Who kept the sea inside its boundaries as it burst from the womb,

9and as I clothed it with clouds and wrapped it in thick darkness?

10For I locked it behind barred gates, limiting its shores.

11I said, ‘This far and no farther will you come.
Here your proud waves must stop!’

12“Have you ever commanded the morning to appear and caused
the dawn to rise in the east?

13Have you made daylight spread to the ends of the earth, to bring
an end to the night’s wickedness?

14As the light approaches, the earth takes shape like clay pressed
beneath a seal; it is robed in brilliant colors.*

15The light disturbs the wicked and stops the arm that is raised in
violence.

16“Have you explored the springs from which the seas come?
Have you explored their depths?

17Do you know where the gates of death are located?
Have you seen the gates of utter gloom?

18Do you realize the extent of the earth?
Tell me about it if you know!

19“Where does light come from, and where does darkness go?

20Can you take each to its home?
Do you know how to get there?

21But of course you know all this!
For you were born before it was all created, and you are so very
experienced!

22“Have you visited the storehouses of the snow or seen the
storehouses of hail?

23(I have reserved them as weapons for the time of trouble, for the
day of battle and war.)

24Where is the path to the source of light?
Where is the home of the east wind?

25“Who created a channel for the torrents of rain?
Who laid out the path for the lightning?

26Who makes the rain fall on barren land, in a desert where no one
lives?

27Who sends rain to satisfy the parched ground and make the tender
grass spring up?

28“Does the rain have a father?
Who gives birth to the dew?

29Who is the mother of the ice?
Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens?

30For the water turns to ice as hard as rock, and the surface of the water freezes.

31“Can you direct the movement of the stars— binding the cluster of the Pleiades or loosening the cords of Orion?

32Can you direct the constellations through the seasons or guide the Bear with her cubs across the heavens?

33Do you know the laws of the universe?
Can you use them to regulate the earth?

34“Can you shout to the clouds and make it rain?

35Can you make lightning appear and cause it to strike as you direct?

36Who gives intuition to the heart and instinct to the mind?

37Who is wise enough to count all the clouds?
Who can tilt the water jars of heaven

38when the parched ground is dry and the soil has hardened into clods?

39“Can you stalk prey for a lioness and satisfy the young lions’ appetites

40as they lie in their dens or crouch in the thicket?

41Who provides food for the ravens when their young cry out to God and wander about in hunger?

Job 39

THE LORD'S CHALLENGE CONTINUES

1"Do you know when the wild goats give birth?
Have you watched as deer are born in the wild?

2Do you know how many months they carry their young?
Are you aware of the time of their delivery?

3They crouch down to give birth to their young and deliver their offspring.

4Their young grow up in the open fields, then leave home and never return.

5"Who gives the wild donkey its freedom?
Who untied its ropes?

6I have placed it in the wilderness; its home is the wasteland.

7It hates the noise of the city and has no driver to shout at it.

8The mountains are its pastureland, where it searches for every blade of grass.

9"Will the wild ox consent to being tamed?
Will it spend the night in your stall?

10Can you hitch a wild ox to a plow?
Will it plow a field for you?

11Given its strength, can you trust it?
Can you leave and trust the ox to do your work?

12Can you rely on it to bring home your grain and deliver it to your threshing floor?

13"The ostrich flaps her wings grandly, but they are no match for the feathers of the stork.

14She lays her eggs on top of the earth, letting them be warmed in the dust.

15She doesn't worry that a foot might crush them or a wild animal
might destroy them.

16She is harsh toward her young, as if they were not her own.
She doesn't care if they die.

17For God has deprived her of wisdom.
He has given her no understanding.

18But whenever she jumps up to run, she passes the swiftest horse
with its rider.

19"Have you given the horse its strength or clothed its neck with a
flowing mane?

20Did you give it the ability to leap like a locust?
Its majestic snorting is terrifying!

21It paws the earth and rejoices in its strength when it charges out
to battle.

22It laughs at fear and is unafraid.
It does not run from the sword.

23The arrows rattle against it, and the spear and javelin flash.

24It paws the ground fiercely and rushes forward into battle when
the ram's horn blows.

25It snorts at the sound of the horn.
It senses the battle in the distance.
It quivers at the captain's commands and the noise of battle.

26"Is it your wisdom that makes the hawk soar and spread its wings
toward the south?

27Is it at your command that the eagle rises to the heights to make
its nest?

28It lives on the cliffs, making its home on a distant, rocky crag.

29From there it hunts its prey, keeping watch with piercing eyes.

30Its young gulp down blood.
Where there's a carcass, there you'll find it."

Job 40

1Then the LORD said to Job,

2"Do you still want to argue with the Almighty?
You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?"

JOB RESPONDS TO THE LORD

3Then Job replied to the LORD,

4“I am nothing—how could I ever find the answers?
I will cover my mouth with my hand.

5I have said too much already.
I have nothing more to say.”

THE LORD CHALLENGES JOB AGAIN

6Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

7“Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you,
and you must answer them.

8“Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you
are right?

9Are you as strong as God?
Can you thunder with a voice like his?

10All right, put on your glory and splendor, your honor and majesty.

11Give vent to your anger.
Let it overflow against the proud.

12Humiliate the proud with a glance; walk on the wicked where
they stand.

13Bury them in the dust.
Imprison them in the world of the dead.

14Then even I would praise you, for your own strength would save
you.

15“Take a look at Behemoth,*
which I made, just as I made you.
It eats grass like an ox.

16See its powerful loins and the muscles of its belly.

17Its tail is as strong as a cedar.
The sinews of its thighs are knit tightly together.

18Its bones are tubes of bronze.
Its limbs are bars of iron.

19It is a prime example of God's handiwork, and only its Creator can threaten it.

20The mountains offer it their best food, where all the wild animals play.

21It lies under the lotus plants,*
hidden by the reeds in the marsh.

22The lotus plants give it shade among the willows beside the stream.

23It is not disturbed by the raging river, not concerned when the swelling Jordan rushes around it.

24No one can catch it off guard or put a ring in its nose and lead it away.

Job 41

THE LORD'S CHALLENGE CONTINUES

1*"Can you catch Leviathan* with a hook or put a noose around its jaw?

2Can you tie it with a rope through the nose or pierce its jaw with a spike?

3Will it beg you for mercy or implore you for pity?

4Will it agree to work for you, to be your slave for life?

5Can you make it a pet like a bird, or give it to your little girls to play with?

6Will merchants try to buy it to sell it in their shops?

7Will its hide be hurt by spears or its head by a harpoon?

8If you lay a hand on it, you will certainly remember the battle that follows.
You won't try that again!

9*No, it is useless to try to capture it.
The hunter who attempts it will be knocked down.

10And since no one dares to disturb it, who then can stand up to me?

11Who has given me anything that I need to pay back?
Everything under heaven is mine.

12"I want to emphasize Leviathan's limbs and its enormous strength and graceful form.

13Who can strip off its hide, and who can penetrate its double layer of armor?*

14Who could pry open its jaws?
For its teeth are terrible!

15The scales on its back are like* rows of shields tightly sealed together.

16They are so close together that no air can get between them.

17Each scale sticks tight to the next.
They interlock and cannot be penetrated.

18“When it sneezes, it flashes light!
Its eyes are like the red of dawn.

19Lightning leaps from its mouth; flames of fire flash out.

20Smoke streams from its nostrils like steam from a pot heated over burning rushes.

21Its breath would kindle coals, for flames shoot from its mouth.

22“The tremendous strength in Leviathan’s neck strikes terror wherever it goes.

23Its flesh is hard and firm and cannot be penetrated.

24Its heart is hard as rock, hard as a millstone.

25When it rises, the mighty are afraid, gripped by terror.

26No sword can stop it, no spear, dart, or javelin.

27Iron is nothing but straw to that creature, and bronze is like rotten wood.

28Arrows cannot make it flee.
Stones shot from a sling are like bits of grass.

29Clubs are like a blade of grass, and it laughs at the swish of javelins.

30Its belly is covered with scales as sharp as glass.
It plows up the ground as it drags through the mud.

31“Leviathan makes the water boil with its commotion.
It stirs the depths like a pot of ointment.

32The water glistens in its wake, making the sea look white.

33Nothing on earth is its equal, no other creature so fearless.

34Of all the creatures, it is the proudest.
It is the king of beasts.”

Job 42

JOB RESPONDS TO THE LORD

1Then Job replied to the LORD:

2“I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you.

3You asked, ‘Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?’
It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.

4You said, ‘Listen and I will speak!
I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.’

5I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

6I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.”

CONCLUSION: THE LORD BLESSES JOB

7After the LORD had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has. 8So take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer on your behalf. I will not treat you as you deserve, for you have not spoken accurately about me, as my servant Job has.” 9So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite did as the LORD commanded them, and the LORD accepted Job’s prayer.

10When Job prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes. In fact, the LORD gave him twice as much as before! 11Then all his brothers, sisters, and former friends came and feasted with him in his home. And they consoled him and comforted him because of all the trials the LORD had brought against him. And each of them brought him a gift of money* and a gold ring.

12So the LORD blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning. For now he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 teams of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. 13He also gave Job

seven more sons and three more daughters. 14He named his first daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. 15In all the land no women were as lovely as the daughters of Job. And their father put them into his will along with their brothers.

16Job lived 140 years after that, living to see four generations of his children and grandchildren. 17Then he died, an old man who had lived a long, full life.

Psalms

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150

WELCOME TO

PSALMS

The book of Psalms is a loosely organized collection of poetry and songs that were used during worship in ancient Israel. They were written over the course of centuries by many different authors. The

Jews used the book of Psalms in much the same way that churches use worship songs today: for public and personal worship.

These songs are timeless. They speak to the full range of our emotions: sorrow and joy, anger and peace, doubt and faith, repentance and praise. Some psalms are related to a particular writer or historical event from the Bible, but most of the psalms have no specific background other than the Israelites' worship. Rich in imagery, they express profound emotion and provide instruction, celebration, and insights into God's nature. Some psalms recall the past, some describe struggles of present circumstances, and some envision a glorious future. Read one and you'll probably want to read more. You won't be disappointed.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over Psalms without stopping. But you may want to take a minute to read some perennial favorites: Psalms 1, 23, and 103. Your next stop is at Isaiah 11:1.

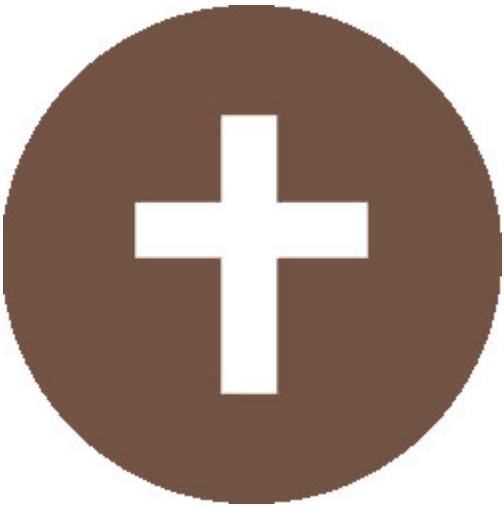
10 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your psalm selections will show you how these beautiful poems are connected to the writers and events of other parts of the Old Testament. Your next stop is at Psalm 19:1.

20 STOPS

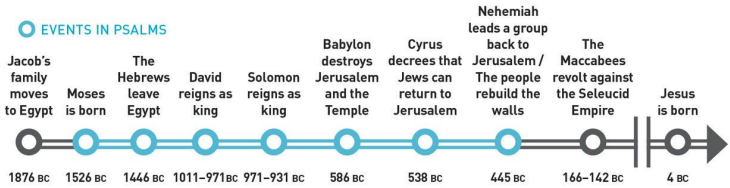
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The twenty psalms selected for your route

will let you sample the variety of tones and themes found in this book: joyful songs, anguished cries, and praise for God. Your next stop is at Psalm 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN PSALMS

The psalms contain some of the clearest references to Jesus found in the Old Testament. In all, seventeen psalms are considered "messianic" because they refer to Jesus' mission. Psalm 2 describes the holy power that Jesus has as the King's Son, including his righteous judgment upon sin. Many other psalms specifically describe the suffering and death that Jesus endured. Psalm 22 is especially poignant, being the psalm that Jesus quoted while hanging on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" Psalm 34:20 contains a prophetic vision of how the Father nonetheless preserved Jesus' body. Finally, Psalm 119 is a meditation on the law of God, which Jesus himself fulfilled completely.



Book One (Psalms 1–41)

Psalm 1

1Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.

2But they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.

3They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season.
Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

4But not the wicked!

They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.

5They will be condemned at the time of judgment.
Sinners will have no place among the godly.

6For the LORD watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

THE MESSIAH PSALM 2

Psalm 2

1Why are the nations so angry?
Why do they waste their time with futile plans?

2The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the LORD
and against his anointed one.

3“Let us break their chains,” they cry, “and free ourselves from slavery to God.”

4But the one who rules in heaven laughs.
The Lord scoffs at them.

5Then in anger he rebukes them, terrifying them with his fierce fury.

6For the Lord declares, “I have placed my chosen king on the throne in Jerusalem,* on my holy mountain.”

7The king proclaims the LORD’s decree: “The LORD said to me, ‘You are my son.*
Today I have become your Father.*

8Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession.

9You will break* them with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots.’”

10Now then, you kings, act wisely!
Be warned, you rulers of the earth!

11Serve the LORD with reverent fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12Submit to God’s royal son,* or he will become angry, and you will be destroyed in the midst of all your activities— for his anger flares up in an instant.
But what joy for all who take refuge in him!

Psalm 3

A psalm of David, regarding the time David fled from his son Absalom.

1O LORD, I have so many enemies; so many are against me.

2So many are saying, “God will never rescue him!”

Interlude

3But you, O LORD, are a shield around me; you are my glory, the one who holds my head high.

4I cried out to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy mountain.

Interlude

5I lay down and slept, yet I woke up in safety, for the LORD was watching over me.

6I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies who surround me on every side.

7Arise, O LORD!
Rescue me, my God!
Slap all my enemies in the face!
Shatter the teeth of the wicked!

8Victory comes from you, O LORD.
May you bless your people.

Interlude

Psalm 4

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by stringed instruments.

1Answer me when I call to you, O God who declares me innocent.
Free me from my troubles.
Have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

2How long will you people ruin my reputation?
How long will you make groundless accusations?

How long will you continue your lies?

Interlude

3You can be sure of this: The LORD set apart the godly for himself.
The LORD will answer when I call to him.

4Don't sin by letting anger control you.
Think about it overnight and remain silent.

Interlude

5Offer sacrifices in the right spirit, and trust the LORD.

6Many people say, "Who will show us better times?"
Let your face smile on us, LORD.

7You have given me greater joy than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new wine.

8In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O LORD, will keep me safe.

Psalm 5

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by the flute.

1O LORD, hear me as I pray; pay attention to my groaning.

2Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but you.

3Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD.
Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.

4O God, you take no pleasure in wickedness; you cannot tolerate the sins of the wicked.

5Therefore, the proud may not stand in your presence, for you hate all who do evil.

6You will destroy those who tell lies.
The LORD detests murderers and deceivers.

7Because of your unfailing love, I can enter your house; I will worship at your Temple with deepest awe.

8Lead me in the right path, O LORD, or my enemies will conquer me.
Make your way plain for me to follow.

9My enemies cannot speak a truthful word.
Their deepest desire is to destroy others.
Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave.
Their tongues are filled with flattery.*

10O God, declare them guilty.
Let them be caught in their own traps.
Drive them away because of their many sins, for they have rebelled against you.

11But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them sing joyful praises forever.
Spread your protection over them, that all who love your name may be filled with joy.

12For you bless the godly, O LORD; you surround them with your shield of love.

Psalm 6

*For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by an eight-stringed instrument.**

1O LORD, don't rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your rage.

2Have compassion on me, LORD, for I am weak.
Heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.

3I am sick at heart.
How long, O LORD, until you restore me?

4Return, O LORD, and rescue me.
Save me because of your unfailing love.

5For the dead do not remember you.
Who can praise you from the grave?*

6I am worn out from sobbing.
All night I flood my bed with weeping, drenching it with my tears.

7My vision is blurred by grief; my eyes are worn out because of all my enemies.

8Go away, all you who do evil, for the LORD has heard my weeping.

9The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD will answer my prayer.

10May all my enemies be disgraced and terrified.
May they suddenly turn back in shame.

Psalm 7

A psalm of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning Cush of the tribe of Benjamin.*

1I come to you for protection, O LORD my God.
Save me from my persecutors—rescue me!

2If you don't, they will maul me like a lion, tearing me to pieces with no one to rescue me.

3O LORD my God, if I have done wrong or am guilty of injustice,

4if I have betrayed a friend or plundered my enemy without cause,

5then let my enemies capture me.
Let them trample me into the ground and drag my honor in the dust.

Interlude

6Arise, O LORD, in anger!
Stand up against the fury of my enemies!
Wake up, my God, and bring justice!

7Gather the nations before you.
Rule over them from on high.

8The LORD judges the nations.
Declare me righteous, O LORD, for I am innocent, O Most High!

9End the evil of those who are wicked, and defend the righteous.
For you look deep within the mind and heart, O righteous God.

10God is my shield, saving those whose hearts are true and right.

11God is an honest judge.
He is angry with the wicked every day.

12If a person does not repent, God* will sharpen his sword; he will bend and string his bow.

13He will prepare his deadly weapons and shoot his flaming arrows.

14The wicked conceive evil; they are pregnant with trouble and give birth to lies.

15They dig a deep pit to trap others, then fall into it themselves.

16The trouble they make for others backfires on them.
The violence they plan falls on their own heads.

17I will thank the LORD because he is just; I will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

Psalm 8

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument. *

1O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!
Your glory is higher than the heavens.

2You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength,*
silencing your enemies and all who oppose you.

3When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers— the moon and the stars you set in place—

4what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?*

5Yet you made them only a little lower than God*
and crowned them* with glory and honor.

6You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—

7the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals,

8the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents.

9O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Psalm 9

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be sung to the tune "Death of the Son."

1I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all the

marvelous things you have done.

2I will be filled with joy because of you.
I will sing praises to your name, O Most High.

3My enemies retreated; they staggered and died when you appeared.

4For you have judged in my favor; from your throne you have judged with fairness.

5You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have erased their names forever.

6The enemy is finished, in endless ruins; the cities you uprooted are now forgotten.

7But the LORD reigns forever, executing judgment from his throne.

8He will judge the world with justice and rule the nations with fairness.

9The LORD is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O LORD, do not abandon those who search for you.

11Sing praises to the LORD who reigns in Jerusalem.*
Tell the world about his unforgettable deeds.

12For he who avenges murder cares for the helpless.
He does not ignore the cries of those who suffer.

13LORD, have mercy on me.
See how my enemies torment me.
Snatch me back from the jaws of death.

14Save me so I can praise you publicly at Jerusalem's gates, so I can rejoice that you have rescued me.

15The nations have fallen into the pit they dug for others.
Their own feet have been caught in the trap they set.

16The LORD is known for his justice.
The wicked are trapped by their own deeds.

*Quiet Interlude**

17The wicked will go down to the grave.*
This is the fate of all the nations who ignore God.

18But the needy will not be ignored forever; the hopes of the poor will not always be crushed.

19Arise, O LORD!
Do not let mere mortals defy you!
Judge the nations!

20Make them tremble in fear, O LORD.
Let the nations know they are merely human.

Interlude

Psalm 10

1O LORD, why do you stand so far away?
Why do you hide when I am in trouble?

2The wicked arrogantly hunt down the poor.
Let them be caught in the evil they plan for others.

3For they brag about their evil desires; they praise the greedy and curse the LORD.

4The wicked are too proud to seek God.
They seem to think that God is dead.

5Yet they succeed in everything they do.
They do not see your punishment awaiting them.
They sneer at all their enemies.

6They think, “Nothing bad will ever happen to us!
We will be free of trouble forever!”

7Their mouths are full of cursing, lies, and threats.*
Trouble and evil are on the tips of their tongues.

8They lurk in ambush in the villages, waiting to murder innocent people.
They are always searching for helpless victims.

9Like lions crouched in hiding, they wait to pounce on the helpless.
Like hunters they capture the helpless and drag them away in nets.

10Their helpless victims are crushed; they fall beneath the strength of the wicked.

11The wicked think, “God isn’t watching us!
He has closed his eyes and won’t even see what we do!”

12Arise, O LORD!
Punish the wicked, O God!
Do not ignore the helpless!

13Why do the wicked get away with despising God?
They think, “God will never call us to account.”

14But you see the trouble and grief they cause.
You take note of it and punish them.
The helpless put their trust in you.
You defend the orphans.

15Break the arms of these wicked, evil people!
Go after them until the last one is destroyed.

16The LORD is king forever and ever!
The godless nations will vanish from the land.

17LORD, you know the hopes of the helpless.
Surely you will hear their cries and comfort them.

18You will bring justice to the orphans and the oppressed, so mere people can no longer terrify them.

Psalm 11

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1I trust in the LORD for protection.
So why do you say to me, “Fly like a bird to the mountains for safety!

2The wicked are stringing their bows and fitting their arrows on the bowstrings.
They shoot from the shadows at those whose hearts are right.

3The foundations of law and order have collapsed.
What can the righteous do?”

4But the LORD is in his holy Temple; the LORD still rules from heaven.
He watches everyone closely, examining every person on earth.

5The LORD examines both the righteous and the wicked.
He hates those who love violence.

6He will rain down blazing coals and burning sulfur on the wicked, punishing them with scorching winds.

7For the righteous LORD loves justice.
The virtuous will see his face.

Psalm 12

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by an eight-stringed instrument. *

1Help, O LORD, for the godly are fast disappearing!
The faithful have vanished from the earth!

2Neighbors lie to each other, speaking with flattering lips and deceitful hearts.

3May the LORD cut off their flattering lips and silence their boastful tongues.

4They say, “We will lie to our hearts’ content.
Our lips are our own—who can stop us?”

5The LORD replies, “I have seen violence done to the helpless, and I have heard the groans of the poor.
Now I will rise up to rescue them, as they have longed for me to do.”

6The LORD’s promises are pure, like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times over.

7Therefore, LORD, we know you will protect the oppressed, preserving them forever from this lying generation,

8even though the wicked strut about, and evil is praised throughout the land.

Psalm 13

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1O LORD, how long will you forget me? Forever?
How long will you look the other way?

2How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day?
How long will my enemy have the upper hand?

3Turn and answer me, O LORD my God!
Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die.

4Don’t let my enemies gloat, saying, “We have defeated him!”
Don’t let them rejoice at my downfall.

5But I trust in your unfailing love.
I will rejoice because you have rescued me.

6I will sing to the LORD
because he is good to me.

Psalm 14

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1Only fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.”
They are corrupt, and their actions are evil; not one of them does good!

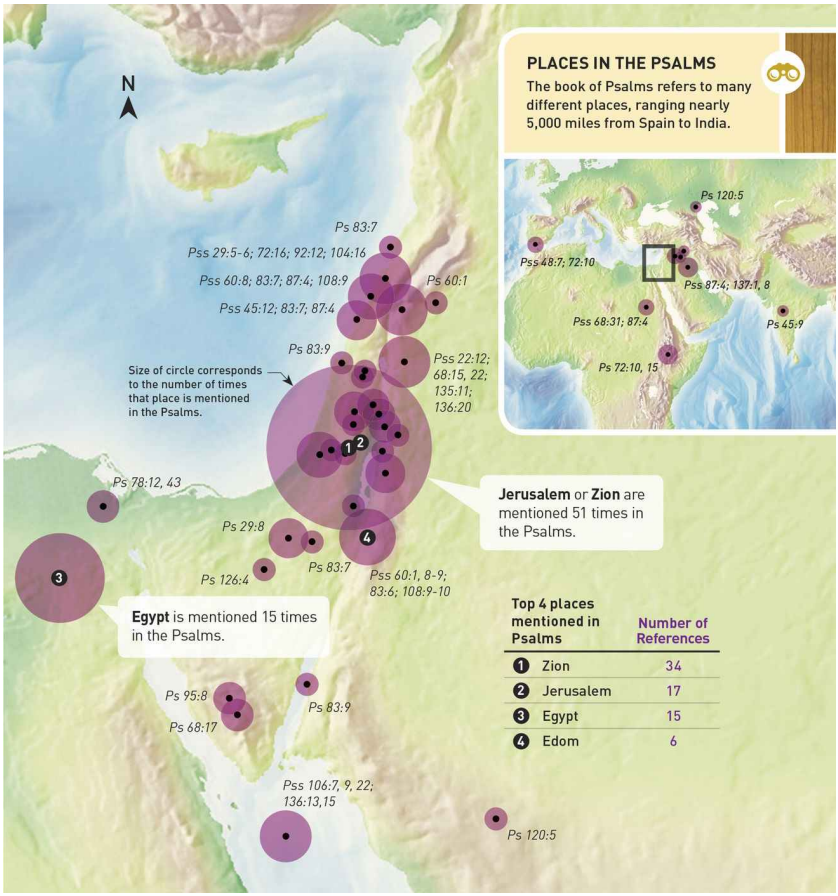
2The LORD looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God.

3But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt.*
No one does good, not a single one!

4Will those who do evil never learn?
They eat up my people like bread and wouldn’t think of praying to the LORD.

5Terror will grip them, for God is with those who obey him.

6The wicked frustrate the plans of the oppressed, but the LORD will protect his people.



PLACES IN THE PSALMS

7Who will come from Mount Zion to rescue Israel?
When the LORD restores his people, Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will rejoice.

Psalm 15

A psalm of David.

1Who may worship in your sanctuary, LORD?
Who may enter your presence on your holy hill?

2Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right, speaking the truth from sincere hearts.

3Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors or speak evil of their friends.

4Those who despise flagrant sinners, and honor the faithful followers of the LORD, and keep their promises even when it hurts.

5Those who lend money without charging interest, and who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent.
Such people will stand firm forever.

Psalm 16

A psalm of David.*

1Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge.

2I said to the LORD, “You are my Master!
Every good thing I have comes from you.”

3The godly people in the land are my true heroes!
I take pleasure in them!

4Troubles multiply for those who chase after other gods.
I will not take part in their sacrifices of blood or even speak the names of their gods.

5LORD, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing.
You guard all that is mine.

6The land you have given me is a pleasant land.
What a wonderful inheritance!

7I will bless the LORD who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me.

8I know the LORD is always with me.
I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.

9No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice.*
My body rests in safety.

10For you will not leave my soul among the dead*
or allow your holy one* to rot in the grave.

11You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

FACING GOD PSALM 17

Psalm 17

A prayer of David.

1O LORD, hear my plea for justice.
Listen to my cry for help.
Pay attention to my prayer, for it comes from honest lips.

2Declare me innocent, for you see those who do right.

3You have tested my thoughts and examined my heart in the night.
You have scrutinized me and found nothing wrong.
I am determined not to sin in what I say.

4I have followed your commands, which keep me from following
cruel and evil people.

5My steps have stayed on your path; I have not wavered from
following you.

6I am praying to you because I know you will answer, O God.
Bend down and listen as I pray.

7Show me your unfailing love in wonderful ways.
By your mighty power you rescue those who seek refuge from their
enemies.

8Guard me as you would guard your own eyes.*
Hide me in the shadow of your wings.

9Protect me from wicked people who attack me, from murderous
enemies who surround me.

10They are without pity.
Listen to their boasting!

11They track me down and surround me, watching for the chance to
throw me to the ground.

12They are like hungry lions, eager to tear me apart— like young
lions hiding in ambush.

13Arise, O LORD!
Stand against them, and bring them to their knees!
Rescue me from the wicked with your sword!

14By the power of your hand, O LORD, destroy those who look to
this world for their reward.
But satisfy the hunger of your treasured ones.
May their children have plenty, leaving an inheritance for their
descendants.

15Because I am righteous, I will see you.
When I awake, I will see you face to face and be satisfied.

Psalm 18

For the choir director: A psalm of David, the servant of the LORD. He sang this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. He sang: 1 *I love you, LORD; you are my strength.*

2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.

3 I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and he saved me from my enemies.

4 The ropes of death entangled me; floods of destruction swept over me.

5 The grave* wrapped its ropes around me; death laid a trap in my path.

6 But in my distress I cried out to the LORD; yes, I prayed to my God for help.
He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry to him reached his ears.

7 Then the earth quaked and trembled.
The foundations of the mountains shook; they quaked because of his anger.

8 Smoke poured from his nostrils; fierce flames leaped from his mouth.
Glowing coals blazed forth from him.

9 He opened the heavens and came down; dark storm clouds were beneath his feet.

10 Mounted on a mighty angelic being,* he flew, soaring on the wings of the wind.

11 He shrouded himself in darkness, veiling his approach with dark

rain clouds.

12Thick clouds shielded the brightness around him and rained down
hail and burning coals.*

13The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High
resounded amid the hail and burning coals.

14He shot his arrows and scattered his enemies; great bolts of
lightning flashed, and they were confused.

15Then at your command, O LORD, at the blast of your breath, the
bottom of the sea could be seen, and the foundations of the earth
were laid bare.

16He reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of
deep waters.

17He rescued me from my powerful enemies, from those who hated
me and were too strong for me.

18They attacked me at a moment when I was in distress, but the
LORD supported me.

19He led me to a place of safety; he rescued me because he delights
in me.

20The LORD rewarded me for doing right; he restored me because of
my innocence.

21For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not turned from my
God to follow evil.

22I have followed all his regulations; I have never abandoned his
decrees.

23I am blameless before God; I have kept myself from sin.

24The LORD rewarded me for doing right.
He has seen my innocence.

25To the faithful you show yourself faithful; to those with integrity
you show integrity.

26To the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show
yourself shrewd.

27You rescue the humble, but you humiliate the proud.

28You light a lamp for me.
The LORD, my God, lights up my darkness.

29In your strength I can crush an army; with my God I can scale any
wall.

30God's way is perfect.
All the LORD's promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.

31For who is God except the LORD?
Who but our God is a solid rock?

32God arms me with strength, and he makes my way perfect.

33He makes me as surefooted as a deer, enabling me to stand on
mountain heights.

34He trains my hands for battle; he strengthens my arm to draw a
bronze bow.

35You have given me your shield of victory.
Your right hand supports me; your help* has made me great.

36You have made a wide path for my feet to keep them from
slipping.

37I chased my enemies and caught them; I did not stop until they
were conquered.

38I struck them down so they could not get up; they fell beneath my

feet.

39You have armed me with strength for the battle; you have
subdued my enemies under my feet.

40You placed my foot on their necks.
I have destroyed all who hated me.

41They called for help, but no one came to their rescue.
They even cried to the LORD, but he refused to answer.

42I ground them as fine as dust in the wind.
I swept them into the gutter like dirt.

43You gave me victory over my accusers.
You appointed me ruler over nations; people I don't even know now
serve me.

44As soon as they hear of me, they submit; foreign nations cringe
before me.

45They all lose their courage and come trembling from their
strongholds.

46The LORD lives! Praise to my Rock!
May the God of my salvation be exalted!

47He is the God who pays back those who harm me; he subdues the
nations under me

48and rescues me from my enemies.
You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies; you save me
from violent opponents.

49For this, O LORD, I will praise you among the nations; I will sing
praises to your name.

50You give great victories to your king; you show unfailing love to
your anointed, to David and all his descendants forever.

Psalm 19

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1The heavens proclaim the glory of God.
The skies display his craftsmanship.

2Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.

3They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard.*

4Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world.
God has made a home in the heavens for the sun.

5It bursts forth like a radiant bridegroom after his wedding.
It rejoices like a great athlete eager to run the race.

6The sun rises at one end of the heavens and follows its course to the other end.
Nothing can hide from its heat.

7The instructions of the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul.
The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

8The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight for living.

9Reverence for the LORD is pure, lasting forever.
The laws of the LORD are true; each one is fair.

10They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold.
They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb.

11They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them.

12How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart?
Cleanse me from these hidden faults.

13Keep your servant from deliberate sins!
Don't let them control me.
Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin.

14May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be

pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Psalm 20

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1In times of trouble, may the LORD answer your cry.
May the name of the God of Jacob keep you safe from all harm.

2May he send you help from his sanctuary and strengthen you from Jerusalem.*

3May he remember all your gifts and look favorably on your burnt offerings.

Interlude

4May he grant your heart's desires and make all your plans succeed.

5May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory and raise a victory banner in the name of our God.
May the LORD answer all your prayers.

6Now I know that the LORD rescues his anointed king.
He will answer him from his holy heaven and rescue him by his great power.

7Some nations boast of their chariots and horses, but we boast in the name of the LORD our God.

8Those nations will fall down and collapse, but we will rise up and stand firm.

9Give victory to our king, O LORD!
Answer our cry for help.

Psalm 21

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1How the king rejoices in your strength, O LORD!
He shouts with joy because you give him victory.

2For you have given him his heart's desire; you have withheld
nothing he requested.

Interlude

3You welcomed him back with success and prosperity.
You placed a crown of finest gold on his head.

4He asked you to preserve his life, and you granted his request.
The days of his life stretch on forever.

5Your victory brings him great honor, and you have clothed him
with splendor and majesty.

6You have endowed him with eternal blessings and given him the
joy of your presence.

7For the king trusts in the LORD.
The unfailing love of the Most High will keep him from stumbling.

8You will capture all your enemies.
Your strong right hand will seize all who hate you.

9You will throw them in a flaming furnace when you appear.
The LORD will consume them in his anger; fire will devour them.

10You will wipe their children from the face of the earth; they will
never have descendants.

11Although they plot against you, their evil schemes will never

succeed.

12For they will turn and run when they see your arrows aimed at them.

13Rise up, O LORD, in all your power.
With music and singing we celebrate your mighty acts.

SUFFERING PSALM 22

Psalm 22

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be sung to the tune "Doe of the Dawn."

1My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
Why are you so far away when I groan for help?

2Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer.
Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.

3Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

4Our ancestors trusted in you, and you rescued them.

5They cried out to you and were saved.
They trusted in you and were never disgraced.

6But I am a worm and not a man.

I am scorned and despised by all!

7Everyone who sees me mocks me.
They sneer and shake their heads, saying,

8“Is this the one who relies on the LORD?
Then let the LORD save him!
If the LORD loves him so much, let the LORD rescue him!”

9Yet you brought me safely from my mother’s womb and led me to trust you at my mother’s breast.

10I was thrust into your arms at my birth.
You have been my God from the moment I was born.

11Do not stay so far from me, for trouble is near, and no one else can help me.

12My enemies surround me like a herd of bulls; fierce bulls of Bashan have hemmed me in!

13Like lions they open their jaws against me, roaring and tearing into their prey.

14My life is poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart is like wax, melting within me.

15My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay.
My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.
You have laid me in the dust and left me for dead.

16My enemies surround me like a pack of dogs; an evil gang closes in on me.
They have pierced* my hands and feet.

17I can count all my bones.
My enemies stare at me and gloat.

18They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice* for
my clothing.

19O LORD, do not stay far away!
You are my strength; come quickly to my aid!

20Save me from the sword; spare my precious life from these dogs.

21Snatch me from the lion's jaws and from the horns of these wild
oxen.

22I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters.*
I will praise you among your assembled people.

23Praise the LORD, all you who fear him!
Honor him, all you descendants of Jacob!
Show him reverence, all you descendants of Israel!

24For he has not ignored or belittled the suffering of the needy.
He has not turned his back on them, but has listened to their cries
for help.

25I will praise you in the great assembly.
I will fulfill my vows in the presence of those who worship you.

26The poor will eat and be satisfied.
All who seek the LORD will praise him.
Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy.

27The whole earth will acknowledge the LORD and return to him.
All the families of the nations will bow down before him.

28For royal power belongs to the LORD.
He rules all the nations.

29Let the rich of the earth feast and worship.
Bow before him, all who are mortal, all whose lives will end as
dust.

30Our children will also serve him.
Future generations will hear about the wonders of the Lord.

31His righteous acts will be told to those not yet born.
They will hear about everything he has done.

Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

1The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need.

2He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful

streams.

3He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.

4Even when I walk through the darkest valley,*
I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.

5You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.

6Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 24

A psalm of David.

1The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it.
The world and all its people belong to him.

2For he laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths.

3Who may climb the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?

4Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship
idols and never tell lies.

5They will receive the LORD's blessing and have a right relationship
with God their savior.

6Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of
Jacob.*

Interlude

7Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter.

8Who is the King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty; the LORD, invincible in battle.

9Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter.

10Who is the King of glory?
The LORD of Heaven's Armies— he is the King of glory.

Interlude

Psalm 25 *

A psalm of David.

1O LORD, I give my life to you.

2I trust in you, my God!
Do not let me be disgraced, or let my enemies rejoice in my defeat.

3No one who trusts in you will ever be disgraced, but disgrace
comes to those who try to deceive others.

4Show me the right path, O LORD; point out the road for me to follow.

5Lead me by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me.
All day long I put my hope in you.

6Remember, O LORD, your compassion and unfailing love, which you have shown from long ages past.

7Do not remember the rebellious sins of my youth.
Remember me in the light of your unfailing love, for you are merciful, O LORD.

8The LORD is good and does what is right; he shows the proper path to those who go astray.

9He leads the humble in doing right, teaching them his way.

10The LORD leads with unfailing love and faithfulness all who keep his covenant and obey his demands.

11For the honor of your name, O LORD, forgive my many, many sins.

12Who are those who fear the LORD?
He will show them the path they should choose.

13They will live in prosperity, and their children will inherit the land.

14The LORD is a friend to those who fear him.
He teaches them his covenant.

15My eyes are always on the LORD, for he rescues me from the traps of my enemies.

16Turn to me and have mercy, for I am alone and in deep distress.

17My problems go from bad to worse.
Oh, save me from them all!

18Feel my pain and see my trouble.
Forgive all my sins.

19See how many enemies I have and how viciously they hate me!

20Protect me! Rescue my life from them!
Do not let me be disgraced, for in you I take refuge.

21May integrity and honesty protect me, for I put my hope in you.

22O God, ransom Israel from all its troubles.

Psalm 26

A psalm of David.

1Declare me innocent, O LORD, for I have acted with integrity; I have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

2Put me on trial, LORD, and cross-examine me.
Test my motives and my heart.

3For I am always aware of your unfailing love, and I have lived according to your truth.

4I do not spend time with liars or go along with hypocrites.

5I hate the gatherings of those who do evil, and I refuse to join in with the wicked.

6I wash my hands to declare my innocence.
I come to your altar, O LORD,

7singing a song of thanksgiving and telling of all your wonders.

8I love your sanctuary, LORD, the place where your glorious presence dwells.

9Don’t let me suffer the fate of sinners.

Don’t condemn me along with murderers.

10Their hands are dirty with evil schemes, and they constantly take bribes.

11But I am not like that; I live with integrity.
So redeem me and show me mercy.

12Now I stand on solid ground, and I will publicly praise the LORD.

Psalm 27

A psalm of David.

1The LORD is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid?
The LORD is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?

2When evil people come to devour me, when my enemies and foes attack me, they will stumble and fall.

3Though a mighty army surrounds me, my heart will not be afraid.
Even if I am attacked, I will remain confident.

4The one thing I ask of the LORD— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD’s perfections and meditating in his Temple.

5For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary.
He will place me out of reach on a high rock.

6Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me.
At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the LORD with music.

7Hear me as I pray, O LORD.
Be merciful and answer me!

8My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.”
And my heart responds, “LORD, I am coming.”

9Do not turn your back on me.
Do not reject your servant in anger.
You have always been my helper.
Don’t leave me now; don’t abandon me, O God of my salvation!

10Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD will hold me close.

11Teach me how to live, O LORD.
Lead me along the right path, for my enemies are waiting for me.

12Do not let me fall into their hands.
For they accuse me of things I’ve never done; with every breath they threaten me with violence.

13Yet I am confident I will see the LORD’s goodness while I am here in the land of the living.

14Wait patiently for the LORD.
Be brave and courageous.
Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.

Psalm 28

A psalm of David.

1I pray to you, O LORD, my rock.
Do not turn a deaf ear to me.
For if you are silent, I might as well give up and die.

2Listen to my prayer for mercy as I cry out to you for help, as I lift my hands toward your holy sanctuary.

3Do not drag me away with the wicked— with those who do evil— those who speak friendly words to their neighbors while planning evil in their hearts.

4Give them the punishment they so richly deserve!

Measure it out in proportion to their wickedness.
Pay them back for all their evil deeds!
Give them a taste of what they have done to others.

5They care nothing for what the LORD has done or for what his hands have made.
So he will tear them down, and they will never be rebuilt!

6Praise the LORD!
For he has heard my cry for mercy.

7The LORD is my strength and shield.
I trust him with all my heart.
He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy.
I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.

8The LORD gives his people strength.
He is a safe fortress for his anointed king.

9Save your people!
Bless Israel, your special possession.*
Lead them like a shepherd, and carry them in your arms forever.

Psalm 29

A psalm of David.

1Honor the LORD, you heavenly beings*; honor the LORD for his glory and strength.

2Honor the LORD for the glory of his name.
Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

3The voice of the LORD echoes above the sea.
The God of glory thunders.
The LORD thunders over the mighty sea.

4The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic.

5The voice of the LORD splits the mighty cedars; the LORD shatters
the cedars of Lebanon.

6He makes Lebanon's mountains skip like a calf; he makes Mount
Hermon* leap like a young wild ox.

7The voice of the LORD strikes with bolts of lightning.

8The voice of the LORD makes the barren wilderness quake; the
LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

9The voice of the LORD twists mighty oaks*
and strips the forests bare.
In his Temple everyone shouts, "Glory!"

10The LORD rules over the floodwaters.
The LORD reigns as king forever.

11The LORD gives his people strength.
The LORD blesses them with peace.

Psalm 30

A psalm of David. A song for the dedication of the Temple.

1I will exalt you, LORD, for you rescued me.
You refused to let my enemies triumph over me.

2O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health.

3You brought me up from the grave,* O LORD.
You kept me from falling into the pit of death.

4Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones!
Praise his holy name.

5For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime!
Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.

6When I was prosperous, I said, “Nothing can stop me now!”

7Your favor, O LORD, made me as secure as a mountain.
Then you turned away from me, and I was shattered.

8I cried out to you, O LORD.
I begged the Lord for mercy, saying,

9“What will you gain if I die, if I sink into the grave?
Can my dust praise you?
Can it tell of your faithfulness?

10Hear me, LORD, and have mercy on me.
Help me, O LORD.”

11You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing.
You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy,

12that I might sing praises to you and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever!

Psalm 31

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1O LORD, I have come to you for protection; don't let me be disgraced.
Save me, for you do what is right.

2Turn your ear to listen to me; rescue me quickly.
Be my rock of protection, a fortress where I will be safe.

3You are my rock and my fortress.
For the honor of your name, lead me out of this danger.

4Pull me from the trap my enemies set for me, for I find protection in you alone.

5I entrust my spirit into your hand.
Rescue me, LORD, for you are a faithful God.

6I hate those who worship worthless idols.
I trust in the LORD.

7I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.

8You have not handed me over to my enemies but have set me in a safe place.

9Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am in distress.
Tears blur my eyes.

My body and soul are withering away.

10I am dying from grief; my years are shortened by sadness.
Sin has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within.

11I am scorned by all my enemies and despised by my neighbors—
even my friends are afraid to come near me.
When they see me on the street, they run the other way.

12I am ignored as if I were dead, as if I were a broken pot.

13I have heard the many rumors about me, and I am surrounded by terror.
My enemies conspire against me, plotting to take my life.

14But I am trusting you, O LORD, saying, “You are my God!”

15My future is in your hands.
Rescue me from those who hunt me down relentlessly.

16Let your favor shine on your servant.
In your unfailing love, rescue me.

17Don’t let me be disgraced, O LORD, for I call out to you for help.
Let the wicked be disgraced; let them lie silent in the grave.*

18Silence their lying lips— those proud and arrogant lips that accuse the godly.

19How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you.
You lavish it on those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world.

20You hide them in the shelter of your presence, safe from those who conspire against them.
You shelter them in your presence, far from accusing tongues.

21Praise the LORD, for he has shown me the wonders of his unfailing love.
He kept me safe when my city was under attack.

22In panic I cried out, “I am cut off from the LORD!”
But you heard my cry for mercy and answered my call for help.

23Love the LORD, all you godly ones!
For the LORD protects those who are loyal to him, but he harshly punishes the arrogant.

24So be strong and courageous, all you who put your hope in the LORD!

Psalm 32

A psalm of David.*

1Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!

2Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of guilt,*
whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

3When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.

4Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me.
My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

Interlude

5Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt.
I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.”
And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

Interlude

6Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time,

that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment.

7For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble.
You surround me with songs of victory.

Interlude

8The LORD says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.
I will advise you and watch over you.

9Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.”

10Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the LORD.

11So rejoice in the LORD and be glad, all you who obey him!
Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!

Psalm 33

1Let the godly sing for joy to the LORD; it is fitting for the pure to praise him.

2Praise the LORD with melodies on the lyre; make music for him on the ten-stringed harp.

3Sing a new song of praise to him; play skillfully on the harp, and sing with joy.

4For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does.

5He loves whatever is just and good; the unfailing love of the LORD fills the earth.

6The LORD merely spoke, and the heavens were created.
He breathed the word, and all the stars were born.

7He assigned the sea its boundaries and locked the oceans in vast reservoirs.

8Let the whole world fear the LORD, and let everyone stand in awe of him.

9For when he spoke, the world began!
It appeared at his command.

10The LORD frustrates the plans of the nations and thwarts all their schemes.

11But the LORD's plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken.

12What joy for the nation whose God is the LORD, whose people he has chosen as his inheritance.

13The LORD looks down from heaven and sees the whole human race.

14From his throne he observes all who live on the earth.

15He made their hearts, so he understands everything they do.

16The best-equipped army cannot save a king, nor is great strength enough to save a warrior.

17Don't count on your warhorse to give you victory— for all its strength, it cannot save you.

18But the LORD watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love.

19He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine.

20We put our hope in the LORD.
He is our help and our shield.

21In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

22Let your unfailing love surround us, LORD, for our hope is in you alone.

Psalm 34 *

A psalm of David, regarding the time he pretended to be insane in front of Abimelech, who sent him away.

1I will praise the LORD at all times.
I will constantly speak his praises.

2I will boast only in the LORD; let all who are helpless take heart.

3Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness; let us exalt his name together.

4I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me.
He freed me from all my fears.

5Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.

6In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles.

7For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him.

8Taste and see that the LORD is good.
Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!

9Fear the LORD, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need.

10Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will lack no good thing.

11Come, my children, and listen to me, and I will teach you to fear

the LORD.

12Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous?

13Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies!

14Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

15The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help.

16But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil; he will erase their memory from the earth.

17The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help.
He rescues them from all their troubles.

18The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

19The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time.

20For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken!

21Calamity will surely destroy the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

22But the LORD will redeem those who serve him.
No one who takes refuge in him will be condemned.

Psalm 35

A psalm of David.

1O LORD, oppose those who oppose me.
Fight those who fight against me.

2Put on your armor, and take up your shield.
Prepare for battle, and come to my aid.

3Lift up your spear and javelin against those who pursue me.
Let me hear you say, “I will give you victory!”

4Bring shame and disgrace on those trying to kill me; turn them
back and humiliate those who want to harm me.

5Blow them away like chaff in the wind— a wind sent by the angel
of the LORD.

6Make their path dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD
pursuing them.

7I did them no wrong, but they laid a trap for me.
I did them no wrong, but they dug a pit to catch me.

8So let sudden ruin come upon them!
Let them be caught in the trap they set for me!
Let them be destroyed in the pit they dug for me.

9Then I will rejoice in the LORD.
I will be glad because he rescues me.

10With every bone in my body I will praise him: “LORD, who can
compare with you?
Who else rescues the helpless from the strong?
Who else protects the helpless and poor from those who rob them?”

11Malicious witnesses testify against me.
They accuse me of crimes I know nothing about.

12They repay me evil for good.
I am sick with despair.

13Yet when they were ill, I grieved for them.
I denied myself by fasting for them, but my prayers returned
unanswered.

14I was sad, as though they were my friends or family, as if I were
grieving for my own mother.

15But they are glad now that I am in trouble; they gleefully join
together against me.
I am attacked by people I don't even know; they slander me
constantly.

16They mock me and call me names; they snarl at me.

17How long, O Lord, will you look on and do nothing?
Rescue me from their fierce attacks.
Protect my life from these lions!

18Then I will thank you in front of the great assembly.
I will praise you before all the people.

19Don't let my treacherous enemies rejoice over my defeat.
Don't let those who hate me without cause gloat over my sorrow.

20They don't talk of peace; they plot against innocent people who
mind their own business.

21They shout, "Aha! Aha!
With our own eyes we saw him do it!"

22O LORD, you know all about this.
Do not stay silent.
Do not abandon me now, O Lord.

23Wake up! Rise to my defense!
Take up my case, my God and my Lord.

24Declare me not guilty, O LORD my God, for you give justice.
Don't let my enemies laugh about me in my troubles.

25Don't let them say, "Look, we got what we wanted!
Now we will eat him alive!"

26May those who rejoice at my troubles be humiliated and
disgraced.
May those who triumph over me be covered with shame and

dishonor.

27But give great joy to those who came to my defense.
Let them continually say, “Great is the LORD, who delights in
blessing his servant with peace!”

28Then I will proclaim your justice, and I will praise you all day
long.

Psalm 36

For the choir director: A psalm of David, the servant of the LORD.

1Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts.*
They have no fear of God at all.

2In their blind conceit, they cannot see how wicked they really are.

3Everything they say is crooked and deceitful.
They refuse to act wisely or do good.

4They lie awake at night, hatching sinful plots.
Their actions are never good.
They make no attempt to turn from evil.

5Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens; your
faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds.

6Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like
the ocean depths.
You care for people and animals alike, O LORD.

7How precious is your unfailing love, O God!
All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings.

8You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting
them drink from your river of delights.

9For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see.

10Pour out your unfailing love on those who love you; give justice

to those with honest hearts.

11Don’t let the proud trample me or the wicked push me around.

12Look! Those who do evil have fallen!
They are thrown down, never to rise again.

Psalm 37 *

A psalm of David.

1Don’t worry about the wicked or envy those who do wrong.

2For like grass, they soon fade away.
Like spring flowers, they soon wither.

3Trust in the LORD and do good.
Then you will live safely in the land and prosper.

4Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart’s desires.

5Commit everything you do to the LORD.
Trust him, and he will help you.

6He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.

7Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act.
Don’t worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes.

8Stop being angry!
Turn from your rage!
Do not lose your temper— it only leads to harm.

9For the wicked will be destroyed, but those who trust in the LORD will possess the land.

10Soon the wicked will disappear.
Though you look for them, they will be gone.

11The lowly will possess the land and will live in peace and prosperity.

12The wicked plot against the godly; they snarl at them in defiance.

13But the Lord just laughs, for he sees their day of judgment coming.

14The wicked draw their swords and string their bows to kill the poor and the oppressed, to slaughter those who do right.

15But their swords will stab their own hearts, and their bows will be broken.

16It is better to be godly and have little than to be evil and rich.

17For the strength of the wicked will be shattered, but the LORD takes care of the godly.

18Day by day the LORD takes care of the innocent, and they will receive an inheritance that lasts forever.

19They will not be disgraced in hard times; even in famine they will have more than enough.

20But the wicked will die.
The LORD's enemies are like flowers in a field— they will disappear like smoke.

21The wicked borrow and never repay, but the godly are generous givers.

22Those the LORD blesses will possess the land, but those he curses will die.

23The LORD directs the steps of the godly.
He delights in every detail of their lives.

24Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds
them by the hand.

25Once I was young, and now I am old.
Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned or their children
begging for bread.

26The godly always give generous loans to others, and their children
are a blessing.

27Turn from evil and do good, and you will live in the land forever.

28For the LORD loves justice, and he will never abandon the godly.
He will keep them safe forever, but the children of the wicked will
die.

29The godly will possess the land and will live there forever.

30The godly offer good counsel; they teach right from wrong.

31They have made God's law their own, so they will never slip from
his path.

32The wicked wait in ambush for the godly, looking for an excuse to
kill them.

33But the LORD will not let the wicked succeed or let the godly be
condemned when they are put on trial.

34Put your hope in the LORD.
Travel steadily along his path.
He will honor you by giving you the land.
You will see the wicked destroyed.

35I have seen wicked and ruthless people flourishing like a tree in
its native soil.

36But when I looked again, they were gone!
Though I searched for them, I could not find them!

37Look at those who are honest and good, for a wonderful future
awaits those who love peace.

38But the rebellious will be destroyed; they have no future.

39The LORD rescues the godly; he is their fortress in times of trouble.

40The LORD helps them, rescuing them from the wicked.
He saves them, and they find shelter in him.

Psalm 38

A psalm of David, asking God to remember him.

1O LORD, don't rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your rage!

2Your arrows have struck deep, and your blows are crushing me.

3Because of your anger, my whole body is sick; my health is broken because of my sins.

4My guilt overwhelms me— it is a burden too heavy to bear.

5My wounds fester and stink because of my foolish sins.

6I am bent over and racked with pain.
All day long I walk around filled with grief.

7A raging fever burns within me, and my health is broken.

8I am exhausted and completely crushed.
My groans come from an anguished heart.

9You know what I long for, Lord; you hear my every sigh.

10My heart beats wildly, my strength fails, and I am going blind.

11My loved ones and friends stay away, fearing my disease.
Even my own family stands at a distance.

12Meanwhile, my enemies lay traps to kill me.
Those who wish me harm make plans to ruin me.
All day long they plan their treachery.

13But I am deaf to all their threats.
I am silent before them as one who cannot speak.

14I choose to hear nothing, and I make no reply.

15For I am waiting for you, O LORD.
You must answer for me, O Lord my God.

16I prayed, “Don’t let my enemies gloat over me or rejoice at my downfall.”

17I am on the verge of collapse, facing constant pain.

18But I confess my sins; I am deeply sorry for what I have done.

19I have many aggressive enemies; they hate me without reason.

20They repay me evil for good and oppose me for pursuing good.

21Do not abandon me, O LORD.
Do not stand at a distance, my God.

22Come quickly to help me, O Lord my savior.

Psalm 39

For Jeduthun, the choir director: A psalm of David.

1I said to myself, “I will watch what I do and not sin in what I say.
I will hold my tongue when the ungodly are around me.”

2But as I stood there in silence— not even speaking of good things
— the turmoil within me grew worse.

3The more I thought about it, the hotter I got, igniting a fire of words:

4“LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be.
Remind me that my days are numbered— how fleeting my life is.

5You have made my life no longer than the width of my hand.
My entire lifetime is just a moment to you; at best, each of us is but

a breath.”

Interlude

6We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing.
We heap up wealth, not knowing who will spend it.

7And so, Lord, where do I put my hope?
My only hope is in you.

8Rescue me from my rebellion.
Do not let fools mock me.

9I am silent before you; I won’t say a word, for my punishment is from you.

10But please stop striking me!
I am exhausted by the blows from your hand.

11When you discipline us for our sins, you consume like a moth what is precious to us.
Each of us is but a breath.

Interlude

12Hear my prayer, O LORD!
Listen to my cries for help!
Don’t ignore my tears.
For I am your guest— a traveler passing through, as my ancestors were before me.

13Leave me alone so I can smile again before I am gone and exist no more.

Psalm 40

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1I waited patiently for the LORD to help me, and he turned to me
and heard my cry.

2He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire.
He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.

3He has given me a new song to sing, a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see what he has done and be amazed.
They will put their trust in the LORD.

4Oh, the joys of those who trust the LORD, who have no confidence
in the proud or in those who worship idols.

5O LORD my God, you have performed many wonders for us.
Your plans for us are too numerous to list.
You have no equal.
If I tried to recite all your wonderful deeds, I would never come to
the end of them.

6You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings.
Now that you have made me listen, I finally understand*— you
don't require burnt offerings or sin offerings.

7Then I said, "Look, I have come.
As is written about me in the Scriptures:

8I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are
written on my heart."

9I have told all your people about your justice.
I have not been afraid to speak out,
as you, O LORD, well know.

10I have not kept the good news of your justice hidden in my heart;
I have talked about your faithfulness and saving power.
I have told everyone in the great assembly
of your unfailing love and faithfulness.

11LORD, don't hold back your tender mercies from me.
Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect me.

12For troubles surround me— too many to count!
My sins pile up so high
I can't see my way out.
They outnumber the hairs on my head.
I have lost all courage.

13Please, LORD, rescue me!
Come quickly, LORD, and help me.

14May those who try to destroy me be humiliated and put to shame.
May those who take delight in my trouble
be turned back in disgrace.

15Let them be horrified by their shame, for they said, "Aha! We've got him now!"

16But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness in you.
May those who love your salvation
repeatedly shout, "The LORD is great!"

17As for me, since I am poor and needy, let the Lord keep me in his thoughts.
You are my helper and my savior.
O my God, do not delay.

Psalm 41

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1Oh, the joys of those who are kind to the poor!
The LORD rescues them when they are in trouble.

2The LORD protects them and keeps them alive.
He gives them prosperity in the land
and rescues them from their enemies.

3The LORD nurses them when they are sick and restores them to health.

4“O LORD,” I prayed, “have mercy on me.
Heal me, for I have sinned against you.”

5But my enemies say nothing but evil about me.
“How soon will he die and be forgotten?” they ask.

6They visit me as if they were my friends, but all the while they gather gossip,
and when they leave, they spread it everywhere.

7All who hate me whisper about me, imagining the worst.

8“He has some fatal disease,” they say.
“He will never get out of that bed!”

9Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me.

10LORD, have mercy on me.
Make me well again, so I can pay them back!

11I know you are pleased with me, for you have not let my enemies triumph over me.

12You have preserved my life because I am innocent; you have brought me into your presence forever.

13Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who lives from everlasting to everlasting.
Amen and amen!

Book Two (Psalms 42–72)

Psalm 42

For the choir director: A psalm* of the descendants of Korah.

1As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.

2I thirst for God, the living God.

When can I go and stand before him?

3Day and night I have only tears for food, while my enemies
continually taunt me, saying,
“Where is this God of yours?”

4My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be:
I walked among the crowds of worshipers,
leading a great procession to the house of God,
singing for joy and giving thanks
amid the sound of a great celebration!

5Why am I discouraged?
Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God!
I will praise him again—
my Savior and 6my God!
Now I am deeply discouraged,
but I will remember you—
even from distant Mount Hermon, the source of the Jordan,
from the land of Mount Mizar.

7I hear the tumult of the raging seas as your waves and surging
tides sweep over me.

8But each day the LORD pours his unfailing love upon me, and
through each night I sing his songs,
praying to God who gives me life.

9“O God my rock,” I cry, “Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I wander around in grief,
oppressed by my enemies?”

10Their taunts break my bones.
They scoff, “Where is this God of yours?”

11Why am I discouraged?
Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God!
I will praise him again—

my Savior and my God!

Psalm 43

1Declare me innocent, O God!
Defend me against these ungodly people.
Rescue me from these unjust liars.

2For you are God, my only safe haven.
Why have you tossed me aside?
Why must I wander around in grief,
oppressed by my enemies?

3Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me.
Let them lead me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you live.

4There I will go to the altar of God, to God—the source of all my joy.
I will praise you with my harp,
O God, my God!

5Why am I discouraged?
Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God!
I will praise him again—
my Savior and my God!

Psalm 44

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah.*

1O God, we have heard it with our own ears— our ancestors have told us
of all you did in their day,
in days long ago:

2You drove out the pagan nations by your power and gave all the land to our ancestors.
You crushed their enemies

and set our ancestors free.

3They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their
own strong arm that gave them victory.
It was your right hand and strong arm
and the blinding light from your face that helped them,
for you loved them.

4You are my King and my God.
You command victories for Israel.*

5Only by your power can we push back our enemies; only in your
name can we trample our foes.

6I do not trust in my bow; I do not count on my sword to save me.

7You are the one who gives us victory over our enemies; you
disgrace those who hate us.

8O God, we give glory to you all day long and constantly praise
your name.

Interlude

9But now you have tossed us aside in dishonor.
You no longer lead our armies to battle.

10You make us retreat from our enemies and allow those who hate
us to plunder our land.

11You have butchered us like sheep and scattered us among the
nations.

12You sold your precious people for a pittance, making nothing on
the sale.

13You let our neighbors mock us.
We are an object of scorn and derision to those around us.

14You have made us the butt of their jokes; they shake their heads

at us in scorn.

15We can't escape the constant humiliation; shame is written across
our faces.

16All we hear are the taunts of our mockers.
All we see are our vengeful enemies.

17All this has happened though we have not forgotten you.
We have not violated your covenant.

18Our hearts have not deserted you.
We have not strayed from your path.

19Yet you have crushed us in the jackal's desert home.
You have covered us with darkness and death.

20If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread our hands in
prayer to foreign gods,

21God would surely have known it, for he knows the secrets of
every heart.

22But for your sake we are killed every day; we are being
slaughtered like sheep.

23Wake up, O Lord! Why do you sleep?
Get up! Do not reject us forever.

24Why do you look the other way?
Why do you ignore our suffering and oppression?

25We collapse in the dust, lying face down in the dirt.

26Rise up! Help us!
Ransom us because of your unfailing love.

WEDDINGS PSALM 45

Psalm 45

For the choir director: A love song to be sung to the tune "Lilies." A psalm of the descendants of Korah.*

1Beautiful words stir my heart.
I will recite a lovely poem about the king,
for my tongue is like the pen of a skillful poet.

2You are the most handsome of all.
Gracious words stream from your lips.
God himself has blessed you forever.

3Put on your sword, O mighty warrior!
You are so glorious, so majestic!

4In your majesty, ride out to victory, defending truth, humility, and justice.
Go forth to perform awe-inspiring deeds!

5Your arrows are sharp, piercing your enemies' hearts.
The nations fall beneath your feet.

6Your throne, O God,* endures forever and ever.
You rule with a scepter of justice.

7You love justice and hate evil.
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you,
pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.

8Myrrh, aloes, and cassia perfume your robes.
In ivory palaces the music of strings entertains you.

9Kings' daughters are among your noble women.
At your right side stands the queen,
wearing jewelry of finest gold from Ophir!

10Listen to me, O royal daughter; take to heart what I say.
Forget your people and your family far away.

11For your royal husband delights in your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord.

12The princess of Tyre* will shower you with gifts.
The wealthy will beg your favor.

13The bride, a princess, looks glorious in her golden gown.

14In her beautiful robes, she is led to the king, accompanied by her bridesmaids.

15What a joyful and enthusiastic procession as they enter the king's palace!

16Your sons will become kings like their father.
You will make them rulers over many lands.

17I will bring honor to your name in every generation.
Therefore, the nations will praise you forever and ever.

Psalm 46

For the choir director: A song of the descendants of Korah, to be sung by soprano voices. *

1God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

2So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea.

3Let the oceans roar and foam.
Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge!

Interlude

4A river brings joy to the city of our God, the sacred home of the Most High.

5God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed.
From the very break of day, God will protect it.

6The nations are in chaos, and their kingdoms crumble!
God's voice thunders,
and the earth melts!

7The LORD of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel*
is our fortress.

Interlude

8Come, see the glorious works of the LORD: See how he brings destruction upon the world.

9He causes wars to end throughout the earth.
He breaks the bow and snaps the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

10"Be still, and know that I am God!
I will be honored by every nation.
I will be honored throughout the world."

11The LORD of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress.

Interlude

Psalm 47

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah.

1Come, everyone! Clap your hands!
Shout to God with joyful praise!

2For the LORD Most High is awesome.
He is the great King of all the earth.

3He subdues the nations before us, putting our enemies beneath our feet.

4He chose the Promised Land as our inheritance, the proud possession of Jacob's descendants, whom he loves.

Interlude

5God has ascended with a mighty shout.
The LORD has ascended with trumpets blaring.

6Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises!

7For God is the King over all the earth.
Praise him with a psalm.*

8God reigns above the nations, sitting on his holy throne.

9The rulers of the world have gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham.
For all the kings of the earth belong to God.
He is highly honored everywhere.

Psalm 48

A song. A psalm of the descendants of Korah.

1How great is the LORD, how deserving of praise,
in the city of our God,
which sits on his holy mountain!

2It is high and magnificent; the whole earth rejoices to see it!
Mount Zion, the holy mountain,*
is the city of the great King!

3God himself is in Jerusalem's towers, revealing himself as its defender.

4The kings of the earth joined forces and advanced against the city.

5But when they saw it, they were stunned; they were terrified and ran away.

6They were gripped with terror and writhed in pain like a woman in labor.

7You destroyed them like the mighty ships of Tarshish shattered by a powerful east wind.

8We had heard of the city's glory, but now we have seen it ourselves — the city of the LORD of Heaven's Armies.
It is the city of our God;
he will make it safe forever.

Interlude

9O God, we meditate on your unfailing love as we worship in your Temple.

10As your name deserves, O God, you will be praised to the ends of the earth.
Your strong right hand is filled with victory.

11Let the people on Mount Zion rejoice.
Let all the towns of Judah be glad
because of your justice.

12Go, inspect the city of Jerusalem.*
Walk around and count the many towers.

13Take note of the fortified walls, and tour all the citadels,
that you may describe them
to future generations.

14For that is what God is like.
He is our God forever and ever,
and he will guide us until we die.

Psalm 49

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah.

1Listen to this, all you people!
Pay attention, everyone in the world!

2High and low,
rich and poor—listen!

3For my words are wise, and my thoughts are filled with insight.

4I listen carefully to many proverbs and solve riddles with
inspiration from a harp.

5Why should I fear when trouble comes, when enemies surround
me?

6They trust in their wealth and boast of great riches.

7Yet they cannot redeem themselves from death*
by paying a ransom to God.

8Redemption does not come so easily, for no one can ever pay
enough

9to live forever
and never see the grave.

10Those who are wise must finally die, just like the foolish and
senseless,

leaving all their wealth behind.

11The grave* is their eternal home, where they will stay forever.
They may name their estates after themselves,

12but their fame will not last.
They will die, just like animals.

13This is the fate of fools, though they are remembered as being wise.*

Interlude

14Like sheep, they are led to the grave,*
where death will be their shepherd.
In the morning the godly will rule over them.
Their bodies will rot in the grave,
far from their grand estates.

15But as for me, God will redeem my life.
He will snatch me from the power of the grave.

Interlude

16So don't be dismayed when the wicked grow rich and their homes become ever more splendid.

17For when they die, they take nothing with them.
Their wealth will not follow them into the grave.

18In this life they consider themselves fortunate and are applauded for their success.

19But they will die like all before them and never again see the light of day.

20People who boast of their wealth don't understand; they will die,

just like animals.

Psalm 50

A psalm of Asaph.

1The LORD, the Mighty One, is God, and he has spoken;
he has summoned all humanity
from where the sun rises to where it sets.

2From Mount Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines in glorious radiance.

3Our God approaches, and he is not silent.
Fire devours everything in his way,
and a great storm rages around him.

4He calls on the heavens above and earth below to witness the judgment of his people.

5“Bring my faithful people to me— those who made a covenant with me by giving sacrifices.”

6Then let the heavens proclaim his justice, for God himself will be the judge.

Interlude

7“O my people, listen as I speak.
Here are my charges against you, O Israel:
I am God, your God!

8I have no complaint about your sacrifices or the burnt offerings you constantly offer.

9But I do not need the bulls from your barns or the goats from your pens.

10For all the animals of the forest are mine, and I own the cattle on a thousand hills.

11I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine.

12If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for all the world is mine and everything in it.

13Do I eat the meat of bulls?
Do I drink the blood of goats?

14Make thankfulness your sacrifice to God, and keep the vows you made to the Most High.

15Then call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.”

16But God says to the wicked: “Why bother reciting my decrees and pretending to obey my covenant?

17For you refuse my discipline and treat my words like trash.

18When you see thieves, you approve of them, and you spend your time with adulterers.

19Your mouth is filled with wickedness, and your tongue is full of lies.

20You sit around and slander your brother— your own mother’s son.

21While you did all this, I remained silent, and you thought I didn’t care.
But now I will rebuke you,
listing all my charges against you.

22Repent, all of you who forget me, or I will tear you apart,
and no one will help you.

23But giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors me.
If you keep to my path,
I will reveal to you the salvation of God.”

Psalm 51

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

1Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love.
Because of your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my sins.

2Wash me clean from my guilt.
Purify me from my sin.

3For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night.

4Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight.
You will be proved right in what you say,
and your judgment against me is just.*

5For I was born a sinner— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.

6But you desire honesty from the womb,*
teaching me wisdom even there.

7Purify me from my sins,* and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

8Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me— now let me rejoice.

9Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.

10Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.

11Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit* from me.

12Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

13Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you.

14Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.

15Unseal my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may praise you.

16You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.

17The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

18Look with favor on Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

19Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit
— with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings.
Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

Psalm 52

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time Doeg the Edomite said to Saul, "David has gone to see Ahimelech."*

1Why do you boast about your crimes, great warrior?
Don't you realize God's justice continues forever?

2All day long you plot destruction.
Your tongue cuts like a sharp razor;
you're an expert at telling lies.

3You love evil more than good and lies more than truth.

Interlude

4You love to destroy others with your words, you liar!

5But God will strike you down once and for all.
He will pull you from your home
and uproot you from the land of the living.

Interlude

6The righteous will see it and be amazed.
They will laugh and say,

7"Look what happens to mighty warriors who do not trust in God.

They trust their wealth instead
and grow more and more bold in their wickedness.”

8But I am like an olive tree, thriving in the house of God.
I will always trust in God’s unfailing love.

9I will praise you forever, O God, for what you have done.
I will trust in your good name
in the presence of your faithful people.

Psalm 53

For the choir director: A meditation; a psalm of David.*

1Only fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.”
They are corrupt, and their actions are evil;
not one of them does good!

2God looks down from heaven on the entire human race;
he looks to see if anyone is truly wise,
if anyone seeks God.

3But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt.*
No one does good,
not a single one!

4Will those who do evil never learn?
They eat up my people like bread
and wouldn’t think of praying to God.

5Terror will grip them, terror like they have never known before.
God will scatter the bones of your enemies.
You will put them to shame, for God has rejected them.

6Who will come from Mount Zion to rescue Israel?
When God restores his people,
Jacob will shout with joy, and Israel will rejoice.

Psalm 54

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time the Ziphites came and said to Saul, "We know where David is hiding." To be accompanied by stringed instruments.*

1Come with great power, O God, and rescue me!
Defend me with your might.

2Listen to my prayer, O God.
Pay attention to my plea.

3For strangers are attacking me; violent people are trying to kill me.
They care nothing for God.

Interlude

4But God is my helper.
The Lord keeps me alive!

5May the evil plans of my enemies be turned against them.
Do as you promised and put an end to them.

6I will sacrifice a voluntary offering to you; I will praise your name, O LORD,
for it is good.

7For you have rescued me from my troubles and helped me to triumph over my enemies.

Psalm 55

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by stringed instruments.*

1Listen to my prayer, O God.
Do not ignore my cry for help!

2Please listen and answer me, for I am overwhelmed by my troubles.

3My enemies shout at me, making loud and wicked threats.

They bring trouble on me
and angrily hunt me down.

4My heart pounds in my chest.
The terror of death assaults me.

5Fear and trembling overwhelm me, and I can't stop shaking.

6Oh, that I had wings like a dove; then I would fly away and rest!

7I would fly far away to the quiet of the wilderness.

Interlude

8How quickly I would escape— far from this wild storm of hatred.

9Confuse them, Lord, and frustrate their plans, for I see violence
and conflict in the city.

10Its walls are patrolled day and night against invaders, but the real
danger is wickedness within the city.

11Everything is falling apart; threats and cheating are rampant in
the streets.

12It is not an enemy who taunts me— I could bear that.
It is not my foes who so arrogantly insult me—
I could have hidden from them.

13Instead, it is you—my equal, my companion and close friend.

14What good fellowship we once enjoyed as we walked together to
the house of God.

15Let death stalk my enemies; let the grave* swallow them alive, for
evil makes its home within them.

16But I will call on God, and the LORD will rescue me.

17Morning, noon, and night I cry out in my distress,

and the LORD hears my voice.

18He ransoms me and keeps me safe from the battle waged against me,
though many still oppose me.

19God, who has ruled forever, will hear me and humble them.

Interlude

For my enemies refuse to change their ways;
they do not fear God.

20As for my companion, he betrayed his friends; he broke his promises.

21His words are as smooth as butter, but in his heart is war.
His words are as soothing as lotion,
but underneath are daggers!

22Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you.
He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.

23But you, O God, will send the wicked down to the pit of destruction.
Murderers and liars will die young,
but I am trusting you to save me.

DON'T FEAR PSALM 56

Psalm 56

For the choir director: A psalm * *of David, regarding the time the Philistines seized him in Gath. To be sung to the tune "Dove on Distant Oaks."*

1O God, have mercy on me, for people are hounding me.
My foes attack me all day long.

2I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me.

3But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you.

4I praise God for what he has promised.
I trust in God, so why should I be afraid?
What can mere mortals do to me?

5They are always twisting what I say; they spend their days plotting to harm me.

6They come together to spy on me— watching my every step, eager to kill me.

7Don't let them get away with their wickedness; in your anger, O God, bring them down.

8You keep track of all my sorrows.*
You have collected all my tears in your bottle.
You have recorded each one in your book.

9My enemies will retreat when I call to you for help.
This I know: God is on my side!

10I praise God for what he has promised; yes, I praise the LORD for what he has promised.

11I trust in God, so why should I be afraid?
What can mere mortals do to me?

12I will fulfill my vows to you, O God, and will offer a sacrifice of

thanks for your help.

13For you have rescued me from death; you have kept my feet from slipping.
So now I can walk in your presence, O God,
in your life-giving light.

Psalm 57

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time he fled from Saul and went into the cave. To be sung to the tune "Do Not Destroy!"*

1Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy!
I look to you for protection.
I will hide beneath the shadow of your wings
until the danger passes by.

2I cry out to God Most High,*
to God who will fulfill his purpose for me.

3He will send help from heaven to rescue me, disgracing those who hound me.

Interlude

My God will send forth his unfailing love and faithfulness.

4I am surrounded by fierce lions who greedily devour human prey—
whose teeth pierce like spears and arrows,
and whose tongues cut like swords.

5Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens!
May your glory shine over all the earth.

6My enemies have set a trap for me.
I am weary from distress.
They have dug a deep pit in my path,
but they themselves have fallen into it.

Interlude

7My heart is confident in you, O God; my heart is confident.
No wonder I can sing your praises!

8Wake up, my heart!
Wake up, O lyre and harp!
I will wake the dawn with my song.

9I will thank you, Lord, among all the people.
I will sing your praises among the nations.

10For your unfailing love is as high as the heavens.
Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

11Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens.
May your glory shine over all the earth.

Psalm 58

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be sung to the tune "Do Not Destroy!"*

1Justice—do you rulers* know the meaning of the word?
Do you judge the people fairly?

2No! You plot injustice in your hearts.
You spread violence throughout the land.

3These wicked people are born sinners; even from birth they have lied and gone their own way.

4They spit venom like deadly snakes; they are like cobras that refuse to listen,

5ignoring the tunes of the snake charmers, no matter how skillfully they play.

6Break off their fangs, O God!
Smash the jaws of these lions, O LORD!

7 May they disappear like water into thirsty ground.
Make their weapons useless in their hands.*

8 May they be like snails that dissolve into slime, like a stillborn
child who will never see the sun.

9 God will sweep them away, both young and old, faster than a pot
heats over burning thorns.

10 The godly will rejoice when they see injustice avenged.
They will wash their feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 Then at last everyone will say, “There truly is a reward for those
who live for God;
surely there is a God who judges justly here on earth.”

Psalm 59

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time Saul sent soldiers to watch David's house in order to kill him. To be sung to the tune "Do Not Destroy!"*

1 Rescue me from my enemies, O God.
Protect me from those who have come to destroy me.

2 Rescue me from these criminals; save me from these murderers.

3 They have set an ambush for me.
Fierce enemies are out there waiting, LORD, though I have not sinned or offended them.

4 I have done nothing wrong, yet they prepare to attack me.
Wake up! See what is happening and help me!

5 O LORD God of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, wake up and punish those hostile nations.
Show no mercy to wicked traitors.

Interlude

6They come out at night, snarling like vicious dogs
as they prowl the streets.

7Listen to the filth that comes from their mouths; their words cut like swords.
“After all, who can hear us?” they sneer.

8But LORD, you laugh at them.
You scoff at all the hostile nations.

9You are my strength; I wait for you to rescue me, for you, O God, are my fortress.

10In his unfailing love, my God will stand with me.
He will let me look down in triumph on all my enemies.

11Don’t kill them, for my people soon forget such lessons; stagger them with your power, and bring them to their knees,
O Lord our shield.

12Because of the sinful things they say, because of the evil that is on their lips,
let them be captured by their pride,
their curses, and their lies.

13Destroy them in your anger!
Wipe them out completely!
Then the whole world will know
that God reigns in Israel.*

Interlude

14My enemies come out at night, snarling like vicious dogs
as they prowl the streets.

15They scavenge for food but go to sleep unsatisfied.*

16But as for me, I will sing about your power.
Each morning I will sing with joy about your unfailing love.

For you have been my refuge,
a place of safety when I am in distress.

17O my Strength, to you I sing praises, for you, O God, are my refuge,
the God who shows me unfailing love.

Psalm 60

For the choir director: A psalm of David useful for teaching, regarding the time David fought Aram-naharaim and Aram-zobah, and Joab returned and killed 12,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. To be sung to the tune "Lily of the Testimony."*

1You have rejected us, O God, and broken our defenses.
You have been angry with us; now restore us to your favor.

2You have shaken our land and split it open.
Seal the cracks, for the land trembles.

3You have been very hard on us, making us drink wine that sent us reeling.

4But you have raised a banner for those who fear you— a rallying point in the face of attack.

Interlude

5Now rescue your beloved people.
Answer and save us by your power.

6God has promised this by his holiness*: “I will divide up Shechem with joy.
I will measure out the valley of Succoth.

7Gilead is mine, and Manasseh, too.
Ephraim, my helmet, will produce my warriors,
and Judah, my scepter, will produce my kings.

8But Moab, my washbasin, will become my servant, and I will wipe my feet on Edom
and shout in triumph over Philistia.”

9Who will bring me into the fortified city?
Who will bring me victory over Edom?

10Have you rejected us, O God?
Will you no longer march with our armies?

11Oh, please help us against our enemies, for all human help is useless.

12With God’s help we will do mighty things, for he will trample down our foes.

Psalm 61

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by stringed instruments.

1O God, listen to my cry!
Hear my prayer!

2From the ends of the earth, I cry to you for help
when my heart is overwhelmed.
Lead me to the towering rock of safety,

3for you are my safe refuge, a fortress where my enemies cannot reach me.

4Let me live forever in your sanctuary, safe beneath the shelter of your wings!

Interlude

5For you have heard my vows, O God.
You have given me an inheritance reserved for those who fear your name.

6Add many years to the life of the king!
May his years span the generations!

7May he reign under God's protection forever.
May your unfailing love and faithfulness watch over him.

8Then I will sing praises to your name forever as I fulfill my vows each day.

Psalm 62

For Jeduthun, the choir director: A psalm of David.

1I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from him.

2He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.

3So many enemies against one man— all of them trying to kill me.
To them I'm just a broken-down wall
or a tottering fence.

4They plan to topple me from my high position.
They delight in telling lies about me.
They praise me to my face
but curse me in their hearts.

Interlude

5Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in him.

6He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.

7My victory and honor come from God alone.
He is my refuge, a rock where no enemy can reach me.

8O my people, trust in him at all times.
Pour out your heart to him,
for God is our refuge.

Interlude

9Common people are as worthless as a puff of wind, and the powerful are not what they appear to be.
If you weigh them on the scales,

together they are lighter than a breath of air.

10Don't make your living by extortion or put your hope in stealing.
And if your wealth increases,
don't make it the center of your life.

11God has spoken plainly, and I have heard it many times:
Power, O God, belongs to you;

12unfailing love, O Lord, is yours.
Surely you repay all people
according to what they have done.

Psalm 63

A psalm of David, regarding a time when David was in the wilderness of Judah.

1O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you.
My soul thirsts for you;
my whole body longs for you
in this parched and weary land
where there is no water.

2I have seen you in your sanctuary and gazed upon your power and glory.

3Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you!

4I will praise you as long as I live, lifting up my hands to you in prayer.

5You satisfy me more than the richest feast.
I will praise you with songs of joy.

6I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night.

7Because you are my helper, I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings.

8I cling to you; your strong right hand holds me securely.

9But those plotting to destroy me will come to ruin.
They will go down into the depths of the earth.

10They will die by the sword and become the food of jackals.

11But the king will rejoice in God.
All who swear to tell the truth will praise him,
while liars will be silenced.

Psalm 64

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1O God, listen to my complaint.
Protect my life from my enemies' threats.

2Hide me from the plots of this evil mob, from this gang of wrongdoers.

3They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim their bitter words like arrows.

4They shoot from ambush at the innocent, attacking suddenly and fearlessly.

5They encourage each other to do evil and plan how to set their traps in secret.
"Who will ever notice?" they ask.

6As they plot their crimes, they say, "We have devised the perfect plan!"
Yes, the human heart and mind are cunning.

7But God himself will shoot them with his arrows, suddenly striking them down.

8Their own tongues will ruin them, and all who see them will shake their heads in scorn.

9Then everyone will be afraid; they will proclaim the mighty acts of God

and realize all the amazing things he does.

10The godly will rejoice in the LORD
and find shelter in him.
And those who do what is right
will praise him.

Psalm 65

For the choir director: A song. A psalm of David.

1What mighty praise, O God, belongs to you in Zion.
We will fulfill our vows to you,

2for you answer our prayers.
All of us must come to you.

3Though we are overwhelmed by our sins, you forgive them all.

4What joy for those you choose to bring near, those who live in your holy courts.
What festivities await us
inside your holy Temple.

5You faithfully answer our prayers with awesome deeds, O God our savior.
You are the hope of everyone on earth,
even those who sail on distant seas.

6You formed the mountains by your power and armed yourself with mighty strength.

7You quieted the raging oceans with their pounding waves
and silenced the shouting of the nations.

8Those who live at the ends of the earth stand in awe of your wonders.
From where the sun rises to where it sets,
you inspire shouts of joy.

9You take care of the earth and water it, making it rich and fertile.
The river of God has plenty of water;
it provides a bountiful harvest of grain,
for you have ordered it so.

10You drench the plowed ground with rain, melting the clods and leveling the ridges.
You soften the earth with showers
and bless its abundant crops.

11You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance.

12The grasslands of the wilderness become a lush pasture, and the hillsides blossom with joy.

13The meadows are clothed with flocks of sheep, and the valleys are carpeted with grain.
They all shout and sing for joy!

Psalm 66

For the choir director: A song. A psalm.

1Shout joyful praises to God, all the earth!

2Sing about the glory of his name!
Tell the world how glorious he is.

3Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!
Your enemies cringe before your mighty power.

4Everything on earth will worship you; they will sing your praises,
shouting your name in glorious songs.”

Interlude

5Come and see what our God has done, what awesome miracles he performs for people!

6He made a dry path through the Red Sea,*
and his people went across on foot.
There we rejoiced in him.

7For by his great power he rules forever.
He watches every movement of the nations;
let no rebel rise in defiance.

Interlude

8Let the whole world bless our God and loudly sing his praises.

9Our lives are in his hands, and he keeps our feet from stumbling.

10You have tested us, O God; you have purified us like silver.

11You captured us in your net and laid the burden of slavery on our backs.

12Then you put a leader over us.*
We went through fire and flood,
but you brought us to a place of great abundance.

13Now I come to your Temple with burnt offerings to fulfill the vows I made to you—

14yes, the sacred vows that I made when I was in deep trouble.

15That is why I am sacrificing burnt offerings to you— the best of my rams as a pleasing aroma,
and a sacrifice of bulls and male goats.

Interlude

16Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he did for me.

17For I cried out to him for help, praising him as I spoke.

18If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not

have listened.

19But God did listen!
He paid attention to my prayer.

20Praise God, who did not ignore my prayer or withdraw his
unfailing love from me.

Psalm 67

For the choir director: A song. A psalm, to be accompanied by stringed instruments.

1May God be merciful and bless us.
May his face smile with favor on us.

Interlude

2May your ways be known throughout the earth, your saving power among people everywhere.

3May the nations praise you, O God.
Yes, may all the nations praise you.

4Let the whole world sing for joy, because you govern the nations with justice
and guide the people of the whole world.

Interlude

5May the nations praise you, O God.
Yes, may all the nations praise you.

6Then the earth will yield its harvests, and God, our God, will richly bless us.

7Yes, God will bless us, and people all over the world will fear him.

Psalm 68

For the choir director: A song. A psalm of David.

1Rise up, O God, and scatter your enemies.
Let those who hate God run for their lives.

2Blow them away like smoke.
Melt them like wax in a fire.
Let the wicked perish in the presence of God.

3But let the godly rejoice.
Let them be glad in God's presence.
Let them be filled with joy.

4Sing praises to God and to his name!
Sing loud praises to him who rides the clouds.*
His name is the LORD—
rejoice in his presence!

5Father to the fatherless, defender of widows— this is God, whose dwelling is holy.

6God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy.
But he makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

7O God, when you led your people out from Egypt, when you marched through the dry wasteland,

Interlude

8the earth trembled, and the heavens poured down rain before you, the God of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.

9You sent abundant rain, O God, to refresh the weary land.

10There your people finally settled, and with a bountiful harvest, O God,

you provided for your needy people.

11The Lord gives the word, and a great army* brings the good news.

12Enemy kings and their armies flee, while the women of Israel
divide the plunder.

13Even those who lived among the sheepfolds found treasures—
doves with wings of silver
and feathers of gold.

14The Almighty scattered the enemy kings like a blowing snowstorm
on Mount Zalmon.

15The mountains of Bashan are majestic, with many peaks
stretching high into the sky.

16Why do you look with envy, O rugged mountains, at Mount Zion,
where God has chosen to live,
where the LORD himself will live forever?

17Surrounded by unnumbered thousands of chariots, the Lord came
from Mount Sinai into his sanctuary.

18When you ascended to the heights, you led a crowd of captives.
You received gifts from the people,
even from those who rebelled against you.
Now the LORD God will live among us there.

19Praise the Lord; praise God our savior!
For each day he carries us in his arms.

Interlude

20Our God is a God who saves!
The Sovereign LORD rescues us from death.

21But God will smash the heads of his enemies, crushing the skulls
of those who love their guilty ways.

22The Lord says, “I will bring my enemies down from Bashan; I will
bring them up from the depths of the sea.

23You, my people, will wash* your feet in their blood, and even
your dogs will get their share!”

24Your procession has come into view, O God— the procession of
my God and King as he goes into the sanctuary.

25Singers are in front, musicians behind; between them are young
women playing tambourines.

26Praise God, all you people of Israel; praise the LORD, the source
of Israel’s life.

27Look, the little tribe of Benjamin leads the way.
Then comes a great throng of rulers from Judah
and all the rulers of Zebulun and Naphtali.

28Summon your might, O God.*
Display your power, O God, as you have in the past.

29The kings of the earth are bringing tribute to your Temple in
Jerusalem.

30Rebuke these enemy nations— these wild animals lurking in the
reeds,
this herd of bulls among the weaker calves.
Make them bring bars of silver in humble tribute.
Scatter the nations that delight in war.

31Let Egypt come with gifts of precious metals*; let Ethiopia* bring
tribute to God.

32Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth.
Sing praises to the Lord.

Interlude

33Sing to the one who rides across the ancient heavens, his mighty
voice thundering from the sky.

34Tell everyone about God's power.
His majesty shines down on Israel;
his strength is mighty in the heavens.

35God is awesome in his sanctuary.
The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.
Praise be to God!

Psalm 69

For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be sung to the tune "Lilies."

1Save me, O God, for the floodwaters are up to my neck.

2Deeper and deeper I sink into the mire; I can't find a foothold.
I am in deep water,
and the floods overwhelm me.

3I am exhausted from crying for help; my throat is parched.
My eyes are swollen with weeping,
waiting for my God to help me.

4Those who hate me without cause outnumber the hairs on my
head.
Many enemies try to destroy me with lies,
demanding that I give back what I didn't steal.

5O God, you know how foolish I am; my sins cannot be hidden from
you.

6Don't let those who trust in you be ashamed because of me, O
Sovereign LORD of Heaven's Armies.
Don't let me cause them to be humiliated,
O God of Israel.

7For I endure insults for your sake; humiliation is written all over
my face.

8Even my own brothers pretend they don't know me; they treat me like a stranger.

9Passion for your house has consumed me, and the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.

10When I weep and fast, they scoff at me.

11When I dress in burlap to show sorrow, they make fun of me.

12I am the favorite topic of town gossip, and all the drunks sing about me.

13But I keep praying to you, LORD, hoping this time you will show me favor.
In your unfailing love, O God,
answer my prayer with your sure salvation.

14Rescue me from the mud; don't let me sink any deeper!
Save me from those who hate me,
and pull me from these deep waters.

15Don't let the floods overwhelm me, or the deep waters swallow me,
or the pit of death devour me.

16Answer my prayers, O LORD, for your unfailing love is wonderful.
Take care of me,
for your mercy is so plentiful.

17Don't hide from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in deep trouble!

18Come and redeem me; free me from my enemies.

19You know of my shame, scorn, and disgrace.
You see all that my enemies are doing.

20Their insults have broken my heart, and I am in despair.
If only one person would show some pity;
if only one would turn and comfort me.

21But instead, they give me poison* for food; they offer me sour
wine for my thirst.

22Let the bountiful table set before them become a snare and their
prosperity become a trap.*

23Let their eyes go blind so they cannot see, and make their bodies
shake continually.*

24Pour out your fury on them; consume them with your burning
anger.

25Let their homes become desolate and their tents be deserted.

26To the one you have punished, they add insult to injury; they add
to the pain of those you have hurt.

27Pile their sins up high, and don't let them go free.

28Erase their names from the Book of Life; don't let them be counted
among the righteous.

29I am suffering and in pain.
Rescue me, O God, by your saving power.

30Then I will praise God's name with singing, and I will honor him
with thanksgiving.

31For this will please the LORD more than sacrificing cattle, more
than presenting a bull with its horns and hooves.

32The humble will see their God at work and be glad.
Let all who seek God's help be encouraged.

33For the LORD hears the cries of the needy; he does not despise his
imprisoned people.

34Praise him, O heaven and earth, the seas and all that move in them.

35For God will save Jerusalem*
and rebuild the towns of Judah.
His people will live there
and settle in their own land.

36The descendants of those who obey him will inherit the land, and those who love him will live there in safety.

Psalm 70

For the choir director: A psalm of David, asking God to remember him.

1Please, God, rescue me!
Come quickly, LORD, and help me.

2May those who try to kill me be humiliated and put to shame.
May those who take delight in my trouble
be turned back in disgrace.

3Let them be horrified by their shame, for they said, “Aha! We’ve got him now!”

4But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness in you.
May those who love your salvation
repeatedly shout, “God is great!”

5But as for me, I am poor and needy; please hurry to my aid, O God.
You are my helper and my savior;
O LORD, do not delay.

Psalm 71

1O LORD, I have come to you for protection; don’t let me be disgraced.

2Save me and rescue me, for you do what is right.
Turn your ear to listen to me,
and set me free.

3Be my rock of safety where I can always hide.
Give the order to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.

4My God, rescue me from the power of the wicked, from the clutches of cruel oppressors.

5O Lord, you alone are my hope.
I've trusted you, O LORD, from childhood.

6Yes, you have been with me from birth; from my mother's womb you have cared for me.
No wonder I am always praising you!

7My life is an example to many, because you have been my strength and protection.

8That is why I can never stop praising you; I declare your glory all day long.

9And now, in my old age, don't set me aside.
Don't abandon me when my strength is failing.

10For my enemies are whispering against me.
They are plotting together to kill me.

11They say, "God has abandoned him.
Let's go and get him,
for no one will help him now."

12O God, don't stay away.
My God, please hurry to help me.

13Bring disgrace and destruction on my accusers.
Humiliate and shame those who want to harm me.

14But I will keep on hoping for your help; I will praise you more

and more.

15I will tell everyone about your righteousness.
All day long I will proclaim your saving power,
though I am not skilled with words.*

16I will praise your mighty deeds, O Sovereign LORD.
I will tell everyone that you alone are just.

17O God, you have taught me from my earliest childhood, and I constantly tell others about the wonderful things you do.

18Now that I am old and gray, do not abandon me, O God.
Let me proclaim your power to this new generation,
your mighty miracles to all who come after me.

19Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the highest heavens.
You have done such wonderful things.
Who can compare with you, O God?

20You have allowed me to suffer much hardship, but you will restore me to life again
and lift me up from the depths of the earth.

21You will restore me to even greater honor and comfort me once again.

22Then I will praise you with music on the harp, because you are faithful to your promises, O my God.
I will sing praises to you with a lyre,
O Holy One of Israel.

23I will shout for joy and sing your praises, for you have ransomed me.

24I will tell about your righteous deeds all day long,
for everyone who tried to hurt me
has been shamed and humiliated.

Psalm 72

A psalm of Solomon.

1Give your love of justice to the king, O God, and righteousness to
the king's son.

2Help him judge your people in the right way; let the poor always
be treated fairly.

3May the mountains yield prosperity for all, and may the hills be fruitful.

4Help him to defend the poor, to rescue the children of the needy, and to crush their oppressors.

5May they fear you* as long as the sun shines, as long as the moon remains in the sky.
Yes, forever!

6May the king's rule be refreshing like spring rain on freshly cut grass, like the showers that water the earth.

7May all the godly flourish during his reign.
May there be abundant prosperity until the moon is no more.

8May he reign from sea to sea, and from the Euphrates River* to the ends of the earth.

9Desert nomads will bow before him; his enemies will fall before him in the dust.

SHEBA

10The western kings of Tarshish and other distant lands will bring him tribute.
The eastern kings of Sheba and Seba
will bring him gifts.

11All kings will bow before him, and all nations will serve him.

12He will rescue the poor when they cry to him; he will help the oppressed, who have no one to defend them.

13He feels pity for the weak and the needy, and he will rescue them.

14He will redeem them from oppression and violence, for their lives
are precious to him.

15Long live the king!
May the gold of Sheba be given to him.
May the people always pray for him
and bless him all day long.

16May there be abundant grain throughout the land, flourishing
even on the hilltops.
May the fruit trees flourish like the trees of Lebanon,
and may the people thrive like grass in a field.

17May the king's name endure forever; may it continue as long as
the sun shines.
May all nations be blessed through him
and bring him praise.

18Praise the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does such
wonderful things.

19Praise his glorious name forever!
Let the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen and amen!

20(This ends the prayers of David son of Jesse.)

Book Three (Psalms 73–89)

Psalm 73

A psalm of Asaph.

1Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure.

2But as for me, I almost lost my footing.
My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone.

3For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness.

4They seem to live such painless lives; their bodies are so healthy and strong.

5They don't have troubles like other people; they're not plagued with problems like everyone else.

6They wear pride like a jeweled necklace and clothe themselves with cruelty.

7These fat cats have everything their hearts could ever wish for!

8They scoff and speak only evil; in their pride they seek to crush others.

9They boast against the very heavens, and their words strut
throughout the earth.

10And so the people are dismayed and confused, drinking in all their
words.

11“What does God know?” they ask.
“Does the Most High even know what’s happening?”

12Look at these wicked people— enjoying a life of ease while their
riches multiply.

13Did I keep my heart pure for nothing?
Did I keep myself innocent for no reason?

14I get nothing but trouble all day long; every morning brings me
pain.

15If I had really spoken this way to others, I would have been a
traitor to your people.

16So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper.
But what a difficult task it is!

17Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood
the destiny of the wicked.

18Truly, you put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over
the cliff to destruction.

19In an instant they are destroyed, completely swept away by
terrors.

20When you arise, O Lord, you will laugh at their silly ideas
as a person laughs at dreams in the morning.

21Then I realized that my heart was bitter, and I was all torn up
inside.

22I was so foolish and ignorant— I must have seemed like a
senseless animal to you.

23Yet I still belong to you; you hold my right hand.

24You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny.

25Whom have I in heaven but you?
I desire you more than anything on earth.

26My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God
remains the strength of my heart;
he is mine forever.

27Those who desert him will perish, for you destroy those who
abandon you.

28But as for me, how good it is to be near God!
I have made the Sovereign LORD my shelter, and I will tell
everyone about the wonderful things you do.

Psalm 74

A psalm of Asaph.*

1O God, why have you rejected us so long?
Why is your anger so intense against the sheep of your own
pasture?

2Remember that we are the people you chose long ago, the tribe
you redeemed as your own special possession!
And remember Jerusalem,* your home here on earth.

3Walk through the awful ruins of the city; see how the enemy has

destroyed your sanctuary.

4There your enemies shouted their victorious battle cries; there they
set up their battle standards.

5They swung their axes like woodcutters in a forest.

6With axes and picks, they smashed the carved paneling.

7They burned your sanctuary to the ground.
They defiled the place that bears your name.

8Then they thought, “Let’s destroy everything!”
So they burned down all the places where God was worshiped.

9We no longer see your miraculous signs.
All the prophets are gone,
and no one can tell us when it will end.

10How long, O God, will you allow our enemies to insult you?
Will you let them dishonor your name forever?

11Why do you hold back your strong right hand?
Unleash your powerful fist and destroy them.

12You, O God, are my king from ages past, bringing salvation to the
earth.

13You split the sea by your strength and smashed the heads of the
sea monsters.

14You crushed the heads of Leviathan*
and let the desert animals eat him.

15You caused the springs and streams to gush forth, and you dried
up rivers that never run dry.

16Both day and night belong to you; you made the starlight* and the
sun.

17You set the boundaries of the earth, and you made both summer
and winter.

18See how these enemies insult you, LORD.
A foolish nation has dishonored your name.

19Don't let these wild beasts destroy your turtledoves.
Don't forget your suffering people forever.

20Remember your covenant promises, for the land is full of darkness
and violence!

21Don't let the downtrodden be humiliated again.
Instead, let the poor and needy praise your name.

22Arise, O God, and defend your cause.
Remember how these fools insult you all day long.

23Don't overlook what your enemies have said or their growing
uproar.

Psalm 75

For the choir director: A psalm of Asaph. A song to be sung to the tune "Do Not Destroy!"

1We thank you, O God!
We give thanks because you are near.
People everywhere tell of your wonderful deeds.

2God says, "At the time I have planned, I will bring justice against
the wicked.

3When the earth quakes and its people live in turmoil, I am the one
who keeps its foundations firm.

Interlude

4"I warned the proud, 'Stop your boasting!'

I told the wicked, ‘Don’t raise your fists!

5Don’t raise your fists in defiance at the heavens or speak with such
arrogance.’”

6For no one on earth—from east or west, or even from the
wilderness— should raise a defiant fist.*

7It is God alone who judges; he decides who will rise and who will
fall.

8For the LORD holds a cup in his hand that is full of foaming wine
mixed with spices.
He pours out the wine in judgment,
and all the wicked must drink it,
draining it to the dregs.

9But as for me, I will always proclaim what God has done; I will
sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10For God says, “I will break the strength of the wicked, but I will
increase the power of the godly.”

Psalm 76

*For the choir director: A psalm of Asaph. A song to be accompanied by
stringed instruments.*

1God is honored in Judah; his name is great in Israel.

2Jerusalem* is where he lives; Mount Zion is his home.

3There he has broken the fiery arrows of the enemy, the shields and
swords and weapons of war.

Interlude

4You are glorious and more majestic than the everlasting
mountains.*

5Our boldest enemies have been plundered.
They lie before us in the sleep of death.
No warrior could lift a hand against us.

6At the blast of your breath, O God of Jacob, their horses and
chariots lay still.

7No wonder you are greatly feared!
Who can stand before you when your anger explodes?

8From heaven you sentenced your enemies; the earth trembled and
stood silent before you.

9You stand up to judge those who do evil, O God, and to rescue the
oppressed of the earth.

Interlude

10Human defiance only enhances your glory, for you use it as a
weapon.*

11Make vows to the LORD your God, and keep them.
Let everyone bring tribute to the Awesome One.

12For he breaks the pride of princes, and the kings of the earth fear
him.

Psalm 77

For Jeduthun, the choir director: A psalm of Asaph.

1I cry out to God; yes, I shout.
Oh, that God would listen to me!

2When I was in deep trouble, I searched for the Lord.
All night long I prayed, with hands lifted toward heaven,

but my soul was not comforted.

3I think of God, and I moan, overwhelmed with longing for his help.

Interlude

4You don't let me sleep.
I am too distressed even to pray!

5I think of the good old days, long since ended,

6when my nights were filled with joyful songs.
I search my soul and ponder the difference now.

7Has the Lord rejected me forever?
Will he never again be kind to me?

8Is his unfailing love gone forever?
Have his promises permanently failed?

9Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he slammed the door on his compassion?

Interlude

10And I said, "This is my fate; the Most High has turned his hand against me."

11But then I recall all you have done, O LORD; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago.

12They are constantly in my thoughts.
I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.

13O God, your ways are holy.
Is there any god as mighty as you?

14You are the God of great wonders!
You demonstrate your awesome power among the nations.

15By your strong arm, you redeemed your people, the descendants

of Jacob and Joseph.

Interlude

16When the Red Sea* saw you, O God, its waters looked and trembled!
The sea quaked to its very depths.

17The clouds poured down rain; the thunder rumbled in the sky.
Your arrows of lightning flashed.

18Your thunder roared from the whirlwind; the lightning lit up the world!
The earth trembled and shook.

19Your road led through the sea, your pathway through the mighty waters— a pathway no one knew was there!

20You led your people along that road like a flock of sheep, with Moses and Aaron as their shepherds.

Psalm 78

A psalm of Asaph.*

1O my people, listen to my instructions.
Open your ears to what I am saying,

2for I will speak to you in a parable.
I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—

3stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us.

4We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD, about his power and his mighty wonders.

5For he issued his laws to Jacob; he gave his instructions to Israel.

He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children,

6so the next generation might know them— even the children not yet born— and they in turn will teach their own children.

7So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.

8Then they will not be like their ancestors— stubborn, rebellious, and unfaithful, refusing to give their hearts to God.

9The warriors of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned their backs and fled on the day of battle.

10They did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his instructions.

11They forgot what he had done— the great wonders he had shown them,

12the miracles he did for their ancestors on the plain of Zoan in the land of Egypt.

13For he divided the sea and led them through, making the water stand up like walls!

14In the daytime he led them by a cloud, and all night by a pillar of fire.

15He split open the rocks in the wilderness to give them water, as from a gushing spring.

16He made streams pour from the rock, making the waters flow down like a river!

17Yet they kept on sinning against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert.

18They stubbornly tested God in their hearts, demanding the foods they craved.

19They even spoke against God himself, saying, "God can't give us

food in the wilderness.

20Yes, he can strike a rock so water gushes out, but he can't give his
people bread and meat."

21When the LORD heard them, he was furious.
The fire of his wrath burned against Jacob.
Yes, his anger rose against Israel,

22for they did not believe God or trust him to care for them.

23But he commanded the skies to open; he opened the doors of
heaven.

24He rained down manna for them to eat; he gave them bread from
heaven.

25They ate the food of angels!
God gave them all they could hold.

26He released the east wind in the heavens and guided the south
wind by his mighty power.

27He rained down meat as thick as dust— birds as plentiful as the
sand on the seashore!

28He caused the birds to fall within their camp and all around their
tents.

29The people ate their fill.
He gave them what they craved.

30But before they satisfied their craving, while the meat was yet in
their mouths,

31the anger of God rose against them, and he killed their strongest
men.
He struck down the finest of Israel's young men.

32But in spite of this, the people kept sinning.
Despite his wonders, they refused to trust him.

33So he ended their lives in failure, their years in terror.

34When God began killing them, they finally sought him.
They repented and took God seriously.

35Then they remembered that God was their rock, that God Most High* was their redeemer.

36But all they gave him was lip service; they lied to him with their tongues.

37Their hearts were not loyal to him.
They did not keep his covenant.

38Yet he was merciful and forgave their sins and did not destroy them all.
Many times he held back his anger and did not unleash his fury!

39For he remembered that they were merely mortal, gone like a breath of wind that never returns.

40Oh, how often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved his heart in that dry wasteland.

41Again and again they tested God's patience and provoked the Holy One of Israel.

42They did not remember his power and how he rescued them from their enemies.

43They did not remember his miraculous signs in Egypt, his wonders on the plain of Zoan.

44For he turned their rivers into blood, so no one could drink from the streams.

45He sent vast swarms of flies to consume them and hordes of frogs to ruin them.

46He gave their crops to caterpillars; their harvest was consumed by locusts.

47He destroyed their grapevines with hail and shattered their sycamore-figs with sleet.

48He abandoned their cattle to the hail, their livestock to bolts of lightning.

49He loosed on them his fierce anger— all his fury, rage, and hostility.
He dispatched against them a band of destroying angels.

50He turned his anger against them; he did not spare the Egyptians' lives but ravaged them with the plague.

51He killed the oldest son in each Egyptian family, the flower of youth throughout the land of Egypt.*

52But he led his own people like a flock of sheep, guiding them safely through the wilderness.

53He kept them safe so they were not afraid; but the sea covered their enemies.

54He brought them to the border of his holy land, to this land of hills he had won for them.

55He drove out the nations before them; he gave them their inheritance by lot.
He settled the tribes of Israel into their homes.

56But they kept testing and rebelling against God Most High.
They did not obey his laws.

57They turned back and were as faithless as their parents.
They were as undependable as a crooked bow.

58They angered God by building shrines to other gods; they made him jealous with their idols.

59When God heard them, he was very angry, and he completely rejected Israel.

60Then he abandoned his dwelling at Shiloh, the Tabernacle where
he had lived among the people.

61He allowed the Ark of his might to be captured; he surrendered
his glory into enemy hands.

62He gave his people over to be butchered by the sword, because he
was so angry with his own people—his special possession.

63Their young men were killed by fire; their young women died
before singing their wedding songs.

64Their priests were slaughtered, and their widows could not mourn
their deaths.

65Then the Lord rose up as though waking from sleep, like a warrior
aroused from a drunken stupor.

66He routed his enemies and sent them to eternal shame.

67But he rejected Joseph's descendants; he did not choose the tribe
of Ephraim.

68He chose instead the tribe of Judah, and Mount Zion, which he
loved.

69There he built his sanctuary as high as the heavens, as solid and
enduring as the earth.

70He chose his servant David, calling him from the sheep pens.

71He took David from tending the ewes and lambs and made him
the shepherd of Jacob's descendants— God's own people, Israel.

72He cared for them with a true heart and led them with skillful
hands.

Psalm 79

A psalm of Asaph.

1O God, pagan nations have conquered your land, your special possession.
They have defiled your holy Temple and made Jerusalem a heap of ruins.

2They have left the bodies of your servants as food for the birds of heaven.
The flesh of your godly ones has become food for the wild animals.

3Blood has flowed like water all around Jerusalem; no one is left to bury the dead.

4We are mocked by our neighbors, an object of scorn and derision to those around us.

5O LORD, how long will you be angry with us? Forever?
How long will your jealousy burn like fire?

6Pour out your wrath on the nations that refuse to acknowledge you — on kingdoms that do not call upon your name.

7For they have devoured your people Israel,*
making the land a desolate wilderness.

8Do not hold us guilty for the sins of our ancestors!
Let your compassion quickly meet our needs, for we are on the brink of despair.

9Help us, O God of our salvation!
Help us for the glory of your name.
Save us and forgive our sins for the honor of your name.

10Why should pagan nations be allowed to scoff, asking, “Where is their God?”
Show us your vengeance against the nations, for they have spilled the blood of your servants.

11Listen to the moaning of the prisoners.
Demonstrate your great power by saving those condemned to die.

12O Lord, pay back our neighbors seven times for the scorn they

have hurled at you.

13Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will thank you
forever and ever, praising your greatness from generation to
generation.

Psalm 80

For the choir director: A psalm of Asaph, to be sung to the tune "Lilies of the Covenant."

1Please listen, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph's
descendants like a flock.
O God, enthroned above the cherubim, display your radiant glory

2to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.
Show us your mighty power.
Come to rescue us!

3Turn us again to yourself, O God.
Make your face shine down upon us.
Only then will we be saved.

4O LORD God of Heaven's Armies, how long will you be angry with
our prayers?

5You have fed us with sorrow and made us drink tears by the
bucketful.

6You have made us the scorn* of neighboring nations.
Our enemies treat us as a joke.

7Turn us again to yourself, O God of Heaven's Armies.
Make your face shine down upon us.
Only then will we be saved.

8You brought us from Egypt like a grapevine; you drove away the
pagan nations and transplanted us into your land.

9You cleared the ground for us, and we took root and filled the

land.

10Our shade covered the mountains; our branches covered the
mighty cedars.

11We spread our branches west to the Mediterranean Sea; our
shoots spread east to the Euphrates River.*

12But now, why have you broken down our walls so that all who
pass by may steal our fruit?

13The wild boar from the forest devours it, and the wild animals
feed on it.

14Come back, we beg you, O God of Heaven's Armies.
Look down from heaven and see our plight.
Take care of this grapevine

15that you yourself have planted, this son you have raised for
yourself.

16For we are chopped up and burned by our enemies.
May they perish at the sight of your frown.

17Strengthen the man you love, the son of your choice.

18Then we will never abandon you again.
Revive us so we can call on your name once more.

19Turn us again to yourself, O LORD God of Heaven's Armies.
Make your face shine down upon us.
Only then will we be saved.

Psalm 81

For the choir director: A psalm of Asaph, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument. *

1Sing praises to God, our strength.
Sing to the God of Jacob.

2Sing! Beat the tambourine.
Play the sweet lyre and the harp.

3Blow the ram's horn at new moon, and again at full moon to call a festival!

4For this is required by the decrees of Israel; it is a regulation of the God of Jacob.

5He made it a law for Israel*
when he attacked Egypt to set us free.
I heard an unknown voice say,

6"Now I will take the load from your shoulders; I will free your hands from their heavy tasks.

7You cried to me in trouble, and I saved you; I answered out of the thundercloud and tested your faith when there was no water at Meribah.

Interlude

8"Listen to me, O my people, while I give you stern warnings.
O Israel, if you would only listen to me!

9You must never have a foreign god; you must not bow down before a false god.

10For it was I, the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things.

11"But no, my people wouldn't listen.
Israel did not want me around.

12So I let them follow their own stubborn desires, living according to their own ideas.

13Oh, that my people would listen to me!
Oh, that Israel would follow me, walking in my paths!

14How quickly I would then subdue their enemies!
How soon my hands would be upon their foes!

15Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him; they would be doomed forever.

16But I would feed you with the finest wheat.
I would satisfy you with wild honey from the rock.”

Psalm 82

A psalm of Asaph.

1God presides over heaven’s court; he pronounces judgment on the heavenly beings:

2“How long will you hand down unjust decisions by favoring the wicked?

Interlude

3“Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute.

4Rescue the poor and helpless; deliver them from the grasp of evil people.

5But these oppressors know nothing; they are so ignorant!
They wander about in darkness, while the whole world is shaken to the core.

6I say, ‘You are gods; you are all children of the Most High.

7But you will die like mere mortals and fall like every other ruler.’”

8Rise up, O God, and judge the earth, for all the nations belong to you.

Psalm 83

A song. A psalm of Asaph.

1O God, do not be silent!
Do not be deaf.
Do not be quiet, O God.

2Don't you hear the uproar of your enemies?
Don't you see that your arrogant enemies are rising up?

3They devise crafty schemes against your people; they conspire against your precious ones.

4"Come," they say, "let us wipe out Israel as a nation.
We will destroy the very memory of its existence."

5Yes, this was their unanimous decision.
They signed a treaty as allies against you—

6these Edomites and Ishmaelites; Moabites and Hagrites;

7Gebalites, Ammonites, and Amalekites; and people from Philistia and Tyre.

8Assyria has joined them, too, and is allied with the descendants of Lot.

Interlude

9Do to them as you did to the Midianites and as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the Kishon River.

10They were destroyed at Endor, and their decaying corpses fertilized the soil.

11Let their mighty nobles die as Oreb and Zeeb did.
Let all their princes die like Zebah and Zalmunna,

12for they said, "Let us seize for our own use these pasturelands of God!"

13O my God, scatter them like tumbleweed, like chaff before the wind!

14As a fire burns a forest and as a flame sets mountains ablaze,

15chase them with your fierce storm; terrify them with your tempest.

16Utterly disgrace them until they submit to your name, O LORD.

17Let them be ashamed and terrified forever.
Let them die in disgrace.

18Then they will learn that you alone are called the LORD, that you alone are the Most High, supreme over all the earth.

Psalm 84

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument. *

1How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of Heaven's Armies.

2I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the LORD.
With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.

3Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow builds her nest and raises her young at a place near your altar, O LORD of Heaven's Armies, my King and my God!

4What joy for those who can live in your house, always singing your praises.

Interlude

5What joy for those whose strength comes from the LORD, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

6When they walk through the Valley of Weeping,*
it will become a place of refreshing springs.
The autumn rains will clothe it with blessings.

7They will continue to grow stronger, and each of them will appear before God in Jerusalem.*

8O LORD God of Heaven's Armies, hear my prayer.
Listen, O God of Jacob.

Interlude

9O God, look with favor upon the king, our shield!
Show favor to the one you have anointed.

10A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else!
I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked.

11For the LORD God is our sun and our shield.
He gives us grace and glory.
The LORD will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.

12O LORD of Heaven's Armies, what joy for those who trust in you.

Psalm 85

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah.

1LORD, you poured out blessings on your land!
You restored the fortunes of Israel.*

2You forgave the guilt of your people— yes, you covered all their sins.

Interlude

3You held back your fury.
You kept back your blazing anger.

4Now restore us again, O God of our salvation.
Put aside your anger against us once more.

5Will you be angry with us always?
Will you prolong your wrath to all generations?

6Won’t you revive us again, so your people can rejoice in you?

7Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.

8I listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people.
But let them not return to their foolish ways.

9Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, so our land will be filled with his glory.

10Unfailing love and truth have met together.
Righteousness and peace have kissed!

11Truth springs up from the earth, and righteousness smiles down from heaven.

12Yes, the LORD pours down his blessings.
Our land will yield its bountiful harvest.

13Righteousness goes as a herald before him, preparing the way for his steps.

Psalm 86

A prayer of David.

1Bend down, O LORD, and hear my prayer; answer me, for I need
your help.

2Protect me, for I am devoted to you.
Save me, for I serve you and trust you.
You are my God.

3Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am calling on you constantly.

4Give me happiness, O Lord, for I give myself to you.

5O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing
love for all who ask for your help.

6Listen closely to my prayer, O LORD; hear my urgent cry.

7I will call to you whenever I'm in trouble, and you will answer me.

8No pagan god is like you, O Lord.
None can do what you do!

9All the nations you made will come and bow before you, Lord;
they will praise your holy name.

10For you are great and perform wonderful deeds.
You alone are God.

11Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth!
Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honor you.

12With all my heart I will praise you, O Lord my God.
I will give glory to your name forever,

13for your love for me is very great.
You have rescued me from the depths of death.*

14O God, insolent people rise up against me; a violent gang is trying to kill me.
You mean nothing to them.

15But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

16Look down and have mercy on me.
Give your strength to your servant; save me, the son of your servant.

17Send me a sign of your favor.
Then those who hate me will be put to shame, for you, O LORD, help and comfort me.

Psalm 87

A song. A psalm of the descendants of Korah.

1On the holy mountain stands the city founded by the LORD.

2He loves the city of Jerusalem more than any other city in Israel.*

3O city of God, what glorious things are said of you!

Interlude

4I will count Egypt* and Babylon among those who know me— also
Philistia and Tyre, and even distant Ethiopia.*
They have all become citizens of Jerusalem!

5Regarding Jerusalem* it will be said, “Everyone enjoys the rights of citizenship there.”
And the Most High will personally bless this city.

6When the LORD registers the nations, he will say, “They have all become citizens of Jerusalem.”

Interlude

7The people will play flutes* and sing, “The source of my life springs from Jerusalem!”

Psalm 88

For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah. A song to be sung to the tune “The Suffering of Affliction.” A psalm of Heman the Ezrahite.*

1O LORD, God of my salvation, I cry out to you by day.
I come to you at night.

2Now hear my prayer; listen to my cry.

3For my life is full of troubles, and death* draws near.

4I am as good as dead, like a strong man with no strength left.

5They have left me among the dead, and I lie like a corpse in a grave.
I am forgotten, cut off from your care.

6You have thrown me into the lowest pit, into the darkest depths.

7Your anger weighs me down; with wave after wave you have engulfed me.

Interlude

8You have driven my friends away by making me repulsive to them.
I am in a trap with no way of escape.

9My eyes are blinded by my tears.
Each day I beg for your help, O LORD; I lift my hands to you for mercy.

10Are your wonderful deeds of any use to the dead?
Do the dead rise up and praise you?

Interlude

11Can those in the grave declare your unfailing love?
Can they proclaim your faithfulness in the place of destruction?*

12Can the darkness speak of your wonderful deeds?
Can anyone in the land of forgetfulness talk about your righteousness?

13O LORD, I cry out to you.
I will keep on pleading day by day.

14O LORD, why do you reject me?
Why do you turn your face from me?

15I have been sick and close to death since my youth.
I stand helpless and desperate before your terrors.

16Your fierce anger has overwhelmed me.
Your terrors have paralyzed me.

17They swirl around me like floodwaters all day long.
They have engulfed me completely.

18You have taken away my companions and loved ones.
Darkness is my closest friend.

Psalm 89

A psalm of Ethan the Ezrahite.*

1I will sing of the LORD's unfailing love forever!
Young and old will hear of your faithfulness.

2Your unfailing love will last forever.
Your faithfulness is as enduring as the heavens.

3The LORD said, "I have made a covenant with David, my chosen servant.
I have sworn this oath to him:

4'I will establish your descendants as kings forever; they will sit on your throne from now until eternity.'"

Interlude

5All heaven will praise your great wonders, LORD; myriads of angels will praise you for your faithfulness.

6For who in all of heaven can compare with the LORD?
What mightiest angel is anything like the LORD?

7The highest angelic powers stand in awe of God.
He is far more awesome than all who surround his throne.

8O LORD God of Heaven's Armies!
Where is there anyone as mighty as you, O LORD?
You are entirely faithful.

9You rule the oceans.
You subdue their storm-tossed waves.

10You crushed the great sea monster.*
You scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.

11The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours; everything in the world is yours—you created it all.

12You created north and south.
Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon praise your name.

13Powerful is your arm!
Strong is your hand!
Your right hand is lifted high in glorious strength.

14Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne.
Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants.

15Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will walk in the light of your presence, LORD.

16They rejoice all day long in your wonderful reputation.
They exult in your righteousness.

17You are their glorious strength.
It pleases you to make us strong.

18Yes, our protection comes from the LORD, and he, the Holy One of Israel, has given us our king.

19Long ago you spoke in a vision to your faithful people.
You said, “I have raised up a warrior.
I have selected him from the common people to be king.

20I have found my servant David.
I have anointed him with my holy oil.

21I will steady him with my hand; with my powerful arm I will make him strong.

22His enemies will not defeat him, nor will the wicked overpower him.

23I will beat down his adversaries before him and destroy those who hate him.

24My faithfulness and unfailing love will be with him, and by my authority he will grow in power.

25I will extend his rule over the sea, his dominion over the rivers.

26And he will call out to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.’

27I will make him my firstborn son, the mightiest king on earth.

28I will love him and be kind to him forever; my covenant with him will never end.

29I will preserve an heir for him; his throne will be as endless as the days of heaven.

30But if his descendants forsake my instructions and fail to obey my regulations,

31if they do not obey my decrees and fail to keep my commands,

32then I will punish their sin with the rod, and their disobedience with beating.

33But I will never stop loving him nor fail to keep my promise to

him.

34No, I will not break my covenant; I will not take back a single
word I said.

35I have sworn an oath to David, and in my holiness I cannot lie:

36His dynasty will go on forever; his kingdom will endure as the
sun.

37It will be as eternal as the moon, my faithful witness in the sky!”

Interlude

38But now you have rejected him and cast him off.
You are angry with your anointed king.

39You have renounced your covenant with him; you have thrown
his crown in the dust.

40You have broken down the walls protecting him and ruined every
fort defending him.

41Everyone who comes along has robbed him, and he has become a
joke to his neighbors.

42You have strengthened his enemies and made them all rejoice.

43You have made his sword useless and refused to help him in
battle.

44You have ended his splendor and overturned his throne.

45You have made him old before his time and publicly disgraced
him.

Interlude

46O LORD, how long will this go on?
Will you hide yourself forever?
How long will your anger burn like fire?

47Remember how short my life is, how empty and futile this human existence!

48No one can live forever; all will die.
No one can escape the power of the grave.*

Interlude

49Lord, where is your unfailing love?
You promised it to David with a faithful pledge.

50Consider, Lord, how your servants are disgraced!
I carry in my heart the insults of so many people.

51Your enemies have mocked me, O LORD; they mock your anointed king wherever he goes.

52Praise the LORD forever!
Amen and amen!

Book Four (Psalms 90–106)

Psalm 90

A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

1Lord, through all the generations you have been our home!

2Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth
and the world, from beginning to end, you are God.

3You turn people back to dust, saying, “Return to dust, you
mortals!”

4For you, a thousand years are as a passing day, as brief as a few
night hours.

5You sweep people away like dreams that disappear.
They are like grass that springs up in the morning.

6In the morning it blooms and flourishes, but by evening it is dry
and withered.

7We wither beneath your anger; we are overwhelmed by your fury.

8You spread out our sins before you— our secret sins—and you see
them all.

9We live our lives beneath your wrath, ending our years with a

groan.

10Seventy years are given to us!
Some even live to eighty.
But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble; soon they disappear, and we fly away.

11Who can comprehend the power of your anger?
Your wrath is as awesome as the fear you deserve.

12Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom.

13O LORD, come back to us!
How long will you delay?
Take pity on your servants!

14Satisfy us each morning with your unfailing love, so we may sing for joy to the end of our lives.

15Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery!
Replace the evil years with good.

16Let us, your servants, see you work again; let our children see your glory.

17And may the Lord our God show us his approval and make our efforts successful.
Yes, make our efforts successful!

Psalm 91

1Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the

shadow of the Almighty.

2This I declare about the LORD: He alone is my refuge, my place of
safety; he is my God, and I trust him.

3For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from
deadly disease.

4He will cover you with his feathers.
He will shelter you with his wings.
His faithful promises are your armor and protection.

5Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies
in the day.

6Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster
that strikes at midday.

7Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are
dying around you, these evils will not touch you.

8Just open your eyes, and see how the wicked are punished.

9If you make the LORD your refuge, if you make the Most High
your shelter,

10no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home.

11For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go.

12They will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt
your foot on a stone.

13You will trample upon lions and cobras; you will crush fierce lions
and serpents under your feet!

14The LORD says, "I will rescue those who love me.
I will protect those who trust in my name.

15When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in
trouble.

I will rescue and honor them.

16I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation.”

SONGS PSALM 92

Psalm 92

A psalm. A song to be sung on the Sabbath Day.

1It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to the Most High.

2It is good to proclaim your unfailing love in the morning, your faithfulness in the evening,

3accompanied by a ten-stringed instrument, a harp, and the melody of a lyre.

4You thrill me, LORD, with all you have done for me!
I sing for joy because of what you have done.

5O LORD, what great works you do!
And how deep are your thoughts.

6Only a simpleton would not know, and only a fool would not understand this:

7Though the wicked sprout like weeds and evildoers flourish, they

will be destroyed forever.

8But you, O LORD, will be exalted forever.

9Your enemies, LORD, will surely perish; all evildoers will be scattered.

10But you have made me as strong as a wild ox.
You have anointed me with the finest oil.

11My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the defeat of my wicked opponents.

12But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon.

13For they are transplanted to the LORD's own house.
They flourish in the courts of our God.

14Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green.

15They will declare, "The LORD is just!
He is my rock!
There is no evil in him!"

Psalm 93

1The LORD is king! He is robed in majesty.
Indeed, the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength.
The world stands firm and cannot be shaken.

2Your throne, O LORD, has stood from time immemorial.
You yourself are from the everlasting past.

3The floods have risen up, O LORD.
The floods have roared like thunder; the floods have lifted their pounding waves.

4But mightier than the violent raging of the seas, mightier than the breakers on the shore— the LORD above is mightier than these!

5Your royal laws cannot be changed.
Your reign, O LORD, is holy forever and ever.

Psalm 94

1O LORD, the God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, let your glorious justice shine forth!

2Arise, O Judge of the earth.
Give the proud what they deserve.

3How long, O LORD?
How long will the wicked be allowed to gloat?

4How long will they speak with arrogance?
How long will these evil people boast?

5They crush your people, LORD, hurting those you claim as your own.

6They kill widows and foreigners and murder orphans.

7"The LORD isn't looking," they say, "and besides, the God of Israel* doesn't care."

8Think again, you fools!
When will you finally catch on?

9Is he deaf—the one who made your ears?
Is he blind—the one who formed your eyes?

10He punishes the nations—won't he also punish you?
He knows everything—doesn't he also know what you are doing?

11The LORD knows people's thoughts; he knows they are worthless!

12Joyful are those you discipline, LORD, those you teach with your

instructions.

13You give them relief from troubled times until a pit is dug to
capture the wicked.

14The LORD will not reject his people; he will not abandon his
special possession.

15Judgment will again be founded on justice, and those with
virtuous hearts will pursue it.

16Who will protect me from the wicked?
Who will stand up for me against evildoers?

17Unless the LORD had helped me, I would soon have settled in the
silence of the grave.

18I cried out, “I am slipping!”
but your unfailing love, O LORD, supported me.

19When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope
and cheer.

20Can unjust leaders claim that God is on their side— leaders whose
decrees permit injustice?

21They gang up against the righteous and condemn the innocent to
death.

22But the LORD is my fortress; my God is the mighty rock where I
hide.

23God will turn the sins of evil people back on them.
He will destroy them for their sins.
The LORD our God will destroy them.

Psalm 95

1Come, let us sing to the LORD!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

2Let us come to him with thanksgiving.
Let us sing psalms of praise to him.

3For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods.

4He holds in his hands the depths of the earth and the mightiest mountains.

5The sea belongs to him, for he made it.
His hands formed the dry land, too.

6Come, let us worship and bow down.
Let us kneel before the LORD our maker,

7for he is our God.
We are the people he watches over, the flock under his care.
If only you would listen to his voice today!

8The LORD says, “Don’t harden your hearts as Israel did at Meribah,
as they did at Massah in the wilderness.

9For there your ancestors tested and tried my patience, even though they saw everything I did.

10For forty years I was angry with them, and I said, ‘They are a people whose hearts turn away from me.
They refuse to do what I tell them.’

11So in my anger I took an oath: ‘They will never enter my place of rest.’”

Psalm 96

1Sing a new song to the LORD!
Let the whole earth sing to the LORD!

2Sing to the LORD; praise his name.
Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.

3Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does.

4Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise!
He is to be feared above all gods.

5The gods of other nations are mere idols, but the LORD made the heavens!

6Honor and majesty surround him; strength and beauty fill his sanctuary.

7O nations of the world, recognize the LORD; recognize that the LORD is glorious and strong.

8Give to the LORD the glory he deserves!

Bring your offering and come into his courts.

9Worship the LORD in all his holy splendor.
Let all the earth tremble before him.

10Tell all the nations, “The LORD reigns!”
The world stands firm and cannot be shaken.
He will judge all peoples fairly.

11Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice!
Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise!

12Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy!
Let the trees of the forest sing for joy

13before the LORD, for he is coming!
He is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with his truth.

Psalm 97

1The LORD is king!
Let the earth rejoice!
Let the farthest coastlands be glad.

2Dark clouds surround him.
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

3Fire spreads ahead of him and burns up all his foes.

4His lightning flashes out across the world.
The earth sees and trembles.

5The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of
all the earth.

6The heavens proclaim his righteousness; every nation sees his
glory.

7Those who worship idols are disgraced— all who brag about their
worthless gods— for every god must bow to him.

8Jerusalem* has heard and rejoiced, and all the towns of Judah are
glad because of your justice, O LORD!

9For you, O LORD, are supreme over all the earth; you are exalted
far above all gods.

10You who love the LORD, hate evil!
He protects the lives of his godly people and rescues them from the
power of the wicked.

11Light shines on the godly, and joy on those whose hearts are right.

12May all who are godly rejoice in the LORD
and praise his holy name!

Psalm 98

A psalm.

1Sing a new song to the LORD, for he has done wonderful deeds.
His right hand has won a mighty victory; his holy arm has shown
his saving power!

2The LORD has announced his victory and has revealed his
righteousness to every nation!

3He has remembered his promise to love and be faithful to Israel.
The ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

4Shout to the LORD, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for
joy!

5Sing your praise to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and
melodious song,

6with trumpets and the sound of the ram's horn.
Make a joyful symphony before the LORD, the King!

7Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise!
Let the earth and all living things join in.

8Let the rivers clap their hands in glee!
Let the hills sing out their songs of joy

9before the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with fairness.

Psalm 99

1The LORD is king!
Let the nations tremble!
He sits on his throne between the cherubim.
Let the whole earth quake!

2The LORD sits in majesty in Jerusalem,*
exalted above all the nations.

3Let them praise your great and awesome name.
Your name is holy!

4Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established fairness.
You have acted with justice and righteousness throughout Israel.*

5Exalt the LORD our God!
Bow low before his feet, for he is holy!

6Moses and Aaron were among his priests; Samuel also called on his
name.
They cried to the LORD for help, and he answered them.

7He spoke to Israel from the pillar of cloud, and they followed the

laws and decrees he gave them.

8O LORD our God, you answered them.
You were a forgiving God to them, but you punished them when they went wrong.

9Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain in Jerusalem, for the LORD our God is holy!

Psalm 100

A psalm of thanksgiving.

1Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth!

2Worship the LORD with gladness.
Come before him, singing with joy.

3Acknowledge that the LORD is God!
He made us, and we are his.*
We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him and praise his name.

5For the LORD is good.
His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

Psalm 101

A psalm of David.

1I will sing of your love and justice, LORD.
I will praise you with songs.

2I will be careful to live a blameless life— when will you come to help me?

I will lead a life of integrity in my own home.

3I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar.
I hate all who deal crookedly; I will have nothing to do with them.

4I will reject perverse ideas and stay away from every evil.

5I will not tolerate people who slander their neighbors.
I will not endure conceit and pride.

6I will search for faithful people to be my companions.
Only those who are above reproach will be allowed to serve me.

7I will not allow deceivers to serve in my house, and liars will not stay in my presence.

8My daily task will be to ferret out the wicked and free the city of the LORD from their grip.

Psalm 102

A prayer of one overwhelmed with trouble, pouring out problems before the LORD.

1LORD, hear my prayer!
Listen to my plea!

2Don't turn away from me in my time of distress.
Bend down to listen, and answer me quickly when I call to you.

3For my days disappear like smoke, and my bones burn like red-hot coals.

4My heart is sick, withered like grass, and I have lost my appetite.

5Because of my groaning, I am reduced to skin and bones.

6I am like an owl in the desert, like a little owl in a far-off wilderness.

7I lie awake, lonely as a solitary bird on the roof.

8My enemies taunt me day after day.
They mock and curse me.

9I eat ashes for food.
My tears run down into my drink

10because of your anger and wrath.
For you have picked me up and thrown me out.

11My life passes as swiftly as the evening shadows.
I am withering away like grass.

12But you, O LORD, will sit on your throne forever.
Your fame will endure to every generation.

13You will arise and have mercy on Jerusalem*— and now is the time to pity her, now is the time you promised to help.

14For your people love every stone in her walls and cherish even the dust in her streets.

15Then the nations will tremble before the LORD.
The kings of the earth will tremble before his glory.

16For the LORD will rebuild Jerusalem.
He will appear in his glory.

17He will listen to the prayers of the destitute.
He will not reject their pleas.

18Let this be recorded for future generations, so that a people not yet born will praise the LORD.

19Tell them the LORD looked down from his heavenly sanctuary.
He looked down to earth from heaven

20to hear the groans of the prisoners, to release those condemned to die.

21And so the LORD's fame will be celebrated in Zion, his praises in Jerusalem,

22when multitudes gather together and kingdoms come to worship the LORD.

23He broke my strength in midlife, cutting short my days.

24But I cried to him, "O my God, who lives forever, don't take my life while I am so young!

25Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth and made the heavens with your hands.

26They will perish, but you remain forever; they will wear out like old clothing.
You will change them like a garment and discard them.

27But you are always the same; you will live forever.

28The children of your people will live in security.
Their children's children will thrive in your presence."

Psalm 103

A psalm of David.

1Let all that I am praise the LORD; with my whole heart, I will
praise his holy name.

2Let all that I am praise the LORD; may I never forget the good
things he does for me.

3He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

4He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender
mercies.

5He fills my life with good things.
My youth is renewed like the eagle's!

6The LORD gives righteousness and justice to all who are treated
unfairly.

7He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of
Israel.

8The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

9He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever.

10He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.

11For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.

12He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.

13The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.

14For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.

15Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die.

16The wind blows, and we are gone— as though we had never been here.

17But the love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear him.
His salvation extends to the children's children

18of those who are faithful to his covenant, of those who obey his commandments!

19The LORD has made the heavens his throne; from there he rules over everything.

20Praise the LORD, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands.

21Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will!

22Praise the LORD, everything he has created, everything in all his kingdom.
Let all that I am praise the LORD.

Psalm 104

1Let all that I am praise the LORD.
O LORD my God, how great you are!
You are robed with honor and majesty.

2You are dressed in a robe of light.
You stretch out the starry curtain of the heavens;

3you lay out the rafters of your home in the rain clouds.
You make the clouds your chariot; you ride upon the wings of the wind.

4The winds are your messengers; flames of fire are your servants.*

5You placed the world on its foundation so it would never be moved.

6You clothed the earth with floods of water, water that covered even the mountains.

7At your command, the water fled; at the sound of your thunder, it hurried away.

8Mountains rose and valleys sank to the levels you decreed.

9Then you set a firm boundary for the seas, so they would never again cover the earth.

10You make springs pour water into the ravines, so streams gush down from the mountains.

11They provide water for all the animals, and the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

12The birds nest beside the streams and sing among the branches of the trees.

13You send rain on the mountains from your heavenly home, and you fill the earth with the fruit of your labor.

14You cause grass to grow for the livestock and plants for people to use.
You allow them to produce food from the earth—

15wine to make them glad, olive oil to soothe their skin, and bread to give them strength.

16The trees of the LORD are well cared for— the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

17There the birds make their nests, and the storks make their homes in the cypresses.

18High in the mountains live the wild goats, and the rocks form a refuge for the hyraxes.*

19You made the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun knows when to set.

20You send the darkness, and it becomes night, when all the forest animals prowl about.

21Then the young lions roar for their prey, stalking the food provided by God.

22At dawn they slink back into their dens to rest.

23Then people go off to their work, where they labor until evening.

24O LORD, what a variety of things you have made!
In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of your creatures.

25Here is the ocean, vast and wide, teeming with life of every kind,
both large and small.

26See the ships sailing along, and Leviathan,* which you made to
play in the sea.

27They all depend on you to give them food as they need it.

28When you supply it, they gather it.
You open your hand to feed them, and they are richly satisfied.

29But if you turn away from them, they panic.
When you take away their breath, they die and turn again to dust.

30When you give them your breath,* life is created, and you renew
the face of the earth.

31May the glory of the LORD continue forever!
The LORD takes pleasure in all he has made!

32The earth trembles at his glance; the mountains smoke at his
touch.

33I will sing to the LORD as long as I live.
I will praise my God to my last breath!

34May all my thoughts be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

35Let all sinners vanish from the face of the earth; let the wicked
disappear forever.
Let all that I am praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 105

1Give thanks to the LORD and proclaim his greatness.
Let the whole world know what he has done.

2Sing to him; yes, sing his praises.
Tell everyone about his wonderful deeds.

3Exult in his holy name; rejoice, you who worship the LORD.

4Search for the LORD and for his strength; continually seek him.

5Remember the wonders he has performed, his miracles, and the rulings he has given,

6you children of his servant Abraham, you descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones.

7He is the LORD our God.
His justice is seen throughout the land.

8He always stands by his covenant— the commitment he made to a thousand generations.

9This is the covenant he made with Abraham and the oath he swore to Isaac.

10He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, and to the people of Israel as a never-ending covenant:

11"I will give you the land of Canaan as your special possession."

12He said this when they were few in number, a tiny group of strangers in Canaan.

13They wandered from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another.

14Yet he did not let anyone oppress them.
He warned kings on their behalf:

15"Do not touch my chosen people, and do not hurt my prophets."

16He called for a famine on the land of Canaan, cutting off its food

supply.

17Then he sent someone to Egypt ahead of them— Joseph, who was
sold as a slave.

18They bruised his feet with fetters and placed his neck in an iron
collar.

19Until the time came to fulfill his dreams,*
the LORD tested Joseph's character.

20Then Pharaoh sent for him and set him free; the ruler of the
nation opened his prison door.

21Joseph was put in charge of all the king's household; he became
ruler over all the king's possessions.

22He could instruct* the king's aides as he pleased and teach the
king's advisers.

23Then Israel arrived in Egypt; Jacob lived as a foreigner in the land
of Ham.

24And the LORD multiplied the people of Israel until they became
too mighty for their enemies.

25Then he turned the Egyptians against the Israelites, and they
plotted against the LORD's servants.

26But the LORD sent his servant Moses, along with Aaron, whom he
had chosen.

27They performed miraculous signs among the Egyptians, and
wonders in the land of Ham.

28The LORD blanketed Egypt in darkness, for they had defied* his
commands to let his people go.

29He turned their water into blood, poisoning all the fish.

30Then frogs overran the land and even invaded the king's bedrooms.

31When the LORD spoke, flies descended on the Egyptians, and gnats swarmed across Egypt.

32He sent them hail instead of rain, and lightning flashed over the land.

33He ruined their grapevines and fig trees and shattered all the trees.

34He spoke, and hordes of locusts came— young locusts beyond number.

35They ate up everything green in the land, destroying all the crops in their fields.

36Then he killed the oldest son in each Egyptian home, the pride and joy of each family.

37The LORD brought his people out of Egypt, loaded with silver and gold; and not one among the tribes of Israel even stumbled.

38Egypt was glad when they were gone, for they feared them greatly.

39The LORD spread a cloud above them as a covering and gave them a great fire to light the darkness.

40They asked for meat, and he sent them quail; he satisfied their hunger with manna—bread from heaven.

41He split open a rock, and water gushed out to form a river through the dry wasteland.

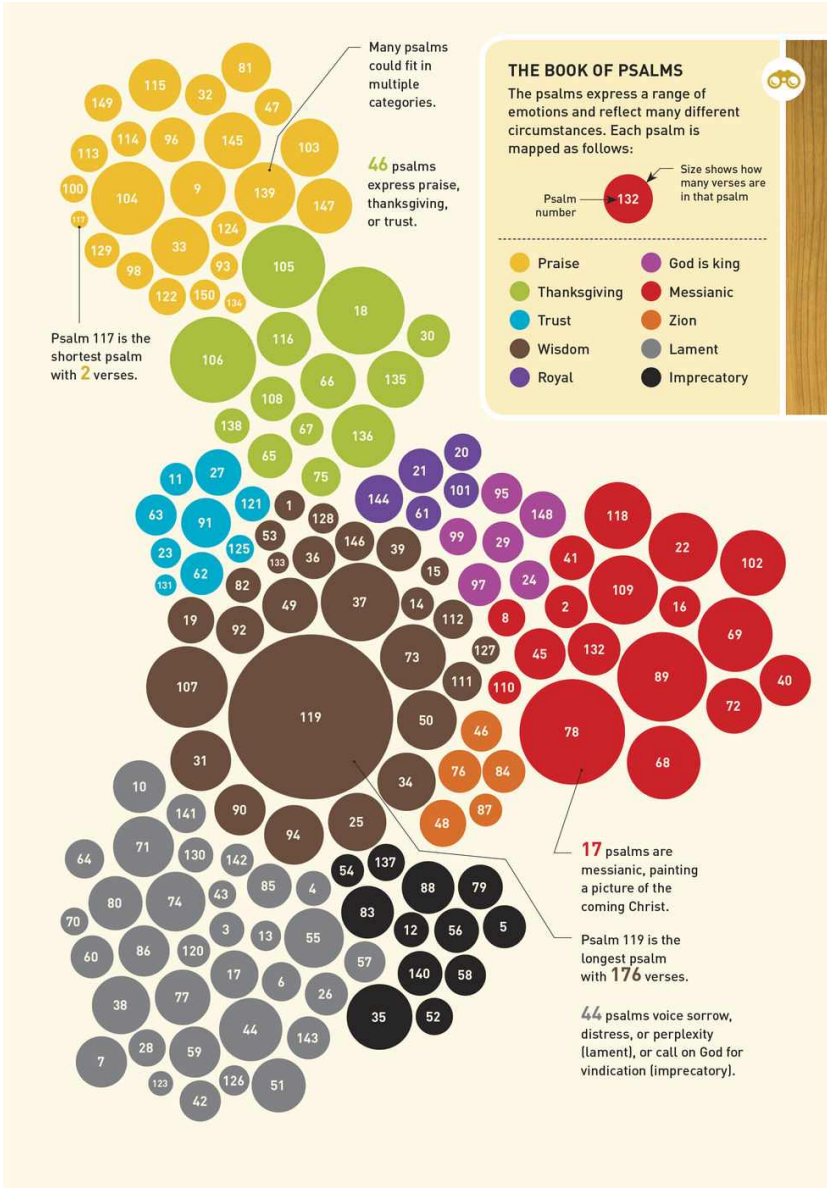
42For he remembered his sacred promise to his servant Abraham.

43So he brought his people out of Egypt with joy, his chosen ones with rejoicing.

44He gave his people the lands of pagan nations, and they harvested

crops that others had planted.

45All this happened so they would follow his decrees and obey his instructions.
Praise the LORD!



THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Psalm 106

1Praise the LORD!
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever.

2Who can list the glorious miracles of the LORD?
Who can ever praise him enough?

3There is joy for those who deal justly with others and always do what is right.

4Remember me, LORD, when you show favor to your people; come near and rescue me.

5Let me share in the prosperity of your chosen ones.
Let me rejoice in the joy of your people; let me praise you with those who are your heritage.

6Like our ancestors, we have sinned.
We have done wrong! We have acted wickedly!

7Our ancestors in Egypt were not impressed by the LORD's miraculous deeds.
They soon forgot his many acts of kindness to them.
Instead, they rebelled against him at the Red Sea.*

8Even so, he saved them— to defend the honor of his name and to demonstrate his mighty power.

9He commanded the Red Sea* to dry up.
He led Israel across the sea as if it were a desert.

10So he rescued them from their enemies and redeemed them from their foes.

11Then the water returned and covered their enemies; not one of them survived.

12Then his people believed his promises.
Then they sang his praise.

13Yet how quickly they forgot what he had done!
They wouldn't wait for his counsel!

14In the wilderness their desires ran wild, testing God's patience in that dry wasteland.

15So he gave them what they asked for, but he sent a plague along with it.

16The people in the camp were jealous of Moses and envious of Aaron, the LORD's holy priest.

17Because of this, the earth opened up; it swallowed Dathan and buried Abiram and the other rebels.

18Fire fell upon their followers; a flame consumed the wicked.

19The people made a calf at Mount Sinai*; they bowed before an image made of gold.

20They traded their glorious God for a statue of a grass-eating bull.

21They forgot God, their savior, who had done such great things in Egypt—

22such wonderful things in the land of Ham, such awesome deeds at the Red Sea.

23So he declared he would destroy them.
But Moses, his chosen one, stepped between the LORD and the people.
He begged him to turn from his anger and not destroy them.

24The people refused to enter the pleasant land, for they wouldn't believe his promise to care for them.

25Instead, they grumbled in their tents and refused to obey the LORD.

26Therefore, he solemnly swore that he would kill them in the wilderness,

27that he would scatter their descendants* among the nations,
exiling them to distant lands.

28Then our ancestors joined in the worship of Baal at Peor; they
even ate sacrifices offered to the dead!

29They angered the LORD with all these things, so a plague broke
out among them.

30But Phinehas had the courage to intervene, and the plague was
stopped.

31So he has been regarded as a righteous man ever since that time.

32At Meribah, too, they angered the LORD, causing Moses serious
trouble.

33They made Moses angry,*
and he spoke foolishly.

34Israel failed to destroy the nations in the land, as the LORD had
commanded them.

35Instead, they mingled among the pagans and adopted their evil
customs.

36They worshiped their idols, which led to their downfall.

37They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons.

38They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters.
By sacrificing them to the idols of Canaan, they polluted the land
with murder.

39They defiled themselves by their evil deeds, and their love of idols
was adultery in the LORD's sight.

40That is why the LORD's anger burned against his people, and he

abhorred his own special possession.

41He handed them over to pagan nations, and they were ruled by
those who hated them.

42Their enemies crushed them and brought them under their cruel
power.

43Again and again he rescued them, but they chose to rebel against
him, and they were finally destroyed by their sin.

44Even so, he pitied them in their distress and listened to their cries.

45He remembered his covenant with them and relented because of
his unfailing love.

46He even caused their captors to treat them with kindness.

47Save us, O LORD our God!
Gather us back from among the nations, so we can thank your holy
name and rejoice and praise you.

48Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who lives from everlasting to
everlasting!
Let all the people say, “Amen!”
Praise the LORD!

Book Five (Psalms 107–150) Psalm 107

1Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever.

2Has the LORD redeemed you? Then speak out!
Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies.

3For he has gathered the exiles from many lands, from east and
west, from north and south.*

4Some wandered in the wilderness, lost and homeless.

5Hungry and thirsty, they nearly died.

6“LORD, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he rescued them from their distress.

7He led them straight to safety, to a city where they could live.

8Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them.

9For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

10Some sat in darkness and deepest gloom, imprisoned in iron chains of misery.

11They rebelled against the words of God, scorning the counsel of the Most High.

12That is why he broke them with hard labor; they fell, and no one was there to help them.

13“LORD, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.

14He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains.

15Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them.

16For he broke down their prison gates of bronze; he cut apart their bars of iron.

17Some were fools; they rebelled and suffered for their sins.

18They couldn’t stand the thought of food, and they were knocking on death’s door.

19“LORD, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.

20He sent out his word and healed them, snatching them from the

door of death.

21Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful
things he has done for them.

22Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and sing joyfully about
his glorious acts.

23Some went off to sea in ships, plying the trade routes of the
world.

24They, too, observed the LORD's power in action, his impressive
works on the deepest seas.

25He spoke, and the winds rose, stirring up the waves.

26Their ships were tossed to the heavens and plunged again to the
depths; the sailors cringed in terror.

27They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits'
end.

28"LORD, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from
their distress.

29He calmed the storm to a whisper and stilled the waves.

30What a blessing was that stillness as he brought them safely into
harbor!

31Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful
things he has done for them.

32Let them exalt him publicly before the congregation and before
the leaders of the nation.

33He changes rivers into deserts, and springs of water into dry,
thirsty land.

34He turns the fruitful land into salty wastelands, because of the
wickedness of those who live there.

35But he also turns deserts into pools of water, the dry land into springs of water.

36He brings the hungry to settle there and to build their cities.

37They sow their fields, plant their vineyards, and harvest their bumper crops.

38How he blesses them!
They raise large families there, and their herds of livestock increase.

39When they decrease in number and become impoverished through oppression, trouble, and sorrow,

40the LORD pours contempt on their princes, causing them to wander in trackless wastelands.

41But he rescues the poor from trouble and increases their families like flocks of sheep.

42The godly will see these things and be glad, while the wicked are struck silent.

43Those who are wise will take all this to heart; they will see in our history the faithful love of the LORD.

Psalm 108

A song. A psalm of David.

1My heart is confident in you, O God; no wonder I can sing your praises with all my heart!

2Wake up, lyre and harp!
I will wake the dawn with my song.

3I will thank you, LORD, among all the people.
I will sing your praises among the nations.

4For your unfailing love is higher than the heavens.
Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

5Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens.
May your glory shine over all the earth.

6Now rescue your beloved people.
Answer and save us by your power.

7God has promised this by his holiness*: “I will divide up Shechem with joy.
I will measure out the valley of Succoth.

8Gilead is mine, and Manasseh, too.
Ephraim, my helmet, will produce my warriors, and Judah, my scepter, will produce my kings.

9But Moab, my washbasin, will become my servant, and I will wipe my feet on Edom and shout in triumph over Philistia.”

10Who will bring me into the fortified city?
Who will bring me victory over Edom?

11Have you rejected us, O God?
Will you no longer march with our armies?

12Oh, please help us against our enemies, for all human help is useless.

13With God’s help we will do mighty things, for he will trample down our foes.

Psalm 109

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1O God, whom I praise, don’t stand silent and aloof

2while the wicked slander me and tell lies about me.

3They surround me with hateful words and fight against me for no reason.

4I love them, but they try to destroy me with accusations even as I
am praying for them!

5They repay evil for good, and hatred for my love.

6They say,* “Get an evil person to turn against him.
Send an accuser to bring him to trial.

7When his case comes up for judgment, let him be pronounced
guilty.
Count his prayers as sins.

8Let his years be few; let someone else take his position.

9May his children become fatherless, and his wife a widow.

10May his children wander as beggars and be driven from* their
ruined homes.

11May creditors seize his entire estate, and strangers take all he has
earned.

12Let no one be kind to him; let no one pity his fatherless children.

13May all his offspring die.
May his family name be blotted out in the next generation.

14May the LORD never forget the sins of his fathers; may his
mother’s sins never be erased from the record.

15May the LORD always remember these sins, and may his name
disappear from human memory.

16For he refused all kindness to others; he persecuted the poor and
needy, and he hounded the brokenhearted to death.

17He loved to curse others; now you curse him.
He never blessed others; now don’t you bless him.

18Cursing is as natural to him as his clothing, or the water he

drinks, or the rich food he eats.

19Now may his curses return and cling to him like clothing; may
they be tied around him like a belt."

20May those curses become the LORD's punishment for my accusers
who speak evil of me.

21But deal well with me, O Sovereign LORD, for the sake of your
own reputation!
Rescue me because you are so faithful and good.

22For I am poor and needy, and my heart is full of pain.

23I am fading like a shadow at dusk; I am brushed off like a locust.

24My knees are weak from fasting, and I am skin and bones.

25I am a joke to people everywhere; when they see me, they shake
their heads in scorn.

26Help me, O LORD my God!
Save me because of your unfailing love.

27Let them see that this is your doing, that you yourself have done
it, LORD.

28Then let them curse me if they like, but you will bless me!
When they attack me, they will be disgraced!
But I, your servant, will go right on rejoicing!

29May my accusers be clothed with disgrace; may their humiliation
cover them like a cloak.

30But I will give repeated thanks to the LORD, praising him to
everyone.

31For he stands beside the needy, ready to save them from those
who condemn them.

Psalm 110

A psalm of David.

1The LORD said to my Lord,*
“Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your
enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.”

2The LORD will extend your powerful kingdom from Jerusalem*;
you will rule over your enemies.

3When you go to war, your people will serve you willingly.
You are arrayed in holy garments, and your strength will be
renewed each day like the morning dew.

4The LORD has taken an oath and will not break his vow: “You are
a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”

5The Lord stands at your right hand to protect you.
He will strike down many kings when his anger erupts.

6He will punish the nations and fill their lands with corpses; he will
shatter heads over the whole earth.

7But he himself will be refreshed from brooks along the way.
He will be victorious.

Psalm 111 *

1Praise the LORD!
I will thank the LORD with all my heart as I meet with his godly
people.

2How amazing are the deeds of the LORD!
All who delight in him should ponder them.

3Everything he does reveals his glory and majesty.
His righteousness never fails.

4He causes us to remember his wonderful works.
How gracious and merciful is our LORD!

5He gives food to those who fear him; he always remembers his covenant.

6He has shown his great power to his people by giving them the lands of other nations.

7All he does is just and good, and all his commandments are trustworthy.

8They are forever true, to be obeyed faithfully and with integrity.

9He has paid a full ransom for his people.
He has guaranteed his covenant with them forever.
What a holy, awe-inspiring name he has!

10Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true wisdom.
All who obey his commandments will grow in wisdom.
Praise him forever!

Psalm 112 *

1Praise the LORD!
How joyful are those who fear the LORD
and delight in obeying his commands.

2Their children will be successful everywhere; an entire generation of godly people will be blessed.

3They themselves will be wealthy, and their good deeds will last forever.

4Light shines in the darkness for the godly.
They are generous, compassionate, and righteous.

5Good comes to those who lend money generously and conduct their business fairly.

6Such people will not be overcome by evil.
Those who are righteous will be long remembered.

7They do not fear bad news; they confidently trust the LORD to care for them.

8They are confident and fearless and can face their foes triumphantly.

9They share freely and give generously to those in need.
Their good deeds will be remembered forever.
They will have influence and honor.

10The wicked will see this and be infuriated.
They will grind their teeth in anger; they will slink away, their hopes thwarted.

SONGS PSALM 113–118

Psalm 113

1Praise the LORD!
Yes, give praise, O servants of the LORD.
Praise the name of the LORD!

2Blessed be the name of the LORD
now and forever.

3Everywhere—from east to west— praise the name of the LORD.

4For the LORD is high above the nations; his glory is higher than the heavens.

5Who can be compared with the LORD our God, who is enthroned on high?

6He stoops to look down on heaven and on earth.

7He lifts the poor from the dust and the needy from the garbage dump.

8He sets them among princes, even the princes of his own people!

9He gives the childless woman a family, making her a happy mother.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 114

1When the Israelites escaped from Egypt— when the family of Jacob left that foreign land—

2the land of Judah became God's sanctuary, and Israel became his kingdom.

3The Red Sea* saw them coming and hurried out of their way!
The water of the Jordan River turned away.

4The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs!

The Jordan River, Psalm 114:5

JORDAN RIVER

5What's wrong, Red Sea, that made you hurry out of their way?
What happened, Jordan River, that you turned away?

6Why, mountains, did you skip like rams?
Why, hills, like lambs?

7Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.

8He turned the rock into a pool of water; yes, a spring of water flowed from solid rock.

Psalm 115

1Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name goes all the glory for your unfailing love and faithfulness.

2Why let the nations say, "Where is their God?"

3Our God is in the heavens, and he does as he wishes.

4Their idols are merely things of silver and gold, shaped by human hands.

5They have mouths but cannot speak, and eyes but cannot see.

6They have ears but cannot hear, and noses but cannot smell.

7They have hands but cannot feel, and feet but cannot walk, and throats but cannot make a sound.

8And those who make idols are just like them, as are all who trust in them.

9O Israel, trust the LORD!
He is your helper and your shield.

10O priests, descendants of Aaron, trust the LORD!
He is your helper and your shield.

11All you who fear the LORD, trust the LORD!
He is your helper and your shield.

12The LORD remembers us and will bless us.
He will bless the people of Israel and bless the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

13He will bless those who fear the LORD, both great and lowly.

14May the LORD richly bless both you and your children.

15May you be blessed by the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

16The heavens belong to the LORD, but he has given the earth to all humanity.

17The dead cannot sing praises to the LORD, for they have gone into the silence of the grave.

18But we can praise the LORD
both now and forever!
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 116

1I love the LORD because he hears my voice and my prayer for mercy.

2Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!

3Death wrapped its ropes around me; the terrors of the grave* overtook me.
I saw only trouble and sorrow.

4Then I called on the name of the LORD: “Please, LORD, save me!”

5How kind the LORD is! How good he is!
So merciful, this God of ours!

6The LORD protects those of childlike faith; I was facing death, and he saved me.

7Let my soul be at rest again, for the LORD has been good to me.

8He has saved me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

9And so I walk in the LORD’s presence as I live here on earth!

10I believed in you, so I said, “I am deeply troubled, LORD.”

11In my anxiety I cried out to you, “These people are all liars!”

12What can I offer the LORD
for all he has done for me?

13I will lift up the cup of salvation and praise the LORD’s name for saving me.

14I will keep my promises to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

15The LORD cares deeply when his loved ones die.

16O LORD, I am your servant; yes, I am your servant, born into your household; you have freed me from my chains.

17I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD.

18I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people—

19in the house of the LORD
in the heart of Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 117

1Praise the LORD, all you nations.
Praise him, all you people of the earth.

2For his unfailing love for us is powerful; the LORD's faithfulness endures forever.
Praise the LORD!

DON'T FEAR PSALM 118:1-18

Psalm 118

1Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever.

2Let all Israel repeat: "His faithful love endures forever."

3Let Aaron's descendants, the priests, repeat: "His faithful love endures forever."

4Let all who fear the LORD repeat: "His faithful love endures forever."

5In my distress I prayed to the LORD, and the LORD answered me and set me free.

6The LORD is for me, so I will have no fear.
What can mere people do to me?

7Yes, the LORD is for me; he will help me.
I will look in triumph at those who hate me.

8It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in people.

9It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes.

10Though hostile nations surrounded me, I destroyed them all with the authority of the LORD.

11Yes, they surrounded and attacked me, but I destroyed them all with the authority of the LORD.

12They swarmed around me like bees; they blazed against me like a crackling fire.

But I destroyed them all with the authority of the LORD.

13My enemies did their best to kill me, but the LORD rescued me.

14The LORD is my strength and my song; he has given me victory.

15Songs of joy and victory are sung in the camp of the godly.
The strong right arm of the LORD has done glorious things!

16The strong right arm of the LORD is raised in triumph.
The strong right arm of the LORD has done glorious things!

17I will not die; instead, I will live to tell what the LORD has done.

18The LORD has punished me severely, but he did not let me die.

19Open for me the gates where the righteous enter, and I will go in
and thank the LORD.

20These gates lead to the presence of the LORD, and the godly enter
there.

21I thank you for answering my prayer and giving me victory!

22The stone that the builders rejected has now become the
cornerstone.

23This is the LORD's doing, and it is wonderful to see.

24This is the day the LORD has made.
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

25Please, LORD, please save us.
Please, LORD, please give us success.

26Bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD.
We bless you from the house of the LORD.

27The LORD is God, shining upon us.
Take the sacrifice and bind it with cords on the altar.

28You are my God, and I will praise you!
You are my God, and I will exalt you!

29Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever.

Psalm 119 *

Aleph

1Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the LORD.

2Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts.

3They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths.

4You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully.

5Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your decrees!

6Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with your commands.

7As I learn your righteous regulations, I will thank you by living as I should!

8I will obey your decrees.
Please don't give up on me!

Beth

9How can a young person stay pure?

By obeying your word.

10I have tried hard to find you— don't let me wander from your commands.

11I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

12I praise you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.

13I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us.

14I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches.

15I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways.

16I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.

Gimel

17Be good to your servant, that I may live and obey your word.

18Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions.

19I am only a foreigner in the land.
Don't hide your commands from me!

20I am always overwhelmed with a desire for your regulations.

21You rebuke the arrogant; those who wander from your commands are cursed.

22Don't let them scorn and insult me, for I have obeyed your laws.

23Even princes sit and speak against me, but I will meditate on your decrees.

24Your laws please me; they give me wise advice.

Daleth

25I lie in the dust; revive me by your word.

26I told you my plans, and you answered.
Now teach me your decrees.

27Help me understand the meaning of your commandments, and I will meditate on your wonderful deeds.

28I weep with sorrow; encourage me by your word.

29Keep me from lying to myself; give me the privilege of knowing your instructions.

30I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your regulations.

31I cling to your laws.
LORD, don't let me be put to shame!

32I will pursue your commands, for you expand my understanding.

He

33Teach me your decrees, O LORD; I will keep them to the end.

34Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart.

35Make me walk along the path of your commands, for that is where my happiness is found.

36Give me an eagerness for your laws rather than a love for money!

37Turn my eyes from worthless things, and give me life through
your word.*

38Reassure me of your promise, made to those who fear you.

39Help me abandon my shameful ways; for your regulations are
good.

40I long to obey your commandments!
Renew my life with your goodness.

Waw

41LORD, give me your unfailing love, the salvation that you
promised me.

42Then I can answer those who taunt me, for I trust in your word.

43Do not snatch your word of truth from me, for your regulations
are my only hope.

44I will keep on obeying your instructions forever and ever.

45I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to your
commandments.

46I will speak to kings about your laws, and I will not be ashamed.

47How I delight in your commands!
How I love them!

48I honor and love your commands.
I meditate on your decrees.

Zayin

49Remember your promise to me; it is my only hope.

50Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles.

51The proud hold me in utter contempt, but I do not turn away from your instructions.

52I meditate on your age-old regulations; O LORD, they comfort me.

53I become furious with the wicked, because they reject your instructions.

54Your decrees have been the theme of my songs wherever I have lived.

55I reflect at night on who you are, O LORD; therefore, I obey your instructions.

56This is how I spend my life: obeying your commandments.

Heth

57LORD, you are mine!

I promise to obey your words!

58With all my heart I want your blessings.
Be merciful as you promised.

59I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your laws.

60I will hurry, without delay, to obey your commands.

61Evil people try to drag me into sin, but I am firmly anchored to your instructions.

62I rise at midnight to thank you for your just regulations.

63I am a friend to anyone who fears you— anyone who obeys your commandments.

64O LORD, your unfailing love fills the earth; teach me your decrees.

Teth

65You have done many good things for me, LORD, just as you promised.

66I believe in your commands; now teach me good judgment and knowledge.

67I used to wander off until you disciplined me; but now I closely follow your word.

68You are good and do only good; teach me your decrees.

69Arrogant people smear me with lies, but in truth I obey your commandments with all my heart.

70Their hearts are dull and stupid, but I delight in your instructions.

71My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your decrees.

72Your instructions are more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver.

Yodh

73You made me; you created me.

Now give me the sense to follow your commands.

74May all who fear you find in me a cause for joy, for I have put my hope in your word.

75I know, O LORD, that your regulations are fair; you disciplined me because I needed it.

76Now let your unfailing love comfort me, just as you promised me, your servant.

77Surround me with your tender mercies so I may live, for your

instructions are my delight.

78Bring disgrace upon the arrogant people who lied about me;
meanwhile, I will concentrate on your commandments.

79Let me be united with all who fear you, with those who know
your laws.

80May I be blameless in keeping your decrees; then I will never be
ashamed.

Kaph

81I am worn out waiting for your rescue, but I have put my hope in
your word.

82My eyes are straining to see your promises come true.
When will you comfort me?

83I am shriveled like a wineskin in the smoke, but I have not
forgotten to obey your decrees.

84How long must I wait?
When will you punish those who persecute me?

85These arrogant people who hate your instructions have dug deep
pits to trap me.

86All your commands are trustworthy.
Protect me from those who hunt me down without cause.

87They almost finished me off, but I refused to abandon your
commandments.

88In your unfailing love, spare my life; then I can continue to obey
your laws.

Lamedh

89Your eternal word, O LORD, stands firm in heaven.

90Your faithfulness extends to every generation, as enduring as the earth you created.

91Your regulations remain true to this day, for everything serves your plans.

92If your instructions hadn't sustained me with joy, I would have died in my misery.

93I will never forget your commandments, for by them you give me life.

94I am yours; rescue me!
For I have worked hard at obeying your commandments.

95Though the wicked hide along the way to kill me, I will quietly keep my mind on your laws.

96Even perfection has its limits, but your commands have no limit.

Mem

97Oh, how I love your instructions!

I think about them all day long.

98Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are my constant guide.

99Yes, I have more insight than my teachers, for I am always thinking of your laws.

100I am even wiser than my elders, for I have kept your commandments.

101I have refused to walk on any evil path, so that I may remain obedient to your word.

102I haven't turned away from your regulations, for you have taught me well.

103How sweet your words taste to me; they are sweeter than honey.

104Your commandments give me understanding; no wonder I hate
every false way of life.

Nun

105Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.

106I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again: I will obey your
righteous regulations.

107I have suffered much, O LORD; restore my life again as you
promised.

108LORD, accept my offering of praise, and teach me your
regulations.

109My life constantly hangs in the balance, but I will not stop
obeying your instructions.

110The wicked have set their traps for me, but I will not turn from
your commandments.

111Your laws are my treasure; they are my heart's delight.

112I am determined to keep your decrees to the very end.

Samekh

113I hate those with divided loyalties, but I love your instructions.

114You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my source of
hope.

115Get out of my life, you evil-minded people, for I intend to obey
the commands of my God.

116LORD, sustain me as you promised, that I may live!
Do not let my hope be crushed.

117Sustain me, and I will be rescued; then I will meditate
continually on your decrees.

118But you have rejected all who stray from your decrees.
They are only fooling themselves.

119You skim off the wicked of the earth like scum; no wonder I love
to obey your laws!

120I tremble in fear of you; I stand in awe of your regulations.

Ayin

121Don't leave me to the mercy of my enemies, for I have done what
is just and right.

122Please guarantee a blessing for me.
Don't let the arrogant oppress me!

123My eyes strain to see your rescue, to see the truth of your
promise fulfilled.

124I am your servant; deal with me in unfailing love, and teach me
your decrees.

125Give discernment to me, your servant; then I will understand
your laws.

126LORD, it is time for you to act, for these evil people have violated
your instructions.

127Truly, I love your commands more than gold, even the finest
gold.

128Each of your commandments is right.
That is why I hate every false way.

Pe

129Your laws are wonderful.

No wonder I obey them!

130The teaching of your word gives light, so even the simple can understand.

131I pant with expectation, longing for your commands.

132Come and show me your mercy, as you do for all who love your name.

133Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by evil.

134Ransom me from the oppression of evil people; then I can obey your commandments.

135Look upon me with love; teach me your decrees.

136Rivers of tears gush from my eyes because people disobey your instructions.

Tsadhe

137O LORD, you are righteous, and your regulations are fair.

138Your laws are perfect and completely trustworthy.

139I am overwhelmed with indignation, for my enemies have disregarded your words.

140Your promises have been thoroughly tested; that is why I love

them so much.

141I am insignificant and despised, but I don't forget your
commandments.

142Your justice is eternal, and your instructions are perfectly true.

143As pressure and stress bear down on me, I find joy in your
commands.

144Your laws are always right; help me to understand them so I may
live.

Qoph

145I pray with all my heart; answer me, LORD!

I will obey your decrees.

146I cry out to you; rescue me, that I may obey your laws.

147I rise early, before the sun is up; I cry out for help and put my
hope in your words.

148I stay awake through the night, thinking about your promise.

149In your faithful love, O LORD, hear my cry; let me be revived by
following your regulations.

150Lawless people are coming to attack me; they live far from your
instructions.

151But you are near, O LORD, and all your commands are true.

152I have known from my earliest days that your laws will last
forever.

Resh

153Look upon my suffering and rescue me, for I have not forgotten
your instructions.

154Argue my case; take my side!
Protect my life as you promised.

155The wicked are far from rescue, for they do not bother with your decrees.

156LORD, how great is your mercy; let me be revived by following your regulations.

157Many persecute and trouble me, yet I have not swerved from your laws.

158Seeing these traitors makes me sick at heart, because they care nothing for your word.

159See how I love your commandments, LORD.
Give back my life because of your unfailing love.

160The very essence of your words is truth; all your just regulations will stand forever.

Shin

161Powerful people harass me without cause, but my heart trembles only at your word.

162I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure.

163I hate and abhor all falsehood, but I love your instructions.

164I will praise you seven times a day because all your regulations are just.

165Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble.

166I long for your rescue, LORD, so I have obeyed your commands.

167I have obeyed your laws, for I love them very much.

168Yes, I obey your commandments and laws because you know
everything I do.

Taw

169O LORD, listen to my cry; give me the discerning mind you
promised.

170Listen to my prayer; rescue me as you promised.

171Let praise flow from my lips, for you have taught me your
decrees.

172Let my tongue sing about your word, for all your commands are
right.

173Give me a helping hand, for I have chosen to follow your
commandments.

174O LORD, I have longed for your rescue, and your instructions are
my delight.

175Let me live so I can praise you, and may your regulations help
me.

176I have wandered away like a lost sheep; come and find me, for I
have not forgotten your commands.

Psalm 120

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1I took my troubles to the LORD; I cried out to him, and he
answered my prayer.

2Rescue me, O LORD, from liars and from all deceitful people.

3O deceptive tongue, what will God do to you?
How will he increase your punishment?

4You will be pierced with sharp arrows and burned with glowing coals.

5How I suffer in far-off Meshech.
It pains me to live in distant Kedar.

6I am tired of living among people who hate peace.

7I search for peace; but when I speak of peace, they want war!

Psalm 121

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1I look up to the mountains— does my help come from there?

2My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth!

3He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber.

4Indeed, he who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps.

5The LORD himself watches over you!
The LORD stands beside you as your protective shade.

6The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon at night.

7The LORD keeps you from all harm and watches over your life.

8The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever.

Psalm 122

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

1I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

2And now here we are, standing inside your gates, O Jerusalem.

3Jerusalem is a well-built city; its seamless walls cannot be breached.

4All the tribes of Israel—the LORD’s people— make their pilgrimage here.
They come to give thanks to the name of the LORD, as the law requires of Israel.

5Here stand the thrones where judgment is given, the thrones of the dynasty of David.

6Pray for peace in Jerusalem.
May all who love this city prosper.

7O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls and prosperity in your palaces.

8For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, “May you have

peace.”

9For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek what is best for you, O Jerusalem.

Psalm 123

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1I lift my eyes to you, O God, enthroned in heaven.

2We keep looking to the LORD our God for his mercy,
just as servants keep their eyes on their master, as a slave girl watches her mistress for the slightest signal.

3Have mercy on us, LORD, have mercy, for we have had our fill of contempt.

4We have had more than our fill of the scoffing of the proud and the contempt of the arrogant.

Psalm 124

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

1What if the LORD had not been on our side?
Let all Israel repeat:

2What if the LORD had not been on our side when people attacked us?

3They would have swallowed us alive in their burning anger.

4The waters would have engulfed us; a torrent would have overwhelmed us.

5Yes, the raging waters of their fury would have overwhelmed our very lives.

6Praise the LORD, who did not let their teeth tear us apart!

7We escaped like a bird from a hunter's trap.
The trap is broken, and we are free!

8Our help is from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 125

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1Those who trust in the LORD are as secure as Mount Zion; they will not be defeated but will endure forever.

2Just as the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, both now and forever.

3The wicked will not rule the land of the godly, for then the godly might be tempted to do wrong.

4O LORD, do good to those who are good, whose hearts are in tune with you.

5But banish those who turn to crooked ways, O LORD.
Take them away with those who do evil.
May Israel have peace!

Psalm 126

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1When the LORD brought back his exiles to Jerusalem,*
it was like a dream!

2We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy.
And the other nations said, "What amazing things the LORD has done for them."

3Yes, the LORD has done amazing things for us!
What joy!

4Restore our fortunes, LORD, as streams renew the desert.

5Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy.

6They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.

Psalm 127

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. A psalm of Solomon.

1Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted.
Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good.

2It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.

3Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him.

4Children born to a young man are like arrows in a warrior's hands.

5How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them!

He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.

Psalm 128

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1How joyful are those who fear the LORD— all who follow his ways!

2You will enjoy the fruit of your labor.
How joyful and prosperous you will be!

3Your wife will be like a fruitful grapevine, flourishing within your home.
Your children will be like vigorous young olive trees as they sit around your table.

4That is the LORD's blessing for those who fear him.

5May the LORD continually bless you from Zion.
May you see Jerusalem prosper as long as you live.

6May you live to enjoy your grandchildren.
May Israel have peace!

Psalm 129

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1From my earliest youth my enemies have persecuted me.
Let all Israel repeat this:

2From my earliest youth my enemies have persecuted me, but they have never defeated me.

3My back is covered with cuts, as if a farmer had plowed long furrows.

4But the LORD is good; he has cut me free from the ropes of the ungodly.

5May all who hate Jerusalem*
be turned back in shameful defeat.

6May they be as useless as grass on a rooftop, turning yellow when only half grown,

7ignored by the harvester, despised by the binder.

8And may those who pass by refuse to give them this blessing: “The LORD bless you; we bless you in the LORD’s name.”

Psalm 130

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1From the depths of despair, O LORD, I call for your help.

2Hear my cry, O Lord.
Pay attention to my prayer.

3LORD, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive?

4But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you.

5I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him.
I have put my hope in his word.

6I long for the Lord more than sentries long for the dawn, yes, more than sentries long for the dawn.

7O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is unfailing love.
His redemption overflows.

8He himself will redeem Israel from every kind of sin.

Psalm 131

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

1LORD, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty.
I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp.

2Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk.
Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

3O Israel, put your hope in the LORD— now and always.

Psalm 132

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1LORD, remember David and all that he suffered.

2He made a solemn promise to the LORD.
He vowed to the Mighty One of Israel,*

3"I will not go home; I will not let myself rest.

4I will not let my eyes sleep nor close my eyelids in slumber

5until I find a place to build a house for the LORD, a sanctuary for the Mighty One of Israel."

6We heard that the Ark was in Ephrathah; then we found it in the distant countryside of Jaar.

7Let us go to the sanctuary of the LORD; let us worship at the
footstool of his throne.

8Arise, O LORD, and enter your resting place, along with the Ark,
the symbol of your power.

9May your priests be clothed in godliness; may your loyal servants
sing for joy.

10For the sake of your servant David, do not reject the king you
have anointed.

11The LORD swore an oath to David with a promise he will never
take back: “I will place one of your descendants on your throne.

12If your descendants obey the terms of my covenant and the laws
that I teach them, then your royal line will continue forever and
ever.”

13For the LORD has chosen Jerusalem*; he has desired it for his
home.

14“This is my resting place forever,” he said.
“I will live here, for this is the home I desired.

15I will bless this city and make it prosperous; I will satisfy its poor
with food.

16I will clothe its priests with godliness; its faithful servants will
sing for joy.

17Here I will increase the power of David; my anointed one will be a
light for my people.

18I will clothe his enemies with shame, but he will be a glorious
king.”

Psalm 133

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

1How wonderful and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony!

2For harmony is as precious as the anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head, that ran down his beard and onto the border of his robe.

3Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon that falls on the mountains of Zion.
And there the LORD has pronounced his blessing, even life everlasting.

Psalm 134

A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem.

1Oh, praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, you who serve at night in the house of the LORD.

2Lift your hands toward the sanctuary, and praise the LORD.

3May the LORD, who made heaven and earth, bless you from Jerusalem.*

Psalm 135

1Praise the LORD!
Praise the name of the LORD!
Praise him, you who serve the LORD,

2you who serve in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God.

3Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; celebrate his lovely name with music.

4For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel for his own

special treasure.

5I know the greatness of the LORD— that our Lord is greater than any other god.

6The LORD does whatever pleases him throughout all heaven and earth, and on the seas and in their depths.

7He causes the clouds to rise over the whole earth.
He sends the lightning with the rain and releases the wind from his storehouses.

8He destroyed the firstborn in each Egyptian home, both people and animals.

9He performed miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt against Pharaoh and all his people.

10He struck down great nations and slaughtered mighty kings—

11Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kings of Canaan.

12He gave their land as an inheritance, a special possession to his people Israel.

13Your name, O LORD, endures forever; your fame, O LORD, is known to every generation.

14For the LORD will give justice to his people and have compassion on his servants.

15The idols of the nations are merely things of silver and gold, shaped by human hands.

16They have mouths but cannot speak, and eyes but cannot see.

17They have ears but cannot hear, and mouths but cannot breathe.

18And those who make idols are just like them, as are all who trust in them.

19O Israel, praise the LORD!
O priests—descendants of Aaron—praise the LORD!

20O Levites, praise the LORD!
All you who fear the LORD, praise the LORD!

21The LORD be praised from Zion, for he lives here in Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 136

1Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good!
His faithful love endures forever.

2Give thanks to the God of gods.
His faithful love endures forever.

3Give thanks to the Lord of lords.
His faithful love endures forever.

4Give thanks to him who alone does mighty miracles.
His faithful love endures forever.

5Give thanks to him who made the heavens so skillfully.
His faithful love endures forever.

6Give thanks to him who placed the earth among the waters.
His faithful love endures forever.

7Give thanks to him who made the heavenly lights— His faithful love endures forever.

8the sun to rule the day, His faithful love endures forever.

9and the moon and stars to rule the night.
His faithful love endures forever.

10Give thanks to him who killed the firstborn of Egypt.
His faithful love endures forever.

11He brought Israel out of Egypt.

His faithful love endures forever.

12He acted with a strong hand and powerful arm.
His faithful love endures forever.

THE SHORES OF THE RED SEA

13Give thanks to him who parted the Red Sea.*

His faithful love endures forever.

14He led Israel safely through, His faithful love endures forever.

15but he hurled Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea.
His faithful love endures forever.

16Give thanks to him who led his people through the wilderness.
His faithful love endures forever.

17Give thanks to him who struck down mighty kings.
His faithful love endures forever.

18He killed powerful kings— His faithful love endures forever.

19Sihon king of the Amorites, His faithful love endures forever.

20and Og king of Bashan.
His faithful love endures forever.

21God gave the land of these kings as an inheritance— His faithful love endures forever.

22a special possession to his servant Israel.
His faithful love endures forever.

23He remembered us in our weakness.
His faithful love endures forever.

24He saved us from our enemies.
His faithful love endures forever.

25He gives food to every living thing.
His faithful love endures forever.

26Give thanks to the God of heaven.
His faithful love endures forever.

THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

Psalm 137

1Beside the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept as we thought of

Jerusalem.*

2We put away our harps, hanging them on the branches of poplar trees.

3For our captors demanded a song from us.
Our tormentors insisted on a joyful hymn: “Sing us one of those songs of Jerusalem!”

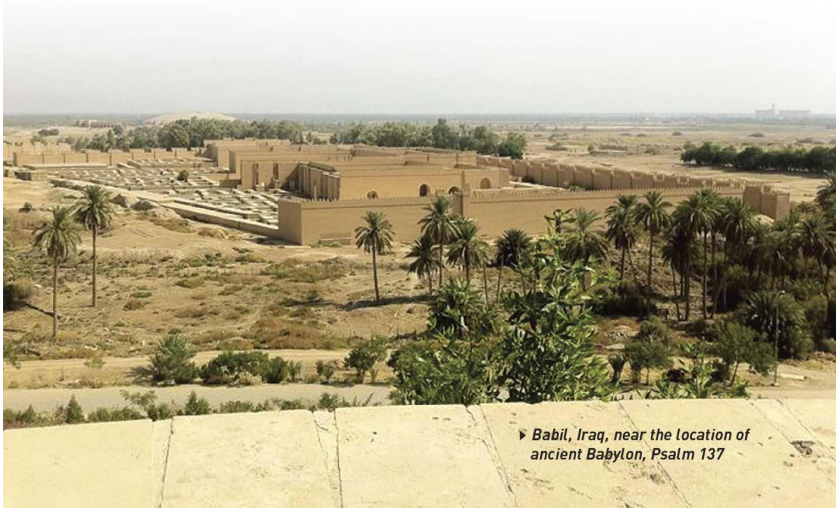
4But how can we sing the songs of the LORD
while in a pagan land?

5If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget how to play the harp.

6May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I fail to remember you, if I don’t make Jerusalem my greatest joy.

7O LORD, remember what the Edomites did on the day the armies of Babylon captured Jerusalem.
“Destroy it!” they yelled.
“Level it to the ground!”

8O Babylon, you will be destroyed.
Happy is the one who pays you back for what you have done to us.



ANCIENT BABYLON

9Happy is the one who takes your babies and smashes them against the rocks!

Psalm 138

A psalm of David.

1I give you thanks, O LORD, with all my heart; I will sing your praises before the gods.

2I bow before your holy Temple as I worship.
I praise your name for your unfailing love and faithfulness; for your promises are backed by all the honor of your name.

3As soon as I pray, you answer me; you encourage me by giving me strength.

4Every king in all the earth will thank you, LORD, for all of them will hear your words.

5Yes, they will sing about the LORD's ways, for the glory of the LORD is very great.

6Though the LORD is great, he cares for the humble, but he keeps his distance from the proud.

7Though I am surrounded by troubles, you will protect me from the anger of my enemies.
You reach out your hand, and the power of your right hand saves me.

8The LORD will work out his plans for my life— for your faithful love, O LORD, endures forever.
Don't abandon me, for you made me.

GOD LOVES YOU PSALM 139

Psalm 139

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.

2You know when I sit down or stand up.
You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.

3You see me when I travel and when I rest at home.

You know everything I do.

4You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD.

5You go before me and follow me.
You place your hand of blessing on my head.

6Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

7I can never escape from your Spirit!
I can never get away from your presence!

8If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave,* you are there.

9If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans,

10even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.

11I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—

12but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.
To you the night shines as bright as day.
Darkness and light are the same to you.

13You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

14Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

15You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.

16You saw me before I was born.
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.

Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

17How precious are your thoughts about me,* O God.
They cannot be numbered!

18I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand!
And when I wake up, you are still with me!

19O God, if only you would destroy the wicked!
Get out of my life, you murderers!

20They blaspheme you; your enemies misuse your name.

21O LORD, shouldn't I hate those who hate you?
Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?

22Yes, I hate them with total hatred, for your enemies are my enemies.

23Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Psalm 140

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1O LORD, rescue me from evil people.
Protect me from those who are violent,

2those who plot evil in their hearts and stir up trouble all day long.

3Their tongues sting like a snake; the venom of a viper drips from their lips.

Interlude

4O LORD, keep me out of the hands of the wicked.
Protect me from those who are violent, for they are plotting against me.

5The proud have set a trap to catch me; they have stretched out a net; they have placed traps all along the way.

Interlude

6I said to the LORD, “You are my God!”
Listen, O LORD, to my cries for mercy!

7O Sovereign LORD, the strong one who rescued me, you protected me on the day of battle.

8LORD, do not let evil people have their way.
Do not let their evil schemes succeed, or they will become proud.

Interlude

9Let my enemies be destroyed by the very evil they have planned for me.

10Let burning coals fall down on their heads.
Let them be thrown into the fire or into watery pits from which they can’t escape.

11Don’t let liars prosper here in our land.
Cause great disasters to fall on the violent.

12But I know the LORD will help those they persecute; he will give justice to the poor.

13Surely righteous people are praising your name; the godly will
live in your presence.

Psalm 141

A psalm of David.

1O LORD, I am calling to you. Please hurry!
Listen when I cry to you for help!

2Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised
hands as an evening offering.

3Take control of what I say, O LORD, and guard my lips.

4Don't let me drift toward evil or take part in acts of wickedness.
Don't let me share in the delicacies of those who do wrong.

5Let the godly strike me!
It will be a kindness!
If they correct me, it is soothing medicine.
Don't let me refuse it.
But I pray constantly against the wicked and their deeds.

6When their leaders are thrown down from a cliff, the wicked will
listen to my words and find them true.

7Like rocks brought up by a plow, the bones of the wicked will lie
scattered without burial.*

8I look to you for help, O Sovereign LORD.
You are my refuge; don't let them kill me.

9Keep me from the traps they have set for me, from the snares of
those who do wrong.

10Let the wicked fall into their own nets, but let me escape.

Psalm 142

A psalm of David, regarding his experience in the cave. A prayer.*

1I cry out to the LORD; I plead for the LORD's mercy.

2I pour out my complaints before him and tell him all my troubles.

3When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn.
Wherever I go, my enemies have set traps for me.

4I look for someone to come and help me, but no one gives me a passing thought!
No one will help me; no one cares a bit what happens to me.

5Then I pray to you, O LORD.
I say, “You are my place of refuge.
You are all I really want in life.

6Hear my cry, for I am very low.
Rescue me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me.

7Bring me out of prison so I can thank you.
The godly will crowd around me, for you are good to me.”

Psalm 143

A psalm of David.

1Hear my prayer, O LORD; listen to my plea!
Answer me because you are faithful and righteous.

2Don’t put your servant on trial, for no one is innocent before you.

3My enemy has chased me.
He has knocked me to the ground and forces me to live in darkness like those in the grave.

4I am losing all hope; I am paralyzed with fear.

5I remember the days of old.
I ponder all your great works and think about what you have done.

6I lift my hands to you in prayer.

I thirst for you as parched land thirsts for rain.

Interlude

7Come quickly, LORD, and answer me, for my depression deepens.
Don't turn away from me, or I will die.

8Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you.
Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you.

9Rescue me from my enemies, LORD; I run to you to hide me.

10Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.
May your gracious Spirit lead me forward on a firm footing.

11For the glory of your name, O LORD, preserve my life.
Because of your faithfulness, bring me out of this distress.

12In your unfailing love, silence all my enemies and destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.

Psalm 144

A psalm of David.

1Praise the LORD, who is my rock.
He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle.

2He is my loving ally and my fortress, my tower of safety, my rescuer.
He is my shield, and I take refuge in him.
He makes the nations* submit to me.

3O LORD, what are human beings that you should notice them,
mere mortals that you should think about them?

4For they are like a breath of air; their days are like a passing shadow.

5Open the heavens, LORD, and come down.
Touch the mountains so they billow smoke.

6Hurl your lightning bolts and scatter your enemies!
Shoot your arrows and confuse them!

7Reach down from heaven and rescue me; rescue me from deep waters, from the power of my enemies.

8Their mouths are full of lies; they swear to tell the truth, but they lie instead.

9I will sing a new song to you, O God!
I will sing your praises with a ten-stringed harp.

10For you grant victory to kings!
You rescued your servant David from the fatal sword.

11Save me!
Rescue me from the power of my enemies.
Their mouths are full of lies; they swear to tell the truth, but they lie instead.

12May our sons flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants.
May our daughters be like graceful pillars, carved to beautify a palace.

13May our barns be filled with crops of every kind.
May the flocks in our fields multiply by the thousands, even tens of thousands,

14and may our oxen be loaded down with produce.
May there be no enemy breaking through our walls, no going into captivity, no cries of alarm in our town squares.

15Yes, joyful are those who live like this!
Joyful indeed are those whose God is the LORD.

Psalm 145 *

A psalm of praise of David.

1I will exalt you, my God and King, and praise your name forever and ever.

2I will praise you every day; yes, I will praise you forever.

3Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise!
No one can measure his greatness.

4Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power.

5I will meditate on your majestic, glorious splendor and your wonderful miracles.

6Your awe-inspiring deeds will be on every tongue; I will proclaim your greatness.

7Everyone will share the story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness.

8The LORD is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

9The LORD is good to everyone.
He showers compassion on all his creation.

10All of your works will thank you, LORD, and your faithful followers will praise you.

11They will speak of the glory of your kingdom; they will give examples of your power.

12They will tell about your mighty deeds and about the majesty and glory of your reign.

13For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.
You rule throughout all generations.
The LORD always keeps his promises; he is gracious in all he does.*

14The LORD helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads.

15The eyes of all look to you in hope; you give them their food as they need it.

16When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.

17The LORD is righteous in everything he does; he is filled with kindness.

18The LORD is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth.

19He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them.

20The LORD protects all those who love him, but he destroys the wicked.

21I will praise the LORD, and may everyone on earth bless his holy name forever and ever.

Psalm 146

1Praise the LORD!
Let all that I am praise the LORD.

2I will praise the LORD as long as I live.
I will sing praises to my God with my dying breath.

3Don't put your confidence in powerful people; there is no help for you there.

4When they breathe their last, they return to the earth, and all their plans die with them.

5But joyful are those who have the God of Israel* as their helper, whose hope is in the LORD their God.

6He made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them.
He keeps every promise forever.

7He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry.
The LORD frees the prisoners.

8The LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are weighed down.
The LORD loves the godly.

9The LORD protects the foreigners among us.
He cares for the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the plans of the wicked.

10The LORD will reign forever.
He will be your God, O Jerusalem,* throughout the generations.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 147

1Praise the LORD!
How good to sing praises to our God!
How delightful and how fitting!

2The LORD is rebuilding Jerusalem and bringing the exiles back to Israel.

3He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds.

4He counts the stars and calls them all by name.

5How great is our Lord! His power is absolute!
His understanding is beyond comprehension!

6The LORD supports the humble, but he brings the wicked down into the dust.

7Sing out your thanks to the LORD; sing praises to our God with a harp.

8He covers the heavens with clouds, provides rain for the earth, and makes the grass grow in mountain pastures.

9He gives food to the wild animals and feeds the young ravens
when they cry.

10He takes no pleasure in the strength of a horse or in human might.

11No, the LORD's delight is in those who fear him, those who put
their hope in his unfailing love.

12Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!

13For he has strengthened the bars of your gates and blessed your
children within your walls.

14He sends peace across your nation and satisfies your hunger with
the finest wheat.

15He sends his orders to the world— how swiftly his word flies!

16He sends the snow like white wool; he scatters frost upon the
ground like ashes.

17He hurls the hail like stones.*
Who can stand against his freezing cold?

18Then, at his command, it all melts.
He sends his winds, and the ice thaws.

19He has revealed his words to Jacob, his decrees and regulations to
Israel.

20He has not done this for any other nation; they do not know his
regulations.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 148

1Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD from the heavens!
Praise him from the skies!

2Praise him, all his angels!
Praise him, all the armies of heaven!

3Praise him, sun and moon!
Praise him, all you twinkling stars!

4Praise him, skies above!
Praise him, vapors high above the clouds!

5Let every created thing give praise to the LORD, for he issued his command, and they came into being.

6He set them in place forever and ever.
His decree will never be revoked.

7Praise the LORD from the earth, you creatures of the ocean depths,

8fire and hail, snow and clouds,*
wind and weather that obey him,

9mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,

10wild animals and all livestock, small scurrying animals and birds,

11kings of the earth and all people, rulers and judges of the earth,

12young men and young women, old men and children.

13Let them all praise the name of the LORD.
For his name is very great; his glory towers over the earth and heaven!

14He has made his people strong, honoring his faithful ones— the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 149

1Praise the LORD!
Sing to the LORD a new song.
Sing his praises in the assembly of the faithful.

2O Israel, rejoice in your Maker.
O people of Jerusalem,* exult in your King.

3Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp.

4For the LORD delights in his people; he crowns the humble with victory.

5Let the faithful rejoice that he honors them.
Let them sing for joy as they lie on their beds.

6Let the praises of God be in their mouths, and a sharp sword in their hands—

7to execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples,

8to bind their kings with shackles and their leaders with iron chains,

9to execute the judgment written against them.
This is the glorious privilege of his faithful ones.
Praise the LORD!

Psalm 150

1Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heaven!

2Praise him for his mighty works; praise his unequaled greatness!

3Praise him with a blast of the ram's horn; praise him with the lyre and harp!

4Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes!

5Praise him with a clash of cymbals; praise him with loud clanging cymbals.

6Let everything that breathes sing praises to the LORD!
Praise the LORD!

Proverbs

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

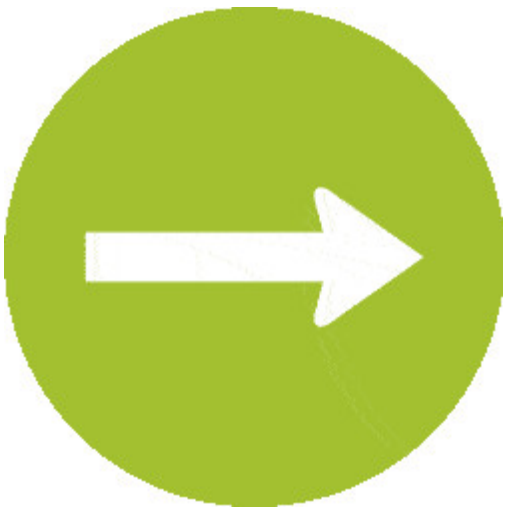
WELCOME TO

PROVERBS

Proverbs contains hundreds of wise sayings and bits of advice, often distilled into single sentences, given by God to support and build upon the teachings of Israel's prophets and the work of Israel's priests. It provides us with wisdom for everyday living, forming our attitudes toward God, others, and ourselves. Although King Solomon wrote or collected much of the book's contents, some parts are from other eras of Israel's history. These proverbs address issues as diverse as money, social justice, foolish talk, and disciplining children. An overriding theme throughout this book is that the source of wisdom is God, our Creator. All wisdom and understanding come from him (see 2:6).

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Although you won't be touching down in Proverbs this time, be sure to return later to catch some of the book's wisdom. Your next stop is at Isaiah 11:1.



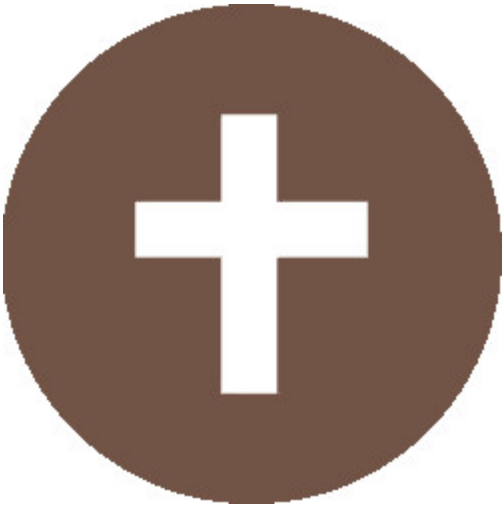
2 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: There are only two readings on your

route, but feel free to read as many proverbs as you like; they are a bit addictive. Your next stop is at Proverbs 3:1.

5 STOPS

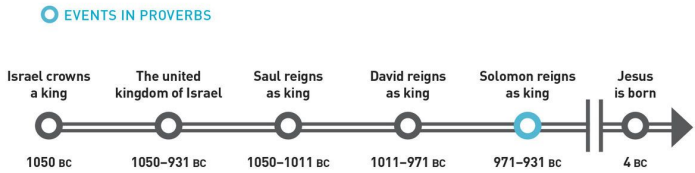
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The five readings on your journey through Proverbs will offer wise sayings on everything from trusting God to discipline to the source of wisdom itself. Your next stop is at Proverbs 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN PROVERBS

In Proverbs 8:17, the personified Wisdom says, “Those who search will surely find me.” Jesus is the wisdom of God, and if you search for Jesus you will find him in Proverbs. Paul recognized this when he wrote that “Christ is . . . the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24).

As you read through Proverbs, you’ll find phrases that Jesus used in his teaching. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus’ words echo Proverbs 30:8: “Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.” In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus’ teaching on money lines up with Proverbs 23:4. Jesus’ story of the lost son in Luke 15 brings the truth of Proverbs 29:3 to life. And in Proverbs 30:4, an impossible idea emerges: “Who but God goes up to heaven and comes back down? . . . What is his name—and his son’s name?” That God would have a son seemed unthinkable, but Jesus is in fact the Son of God; and he came to show and teach us the wisdom of heaven.



Proverbs 1

THE PURPOSE OF PROVERBS

1These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel.

2Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise.

3Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair.

4These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and

discernment to the young.

5Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser.
Let those with understanding receive guidance

6by exploring the meaning in these proverbs and parables, the
words of the wise and their riddles.

7Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools
despise wisdom and discipline.

A FATHER'S EXHORTATION: ACQUIRE WISDOM

8My child,* listen when your father corrects you.

Don't neglect your mother's instruction.

9What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a
chain of honor around your neck.

10My child, if sinners entice you, turn your back on them!

11They may say, "Come and join us.
Let's hide and kill someone!
Just for fun, let's ambush the innocent!

12Let's swallow them alive, like the grave*; let's swallow them
whole, like those who go down to the pit of death.

13Think of the great things we'll get!
We'll fill our houses with all the stuff we take.

14Come, throw in your lot with us; we'll all share the loot."

15My child, don't go along with them!
Stay far away from their paths.

16They rush to commit evil deeds.
They hurry to commit murder.

17If a bird sees a trap being set, it knows to stay away.

18But these people set an ambush for themselves; they are trying to get themselves killed.

19Such is the fate of all who are greedy for money; it robs them of life.

WISDOM SHOUTS IN THE STREETS

20Wisdom shouts in the streets.

She cries out in the public square.

21She calls to the crowds along the main street, to those gathered in front of the city gate:

22"How long, you simpletons, will you insist on being simpleminded?
How long will you mockers relish your mocking?
How long will you fools hate knowledge?

23Come and listen to my counsel.
I'll share my heart with you and make you wise.

24"I called you so often, but you wouldn't come.
I reached out to you, but you paid no attention.

25You ignored my advice and rejected the correction I offered.

26So I will laugh when you are in trouble!
I will mock you when disaster overtakes you—

27when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone, and anguish and distress overwhelm you.

28"When they cry for help, I will not answer.
Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me.

29For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD.

30They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them.

31Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way,
choking on their own schemes.

32For simpletons turn away from me—to death.
Fools are destroyed by their own complacency.

33But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm.”

Proverbs 2

THE BENEFITS OF WISDOM

1My child,* listen to what I say, and treasure my commands.

2Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding.

3Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding.

4Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures.

5Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God.

6For the LORD grants wisdom!
From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

7He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest.
He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.

8He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him.

9Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will

find the right way to go.

10For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you
with joy.

11Wise choices will watch over you.
Understanding will keep you safe.

12Wisdom will save you from evil people, from those whose words
are twisted.

13These men turn from the right way to walk down dark paths.

14They take pleasure in doing wrong, and they enjoy the twisted
ways of evil.

15Their actions are crooked, and their ways are wrong.

16Wisdom will save you from the immoral woman, from the
seductive words of the promiscuous woman.

17She has abandoned her husband and ignores the covenant she
made before God.

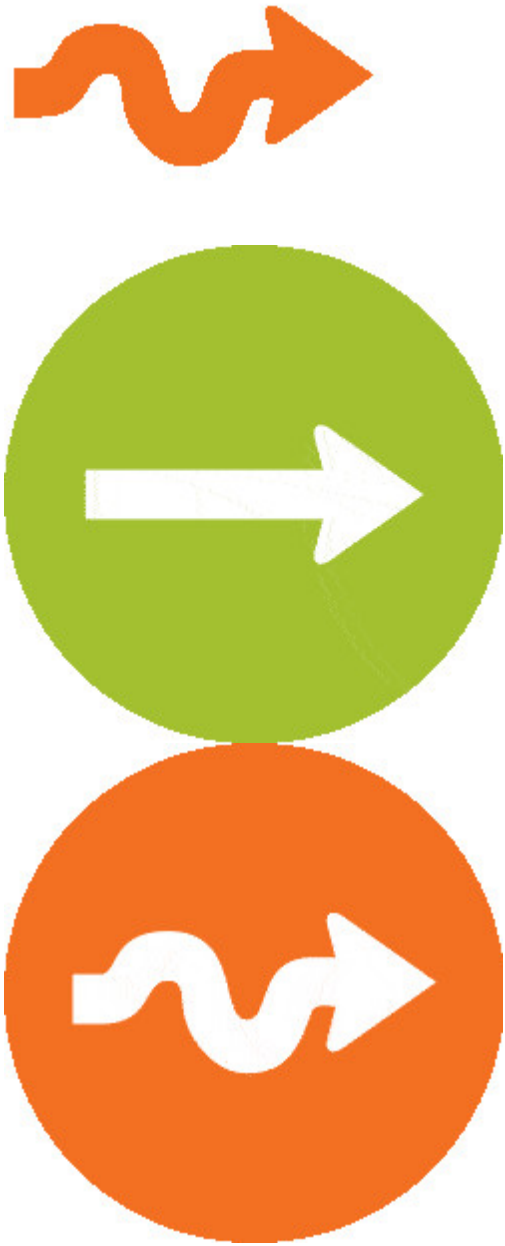
18Entering her house leads to death; it is the road to the grave.*

19The man who visits her is doomed.
He will never reach the paths of life.

20Follow the steps of good men instead, and stay on the paths of the
righteous.

21For only the godly will live in the land, and those with integrity
will remain in it.

22But the wicked will be removed from the land, and the
treacherous will be uprooted.



Proverbs 3

TRUSTING IN THE LORD

1My child,* never forget the things I have taught you.
Store my commands in your heart.

2If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying.

3Never let loyalty and kindness leave you!
Tie them around your neck as a reminder.
Write them deep within your heart.

4Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation.

5Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

6Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

7Don't be impressed with your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

8Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.

9Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce.

10Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.

11My child, don't reject the LORD's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you.

12For the LORD corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.*

13Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding.

14For wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold.

15Wisdom is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.

16She offers you long life in her right hand, and riches and honor in her left.

17She will guide you down delightful paths; all her ways are satisfying.

18Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly.

19By wisdom the LORD founded the earth; by understanding he created the heavens.

20By his knowledge the deep fountains of the earth burst forth, and the dew settles beneath the night sky.

21My child, don't lose sight of common sense and discernment. Hang on to them,

22for they will refresh your soul.
They are like jewels on a necklace.

23They keep you safe on your way, and your feet will not stumble.

24You can go to bed without fear; you will lie down and sleep soundly.

25You need not be afraid of sudden disaster or the destruction that comes upon the wicked,

26for the LORD is your security.
He will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.

27Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them.

28If you can help your neighbor now, don't say, "Come back tomorrow, and then I'll help you."

29Don't plot harm against your neighbor, for those who live nearby trust you.

30Don't pick a fight without reason, when no one has done you harm.

31Don't envy violent people or copy their ways.

32Such wicked people are detestable to the LORD, but he offers his friendship to the godly.

33The LORD curses the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the upright.

34The LORD mocks the mockers but is gracious to the humble.*

35The wise inherit honor, but fools are put to shame!

Proverbs 4

A FATHER'S WISE ADVICE

1My children,* listen when your father corrects you.
Pay attention and learn good judgment,

2for I am giving you good guidance.
Don’t turn away from my instructions.

3For I, too, was once my father’s son, tenderly loved as my mother’s only child.

4My father taught me, “Take my words to heart.
Follow my commands, and you will live.

5Get wisdom; develop good judgment.
Don’t forget my words or turn away from them.

6Don’t turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you.
Love her, and she will guard you.

7Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do!
And whatever else you do, develop good judgment.

8If you prize wisdom, she will make you great.
Embrace her, and she will honor you.

9She will place a lovely wreath on your head; she will present you with a beautiful crown.”

10My child,* listen to me and do as I say, and you will have a long, good life.

11I will teach you wisdom’s ways and lead you in straight paths.

12When you walk, you won’t be held back; when you run, you won’t stumble.

13Take hold of my instructions; don’t let them go.
Guard them, for they are the key to life.

14Don’t do as the wicked do, and don’t follow the path of evildoers.

15Don’t even think about it; don’t go that way.
Turn away and keep moving.

16For evil people can’t sleep until they’ve done their evil deed for

the day.
They can't rest until they've caused someone to stumble.

17They eat the food of wickedness and drink the wine of violence!

18The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day.

19But the way of the wicked is like total darkness.
They have no idea what they are stumbling over.

20My child, pay attention to what I say.
Listen carefully to my words.

21Don't lose sight of them.
Let them penetrate deep into your heart,

22for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body.

23Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

24Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech.

25Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you.

26Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path.

27Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

Proverbs 5

AVOID IMMORAL WOMEN

1My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen carefully to my wise counsel.

2Then you will show discernment, and your lips will express what you've learned.

3For the lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her
mouth is smoother than oil.

4But in the end she is as bitter as poison, as dangerous as a double-
edged sword.

5Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.*

6For she cares nothing about the path to life.
She staggers down a crooked trail and doesn't realize it.

7So now, my sons, listen to me.
Never stray from what I am about to say:

8Stay away from her!
Don't go near the door of her house!

9If you do, you will lose your honor and will lose to merciless
people all you have achieved.

10Strangers will consume your wealth, and someone else will enjoy
the fruit of your labor.

11In the end you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your
body.

12You will say, "How I hated discipline!
If only I had not ignored all the warnings!

13Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers?
Why didn't I pay attention to my instructors?

14I have come to the brink of utter ruin, and now I must face public
disgrace."

15Drink water from your own well— share your love only with your
wife.*

16Why spill the water of your springs in the streets, having sex with

just anyone?*

17You should reserve it for yourselves.
Never share it with strangers.

18Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you.
Rejoice in the wife of your youth.

19She is a loving deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts satisfy you always.
May you always be captivated by her love.

20Why be captivated, my son, by an immoral woman, or fondle the breasts of a promiscuous woman?

21For the LORD sees clearly what a man does, examining every path he takes.

22An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him.

23He will die for lack of self-control; he will be lost because of his great foolishness.

Proverbs 6

LESSONS FOR DAILY LIFE

1My child,* if you have put up security for a friend's debt or agreed to guarantee the debt of a stranger—

2if you have trapped yourself by your agreement and are caught by what you said—

3follow my advice and save yourself, for you have placed yourself at your friend's mercy.
Now swallow your pride; go and beg to have your name erased.

4Don't put it off; do it now!
Don't rest until you do.

5Save yourself like a gazelle escaping from a hunter, like a bird
fleeing from a net.

6Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones.
Learn from their ways and become wise!

7Though they have no prince or governor or ruler to make them
work,

8they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter.

9But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep?
When will you wake up?

10A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the
hands to rest—

11then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack
you like an armed robber.

12What are worthless and wicked people like?
They are constant liars,

13signaling their deceit with a wink of the eye, a nudge of the foot,
or the wiggle of fingers.

14Their perverted hearts plot evil, and they constantly stir up
trouble.

15But they will be destroyed suddenly, broken in an instant beyond
all hope of healing.

16There are six things the LORD hates— no, seven things he detests:

17haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent,

18a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong,

19a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a
family.

20My son, obey your father's commands, and don't neglect your
mother's instruction.

21Keep their words always in your heart.
Tie them around your neck.

22When you walk, their counsel will lead you.
When you sleep, they will protect you.
When you wake up, they will advise you.

23For their command is a lamp and their instruction a light; their
corrective discipline is the way to life.

24It will keep you from the immoral woman, from the smooth
tongue of a promiscuous woman.

25Don't lust for her beauty.
Don't let her coy glances seduce you.

26For a prostitute will bring you to poverty,*
but sleeping with another man's wife will cost you your life.

27Can a man scoop a flame into his lap and not have his clothes
catch on fire?

28Can he walk on hot coals and not blister his feet?

29So it is with the man who sleeps with another man's wife.
He who embraces her will not go unpunished.

30Excuses might be found for a thief who steals because he is
starving.

31But if he is caught, he must pay back seven times what he stole,
even if he has to sell everything in his house.

32But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys
himself.

33He will be wounded and disgraced.
His shame will never be erased.

34For the woman's jealous husband will be furious, and he will
show no mercy when he takes revenge.

35He will accept no compensation, nor be satisfied with a payoff of
any size.

Proverbs 7

ANOTHER WARNING ABOUT IMMORAL WOMEN

1Follow my advice, my son; always treasure my commands.

2Obey my commands and live!
Guard my instructions as you guard your own eyes.*

3Tie them on your fingers as a reminder.
Write them deep within your heart.

4Love wisdom like a sister; make insight a beloved member of your
family.

5Let them protect you from an affair with an immoral woman, from
listening to the flattery of a promiscuous woman.

6While I was at the window of my house, looking through the
curtain,

7I saw some naive young men, and one in particular who lacked
common sense.

8He was crossing the street near the house of an immoral woman,
strolling down the path by her house.

9It was at twilight, in the evening, as deep darkness fell.

10The woman approached him, seductively dressed and sly of heart.

11She was the brash, rebellious type, never content to stay at home.

12She is often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner.

13She threw her arms around him and kissed him, and with a
brazen look she said,

14“I’ve just made my peace offerings and fulfilled my vows.

15You’re the one I was looking for!
I came out to find you, and here you are!

16My bed is spread with beautiful blankets, with colored sheets of
Egyptian linen.

17I’ve perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

18Come, let’s drink our fill of love until morning.
Let’s enjoy each other’s caresses,

19for my husband is not home.
He’s away on a long trip.

20He has taken a wallet full of money with him and won’t return
until later this month.*”

21So she seduced him with her pretty speech and enticed him with
her flattery.

22He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter.
He was like a stag caught in a trap,*

23awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart.
He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost
him his life.

24So listen to me, my sons, and pay attention to my words.

25Don’t let your hearts stray away toward her.
Don’t wander down her wayward path.

26For she has been the ruin of many; many men have been her victims.

27Her house is the road to the grave.*
Her bedroom is the den of death.

Proverbs 8

WISDOM CALLS FOR A HEARING

1Listen as Wisdom calls out!
Hear as understanding raises her voice!

2On the hilltop along the road, she takes her stand at the crossroads.

3By the gates at the entrance to the town, on the road leading in, she cries aloud,

4"I call to you, to all of you!
I raise my voice to all people.

5You simple people, use good judgment.
You foolish people, show some understanding.

6Listen to me! For I have important things to tell you.
Everything I say is right,

7for I speak the truth and detest every kind of deception.

8My advice is wholesome.
There is nothing devious or crooked in it.

9My words are plain to anyone with understanding, clear to those with knowledge.

10Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold.

11For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies.
Nothing you desire can compare with it.

12“I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment.
I know where to discover knowledge and discernment.

13All who fear the LORD will hate evil.
Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance, corruption and perverse speech.

14Common sense and success belong to me.
Insight and strength are mine.

15Because of me, kings reign, and rulers make just decrees.

16Rulers lead with my help, and nobles make righteous judgments.*

17“I love all who love me.
Those who search will surely find me.

18I have riches and honor, as well as enduring wealth and justice.

19My gifts are better than gold, even the purest gold, my wages better than sterling silver!

20I walk in righteousness, in paths of justice.

21Those who love me inherit wealth.
I will fill their treasuries.

22“The LORD formed me from the beginning, before he created anything else.

23I was appointed in ages past, at the very first, before the earth began.

24I was born before the oceans were created, before the springs bubbled forth their waters.

25Before the mountains were formed, before the hills, I was born—

26before he had made the earth and fields and the first handfuls of soil.

27I was there when he established the heavens, when he drew the horizon on the oceans.

28I was there when he set the clouds above, when he established springs deep in the earth.

29I was there when he set the limits of the seas, so they would not spread beyond their boundaries.
And when he marked off the earth's foundations,

30I was the architect at his side.
I was his constant delight, rejoicing always in his presence.

31And how happy I was with the world he created; how I rejoiced with the human family!

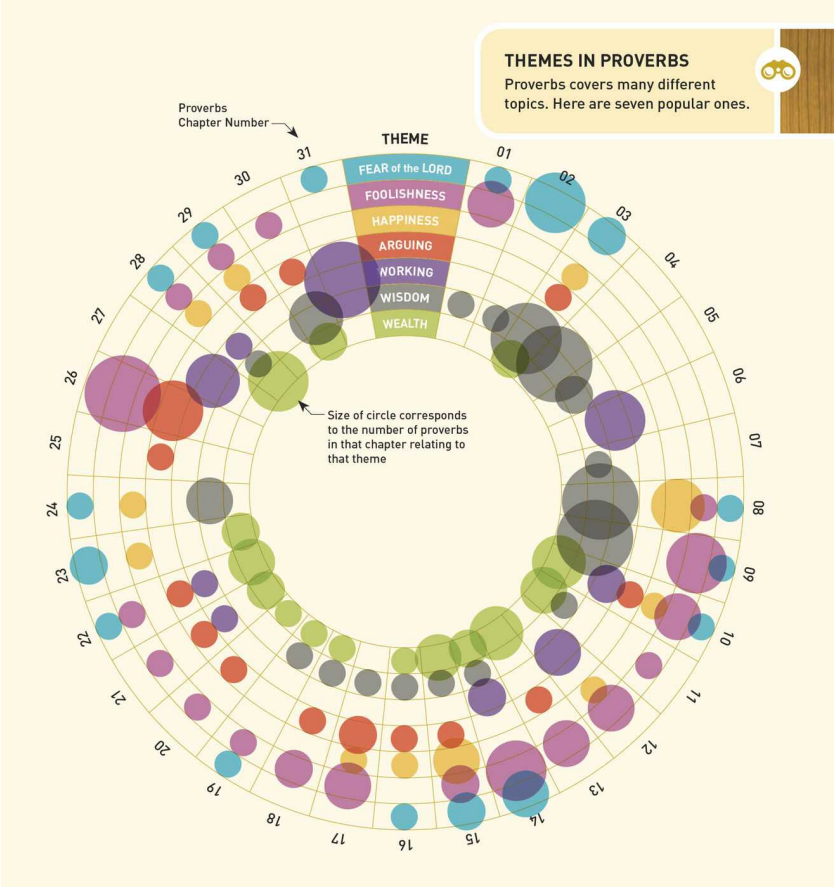
32"And so, my children,* listen to me, for all who follow my ways are joyful.

33Listen to my instruction and be wise.
Don't ignore it.

34Joyful are those who listen to me, watching for me daily at my gates, waiting for me outside my home!

35For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD.

36But those who miss me injure themselves.
All who hate me love death."



THEMES IN PROVERBS

Proverbs 9

1Wisdom has built her house; she has carved its seven columns.

2She has prepared a great banquet, mixed the wines, and set the table.

3She has sent her servants to invite everyone to come.
She calls out from the heights overlooking the city.

4“Come in with me,” she urges the simple.

To those who lack good judgment, she says,

5“Come, eat my food, and drink the wine I have mixed.

6Leave your simple ways behind, and begin to live; learn to use
good judgment.”

7Anyone who rebukes a mocker will get an insult in return.
Anyone who corrects the wicked will get hurt.

8So don’t bother correcting mockers; they will only hate you.
But correct the wise, and they will love you.

9Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser.
Teach the righteous, and they will learn even more.

10Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom.
Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

11Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life.

12If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit.
If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer.

FOLLY CALLS FOR A HEARING

13The woman named Folly is brash.

She is ignorant and doesn’t know it.

14She sits in her doorway on the heights overlooking the city.

15She calls out to men going by who are minding their own
business.

16“Come in with me,” she urges the simple.
To those who lack good judgment, she says,

17“Stolen water is refreshing; food eaten in secret tastes the best!”

18But little do they know that the dead are there.
Her guests are in the depths of the grave.*

Proverbs 10

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

1The proverbs of Solomon: A wise child* brings joy to a father; a
foolish child brings grief to a mother.

2Tainted wealth has no lasting value, but right living can save your
life.

3The LORD will not let the godly go hungry, but he refuses to
satisfy the craving of the wicked.

4Lazy people are soon poor; hard workers get rich.

5A wise youth harvests in the summer, but one who sleeps during
harvest is a disgrace.

6The godly are showered with blessings; the words of the wicked
conceal violent intentions.

7We have happy memories of the godly, but the name of a wicked
person rots away.

8The wise are glad to be instructed, but babbling fools fall flat on their faces.

9People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed.

10People who wink at wrong cause trouble, but a bold reproof promotes peace.*

11The words of the godly are a life-giving fountain; the words of the wicked conceal violent intentions.

12Hatred stirs up quarrels, but love makes up for all offenses.

13Wise words come from the lips of people with understanding, but those lacking sense will be beaten with a rod.

14Wise people treasure knowledge, but the babbling of a fool invites disaster.

15The wealth of the rich is their fortress; the poverty of the poor is their destruction.

16The earnings of the godly enhance their lives, but evil people squander their money on sin.

17People who accept discipline are on the pathway to life, but those who ignore correction will go astray.

18Hiding hatred makes you a liar; slandering others makes you a fool.

19Too much talk leads to sin.
Be sensible and keep your mouth shut.

20The words of the godly are like sterling silver; the heart of a fool is worthless.

21The words of the godly encourage many, but fools are destroyed

by their lack of common sense.

22The blessing of the LORD makes a person rich, and he adds no
sorrow with it.

23Doing wrong is fun for a fool, but living wisely brings pleasure to
the sensible.

24The fears of the wicked will be fulfilled; the hopes of the godly
will be granted.

25When the storms of life come, the wicked are whirled away, but
the godly have a lasting foundation.

26Lazy people irritate their employers, like vinegar to the teeth or
smoke in the eyes.

27Fear of the LORD lengthens one's life, but the years of the wicked
are cut short.

28The hopes of the godly result in happiness, but the expectations of
the wicked come to nothing.

29The way of the LORD is a stronghold to those with integrity, but it
destroys the wicked.

30The godly will never be disturbed, but the wicked will be removed
from the land.

31The mouth of the godly person gives wise advice, but the tongue
that deceives will be cut off.

32The lips of the godly speak helpful words, but the mouth of the
wicked speaks perverse words.

Proverbs 11

1The LORD detests the use of dishonest scales, but he delights in
accurate weights.

2Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

3Honesty guides good people; dishonesty destroys treacherous
people.

4Riches won't help on the day of judgment, but right living can save
you from death.

5The godly are directed by honesty; the wicked fall beneath their
load of sin.

6The godliness of good people rescues them; the ambition of
treacherous people traps them.

7When the wicked die, their hopes die with them, for they rely on
their own feeble strength.

8The godly are rescued from trouble, and it falls on the wicked
instead.

9With their words, the godless destroy their friends, but knowledge
will rescue the righteous.

10The whole city celebrates when the godly succeed; they shout for
joy when the wicked die.

11Upright citizens are good for a city and make it prosper, but the

talk of the wicked tears it apart.

12It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor; a sensible person keeps quiet.

13A gossip goes around telling secrets, but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence.

14Without wise leadership, a nation falls; there is safety in having many advisers.

15There's danger in putting up security for a stranger's debt; it's safer not to guarantee another person's debt.

16A gracious woman gains respect, but ruthless men gain only wealth.

17Your kindness will reward you, but your cruelty will destroy you.

18Evil people get rich for the moment, but the reward of the godly will last.

19Godly people find life; evil people find death.

20The LORD detests people with crooked hearts, but he delights in those with integrity.

21Evil people will surely be punished, but the children of the godly will go free.

22A beautiful woman who lacks discretion is like a gold ring in a pig's snout.

23The godly can look forward to a reward, while the wicked can expect only judgment.

24Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything.

25The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will

themselves be refreshed.

26People curse those who hoard their grain, but they bless the one
who sells in time of need.

27If you search for good, you will find favor; but if you search for
evil, it will find you!

28Trust in your money and down you go!
But the godly flourish like leaves in spring.

29Those who bring trouble on their families inherit the wind.
The fool will be a servant to the wise.

30The seeds of good deeds become a tree of life; a wise person wins
friends.*

31If the righteous are rewarded here on earth, what will happen to
wicked sinners?*

Proverbs 12

1To learn, you must love discipline; it is stupid to hate correction.

2The LORD approves of those who are good, but he condemns those who plan wickedness.

3Wickedness never brings stability, but the godly have deep roots.

4A worthy wife is a crown for her husband, but a disgraceful woman is like cancer in his bones.

5The plans of the godly are just; the advice of the wicked is treacherous.

6The words of the wicked are like a murderous ambush, but the words of the godly save lives.

7The wicked die and disappear, but the family of the godly stands firm.

8A sensible person wins admiration, but a warped mind is despised.

9Better to be an ordinary person with a servant than to be self-important but have no food.

10The godly care for their animals, but the wicked are always cruel.

11A hard worker has plenty of food, but a person who chases fantasies has no sense.

12Thieves are jealous of each other's loot, but the godly are well rooted and bear their own fruit.

13The wicked are trapped by their own words, but the godly escape such trouble.

14Wise words bring many benefits, and hard work brings rewards.

15Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.

16A fool is quick-tempered, but a wise person stays calm when insulted.

17An honest witness tells the truth; a false witness tells lies.

18Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.

19Truthful words stand the test of time, but lies are soon exposed.

20Deceit fills hearts that are plotting evil; joy fills hearts that are planning peace!

21No harm comes to the godly, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.

22The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth.

23The wise don't make a show of their knowledge, but fools

broadcast their foolishness.

24Work hard and become a leader; be lazy and become a slave.

25Worry weighs a person down; an encouraging word cheers a person up.

26The godly give good advice to their friends;*
the wicked lead them astray.

27Lazy people don't even cook the game they catch, but the diligent make use of everything they find.

28The way of the godly leads to life; that path does not lead to death.

Proverbs 13

1A wise child accepts a parent's discipline;*
a mocker refuses to listen to correction.

2Wise words will win you a good meal, but treacherous people have an appetite for violence.

3Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything.

4Lazy people want much but get little, but those who work hard will prosper.

5The godly hate lies; the wicked cause shame and disgrace.

6Godliness guards the path of the blameless, but the evil are misled by sin.

7Some who are poor pretend to be rich; others who are rich pretend to be poor.

8The rich can pay a ransom for their lives, but the poor won't even get threatened.

9The life of the godly is full of light and joy, but the light of the wicked will be snuffed out.

10Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise.

11Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows over time.

12Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life.

13People who despise advice are asking for trouble; those who respect a command will succeed.

14The instruction of the wise is like a life-giving fountain; those who accept it avoid the snares of death.

15A person with good sense is respected; a treacherous person is headed for destruction.*

16Wise people think before they act; fools don't—and even brag about their foolishness.

17An unreliable messenger stumbles into trouble, but a reliable messenger brings healing.

18If you ignore criticism, you will end in poverty and disgrace; if you accept correction, you will be honored.

19It is pleasant to see dreams come true, but fools refuse to turn from evil to attain them.

20Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.

21Trouble chases sinners, while blessings reward the righteous.

22Good people leave an inheritance to their grandchildren, but the sinner's wealth passes to the godly.

23A poor person's farm may produce much food, but injustice sweeps it all away.

24Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children.
Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.

25The godly eat to their hearts' content, but the belly of the wicked goes hungry.

Proverbs 14

1A wise woman builds her home, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands.

2Those who follow the right path fear the LORD; those who take the wrong path despise him.

3A fool's proud talk becomes a rod that beats him, but the words of the wise keep them safe.

4Without oxen a stable stays clean, but you need a strong ox for a large harvest.

5An honest witness does not lie; a false witness breathes lies.

6A mocker seeks wisdom and never finds it, but knowledge comes easily to those with understanding.

7Stay away from fools, for you won't find knowledge on their lips.

8The prudent understand where they are going, but fools deceive

themselves.

9Fools make fun of guilt, but the godly acknowledge it and seek
reconciliation.

10Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can fully
share its joy.

11The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the
godly will flourish.

12There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in
death.

13Laughter can conceal a heavy heart, but when the laughter ends,
the grief remains.

14Backsliders get what they deserve; good people receive their
reward.

15Only simpletons believe everything they're told!
The prudent carefully consider their steps.

16The wise are cautious* and avoid danger; fools plunge ahead with
reckless confidence.

17Short-tempered people do foolish things, and schemers are hated.

18Simpletons are clothed with foolishness,*
but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

19Evil people will bow before good people; the wicked will bow at
the gates of the godly.

20The poor are despised even by their neighbors, while the rich
have many "friends."

21It is a sin to belittle one's neighbor; blessed are those who help the
poor.

22If you plan to do evil, you will be lost; if you plan to do good, you will receive unfailing love and faithfulness.

23Work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty!

24Wealth is a crown for the wise; the effort of fools yields only foolishness.

25A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is a traitor.

26Those who fear the LORD are secure; he will be a refuge for their children.

27Fear of the LORD is a life-giving fountain; it offers escape from the snares of death.

28A growing population is a king's glory; a prince without subjects has nothing.

29People with understanding control their anger; a hot temper shows great foolishness.

30A peaceful heart leads to a healthy body; jealousy is like cancer in the bones.

31Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but helping the poor honors him.

32The wicked are crushed by disaster, but the godly have a refuge when they die.

33Wisdom is enshrined in an understanding heart; wisdom is not* found among fools.

34Godliness makes a nation great, but sin is a disgrace to any people.

35A king rejoices in wise servants but is angry with those who disgrace him.

Proverbs 15

1A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers
flare.

2The tongue of the wise makes knowledge appealing, but the mouth
of a fool belches out foolishness.

3The LORD is watching everywhere, keeping his eye on both the
evil and the good.

4Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

5Only a fool despises a parent's* discipline; whoever learns from
correction is wise.

6There is treasure in the house of the godly, but the earnings of the
wicked bring trouble.

7The lips of the wise give good advice; the heart of a fool has none
to give.

8The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but he delights in the
prayers of the upright.

9The LORD detests the way of the wicked, but he loves those who
pursue godliness.

10Whoever abandons the right path will be severely disciplined;
whoever hates correction will die.

11Even Death and Destruction* hold no secrets from the LORD.
How much more does he know the human heart!

12Mockers hate to be corrected, so they stay away from the wise.

13A glad heart makes a happy face; a broken heart crushes the
spirit.

14A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash.

15For the despondent, every day brings trouble; for the happy heart, life is a continual feast.

16Better to have little, with fear for the LORD, than to have great treasure and inner turmoil.

17A bowl of vegetables with someone you love is better than steak with someone you hate.

18A hot-tempered person starts fights; a cool-tempered person stops them.

19A lazy person's way is blocked with briers, but the path of the upright is an open highway.

20Sensible children bring joy to their father; foolish children despise their mother.

21Foolishness brings joy to those with no sense; a sensible person stays on the right path.

22Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success.

23Everyone enjoys a fitting reply; it is wonderful to say the right thing at the right time!

24The path of life leads upward for the wise; they leave the grave* behind.

25The LORD tears down the house of the proud, but he protects the property of widows.

26The LORD detests evil plans, but he delights in pure words.

27Greed brings grief to the whole family, but those who hate bribes will live.

28The heart of the godly thinks carefully before speaking; the mouth of the wicked overflows with evil words.

29The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayers of the righteous.

30A cheerful look brings joy to the heart; good news makes for good health.

31If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise.

32If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself; but if you listen to correction, you grow in understanding.

33Fear of the LORD teaches wisdom; humility precedes honor.

Proverbs 16

1We can make our own plans, but the LORD gives the right answer.

2People may be pure in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their motives.

3Commit your actions to the LORD, and your plans will succeed.

4The LORD has made everything for his own purposes, even the wicked for a day of disaster.

5The LORD detests the proud; they will surely be punished.

6Unfailing love and faithfulness make atonement for sin.
By fearing the LORD, people avoid evil.

7When people's lives please the LORD, even their enemies are at peace with them.

8Better to have little, with godliness, than to be rich and dishonest.

9We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.

10The king speaks with divine wisdom; he must never judge
unfairly.

11The LORD demands accurate scales and balances; he sets the
standards for fairness.

12A king detests wrongdoing, for his rule is built on justice.

13The king is pleased with words from righteous lips; he loves those
who speak honestly.

14The anger of the king is a deadly threat; the wise will try to
appease it.

15When the king smiles, there is life;
his favor refreshes like a spring rain.

16How much better to get wisdom than gold, and good judgment
than silver!

17The path of the virtuous leads away from evil; whoever follows
that path is safe.

18Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.

19Better to live humbly with the poor than to share plunder with the
proud.

20Those who listen to instruction will prosper; those who trust the
LORD will be joyful.

21The wise are known for their understanding, and pleasant words
are persuasive.

22Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it, but
discipline is wasted on fools.

23From a wise mind comes wise speech; the words of the wise are
persuasive.

24Kind words are like honey— sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.

25There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death.

26It is good for workers to have an appetite; an empty stomach drives them on.

27Scoundrels create trouble; their words are a destructive blaze.

28A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends.

29Violent people mislead their companions, leading them down a harmful path.

30With narrowed eyes, people plot evil; with a smirk, they plan their mischief.

31Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained by living a godly life.

32Better to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city.

33We may throw the dice,*
but the LORD determines how they fall.

Proverbs 17

1Better a dry crust eaten in peace than a house filled with feasting—and conflict.

2A wise servant will rule over the master's disgraceful son and will share the inheritance of the master's children.

3Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but the LORD tests the heart.

4Wrongdoers eagerly listen to gossip; liars pay close attention to slander.

5Those who mock the poor insult their Maker; those who rejoice at the misfortune of others will be punished.

6Grandchildren are the crowning glory of the aged; parents* are the pride of their children.

7Eloquent words are not fitting for a fool; even less are lies fitting for a ruler.

8A bribe is like a lucky charm; whoever gives one will prosper!

9Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends.

10A single rebuke does more for a person of understanding than a hundred lashes on the back of a fool.

11Evil people are eager for rebellion, but they will be severely punished.

12It is safer to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than to confront a fool caught in foolishness.

13If you repay good with evil, evil will never leave your house.

14Starting a quarrel is like opening a floodgate, so stop before a dispute breaks out.

15Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent— both are detestable to the LORD.

16It is senseless to pay to educate a fool, since he has no heart for learning.

17A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.

18It’s poor judgment to guarantee another person’s debt or put up
security for a friend.

19Anyone who loves to quarrel loves sin; anyone who trusts in high
walls invites disaster.

20The crooked heart will not prosper; the lying tongue tumbles into
trouble.

21It is painful to be the parent of a fool; there is no joy for the father
of a rebel.

22A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a
person’s strength.

23The wicked take secret bribes to pervert the course of justice.

24Sensible people keep their eyes glued on wisdom, but a fool’s eyes
wander to the ends of the earth.

25Foolish children* bring grief to their father and bitterness to the
one who gave them birth.

26It is wrong to punish the godly for being good or to flog leaders
for being honest.

27A truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding
is even-tempered.

28Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their
mouths shut, they seem intelligent.

Proverbs 18

1Unfriendly people care only about themselves; they lash out at
common sense.

2Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their

own opinions.

3Doing wrong leads to disgrace, and scandalous behavior brings contempt.

4Wise words are like deep waters; wisdom flows from the wise like a bubbling brook.

5It is not right to acquit the guilty or deny justice to the innocent.

6Fools' words get them into constant quarrels; they are asking for a beating.

7The mouths of fools are their ruin; they trap themselves with their lips.

8Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one's heart.

9A lazy person is as bad as someone who destroys things.

10The name of the LORD is a strong fortress; the godly run to him and are safe.

11The rich think of their wealth as a strong defense; they imagine it to be a high wall of safety.

12Haughtiness goes before destruction; humility precedes honor.

13Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish.

14The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear a crushed spirit?

15Intelligent people are always ready to learn.
Their ears are open for knowledge.

16Giving a gift can open doors; it gives access to important people!

17The first to speak in court sounds right— until the cross-examination begins.

18Flipping a coin* can end arguments; it settles disputes between
powerful opponents.

19An offended friend is harder to win back than a fortified city.
Arguments separate friends like a gate locked with bars.

20Wise words satisfy like a good meal; the right words bring
satisfaction.

21The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will
reap the consequences.

22The man who finds a wife finds a treasure, and he receives favor
from the LORD.

23The poor plead for mercy; the rich answer with insults.

24There are “friends” who destroy each other, but a real friend
sticks closer than a brother.

Proverbs 19

1Better to be poor and honest than to be dishonest and a fool.

2Enthusiasm without knowledge is no good; haste makes mistakes.

3People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry
at the LORD.

4Wealth makes many “friends”; poverty drives them all away.

5A false witness will not go unpunished, nor will a liar escape.

6Many seek favors from a ruler; everyone is the friend of a person
who gives gifts!

7The relatives of the poor despise them; how much more will their

friends avoid them!
Though the poor plead with them, their friends are gone.

8To acquire wisdom is to love yourself; people who cherish
understanding will prosper.

9A false witness will not go unpunished, and a liar will be
destroyed.

10It isn't right for a fool to live in luxury or for a slave to rule over
princes!

11Sensible people control their temper; they earn respect by
overlooking wrongs.

12The king's anger is like a lion's roar, but his favor is like dew on
the grass.

13A foolish child* is a calamity to a father; a quarrelsome wife is as
annoying as constant dripping.

14Fathers can give their sons an inheritance of houses and wealth,
but only the LORD can give an understanding wife.

15Lazy people sleep soundly, but idleness leaves them hungry.

16Keep the commandments and keep your life; despising them leads
to death.

17If you help the poor, you are lending to the LORD— and he will
repay you!

18Discipline your children while there is hope.
Otherwise you will ruin their lives.

19Hot-tempered people must pay the penalty.
If you rescue them once, you will have to do it again.

20Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the
rest of your life.

21You can make many plans, but the LORD's purpose will prevail.

22Loyalty makes a person attractive.
It is better to be poor than dishonest.

23Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection
from harm.

24Lazy people take food in their hand but don't even lift it to their
mouth.

25If you punish a mocker, the simpleminded will learn a lesson; if
you correct the wise, they will be all the wiser.

26Children who mistreat their father or chase away their mother are
an embarrassment and a public disgrace.

27If you stop listening to instruction, my child, you will turn your
back on knowledge.

28A corrupt witness makes a mockery of justice; the mouth of the
wicked gulps down evil.

29Punishment is made for mockers, and the backs of fools are made
to be beaten.

Proverbs 20

1Wine produces mockers; alcohol leads to brawls.
Those led astray by drink cannot be wise.

2The king's fury is like a lion's roar; to rouse his anger is to risk
your life.

3Avoiding a fight is a mark of honor; only fools insist on quarreling.

4Those too lazy to plow in the right season will have no food at the
harvest.

5Though good advice lies deep within the heart, a person with

understanding will draw it out.

6Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?

7The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children who follow them.

8When a king sits in judgment, he weighs all the evidence, distinguishing the bad from the good.

9Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart; I am pure and free from sin”?

10False weights and unequal measures*— the LORD detests double standards of every kind.

11Even children are known by the way they act, whether their conduct is pure, and whether it is right.

12Ears to hear and eyes to see— both are gifts from the LORD.

13If you love sleep, you will end in poverty.
Keep your eyes open, and there will be plenty to eat!

14The buyer haggles over the price, saying, “It’s worthless,”
then brags about getting a bargain!

15Wise words are more valuable than much gold and many rubies.

16Get security from someone who guarantees a stranger’s debt.
Get a deposit if he does it for foreigners.*

17Stolen bread tastes sweet, but it turns to gravel in the mouth.

18Plans succeed through good counsel; don’t go to war without wise advice.

19A gossip goes around telling secrets, so don’t hang around with

chatterers.

20If you insult your father or mother, your light will be snuffed out
in total darkness.

21An inheritance obtained too early in life is not a blessing in the
end.

22Don't say, "I will get even for this wrong."
Wait for the LORD to handle the matter.

23The LORD detests double standards; he is not pleased by dishonest
scales.

24The LORD directs our steps, so why try to understand everything
along the way?

25Don't trap yourself by making a rash promise to God and only
later counting the cost.

26A wise king scatters the wicked like wheat, then runs his
threshing wheel over them.

27The LORD's light penetrates the human spirit,*
exposing every hidden motive.

28Unfailing love and faithfulness protect the king; his throne is
made secure through love.

29The glory of the young is their strength; the gray hair of
experience is the splendor of the old.

30Physical punishment cleanses away evil;*
such discipline purifies the heart.

Proverbs 21

1The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the LORD; he
guides it wherever he pleases.

2People may be right in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their heart.

3The LORD is more pleased when we do what is right and just than when we offer him sacrifices.

4Haughty eyes, a proud heart, and evil actions are all sin.

5Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

6Wealth created by a lying tongue is a vanishing mist and a deadly trap.*

7The violence of the wicked sweeps them away, because they refuse to do what is just.

8The guilty walk a crooked path; the innocent travel a straight road.

9It's better to live alone in the corner of an attic than with a quarrelsome wife in a lovely home.

10Evil people desire evil; their neighbors get no mercy from them.

11If you punish a mocker, the simpleminded become wise; if you instruct the wise, they will be all the wiser.

12The Righteous One* knows what is going on in the homes of the wicked; he will bring disaster on them.

13Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need.

14A secret gift calms anger; a bribe under the table pacifies fury.

15Justice is a joy to the godly, but it terrifies evildoers.

16The person who strays from common sense will end up in the company of the dead.

17Those who love pleasure become poor; those who love wine and
luxury will never be rich.

18The wicked are punished in place of the godly, and traitors in
place of the honest.

19It's better to live alone in the desert than with a quarrelsome,
complaining wife.

20The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they
get.

21Whoever pursues righteousness and unfailing love will find life,
righteousness, and honor.

22The wise conquer the city of the strong and level the fortress in
which they trust.

23Watch your tongue and keep your mouth shut, and you will stay
out of trouble.

24Mockers are proud and haughty; they act with boundless
arrogance.

25Despite their desires, the lazy will come to ruin, for their hands
refuse to work.

26Some people are always greedy for more, but the godly love to
give!

27The sacrifice of an evil person is detestable, especially when it is
offered with wrong motives.

28A false witness will be cut off, but a credible witness will be
allowed to speak.

29The wicked bluff their way through, but the virtuous think before
they act.

30No human wisdom or understanding or plan can stand against the
LORD.

31The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but the victory belongs
to the LORD.

Proverbs 22

1Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high
esteem is better than silver or gold.

2The rich and poor have this in common: The LORD made them
both.

3A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions.
The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.

4True humility and fear of the LORD
lead to riches, honor, and long life.

5Corrupt people walk a thorny, treacherous road; whoever values
life will avoid it.

6Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older,
they will not leave it.

7Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is servant to the
lender.

8Those who plant injustice will harvest disaster, and their reign of
terror will come to an end.*

9Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor.

10Throw out the mocker, and fighting goes, too.
Quarrels and insults will disappear.

11Whoever loves a pure heart and gracious speech will have the
king as a friend.

12The LORD preserves those with knowledge, but he ruins the plans
of the treacherous.

13The lazy person claims, “There’s a lion out there!
If I go outside, I might be killed!”

14The mouth of an immoral woman is a dangerous trap; those who make the LORD angry will fall into it.

15A youngster’s heart is filled with foolishness, but physical discipline will drive it far away.

16A person who gets ahead by oppressing the poor or by showering gifts on the rich will end in poverty.

SAYINGS OF THE WISE

17Listen to the words of the wise; apply your heart to my instruction.

18For it is good to keep these sayings in your heart and always ready on your lips.

19I am teaching you today—yes, you— so you will trust in the LORD.

20I have written thirty sayings* for you, filled with advice and knowledge.

21In this way, you may know the truth and take an accurate report to those who sent you.

22Don’t rob the poor just because you can, or exploit the needy in court.

23For the LORD is their defender.
He will ruin anyone who ruins them.

24Don’t befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people,

25or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.

26Don’t agree to guarantee another person’s debt or put up security
for someone else.

27If you can’t pay it, even your bed will be snatched from under
you.

28Don’t cheat your neighbor by moving the ancient boundary
markers set up by previous generations.

29Do you see any truly competent workers?
They will serve kings rather than working for ordinary people.

Proverbs 23

1While dining with a ruler, pay attention to what is put before you.

2If you are a big eater, put a knife to your throat;

3don’t desire all the delicacies, for he might be trying to trick you.

4Don’t wear yourself out trying to get rich.
Be wise enough to know when to quit.

5In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings
and fly away like an eagle.

6Don’t eat with people who are stingy; don’t desire their delicacies.

7They are always thinking about how much it costs.*
“Eat and drink,” they say, but they don’t mean it.

8You will throw up what little you’ve eaten, and your compliments
will be wasted.

9Don’t waste your breath on fools, for they will despise the wisest
advice.

10 Don’t cheat your neighbor by moving the ancient boundary
markers; don’t take the land of defenseless orphans.

11 For their Redeemer* is strong; he himself will bring their charges
against you.

12 Commit yourself to instruction; listen carefully to words of
knowledge.

13 Don’t fail to discipline your children.
The rod of punishment won’t kill them.

14 Physical discipline may well save them from death.*

15 My child,* if your heart is wise, my own heart will rejoice!

16 Everything in me will celebrate when you speak what is right.

17 Don’t envy sinners, but always continue to fear the LORD.

18 You will be rewarded for this; your hope will not be disappointed.

19 My child, listen and be wise: Keep your heart on the right course.

20 Do not carouse with drunkards or feast with gluttons,

21 for they are on their way to poverty, and too much sleep clothes
them in rags.

22 Listen to your father, who gave you life, and don’t despise your
mother when she is old.

23 Get the truth and never sell it; also get wisdom, discipline, and
good judgment.

24 The father of godly children has cause for joy.
What a pleasure to have children who are wise.*

25So give your father and mother joy!
May she who gave you birth be happy.

26O my son, give me your heart.
May your eyes take delight in following my ways.

27A prostitute is a dangerous trap; a promiscuous woman is as dangerous as falling into a narrow well.

28She hides and waits like a robber, eager to make more men unfaithful.

29Who has anguish? Who has sorrow?
Who is always fighting? Who is always complaining?
Who has unnecessary bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?

30It is the one who spends long hours in the taverns, trying out new drinks.

31Don't gaze at the wine, seeing how red it is, how it sparkles in the cup, how smoothly it goes down.

32For in the end it bites like a poisonous snake; it stings like a viper.

33You will see hallucinations, and you will say crazy things.

34You will stagger like a sailor tossed at sea, clinging to a swaying mast.

35And you will say, "They hit me, but I didn't feel it.
I didn't even know it when they beat me up.
When will I wake up so I can look for another drink?"

Proverbs 24

1Don't envy evil people or desire their company.

2For their hearts plot violence, and their words always stir up trouble.

3A house is built by wisdom and becomes strong through good sense.

4Through knowledge its rooms are filled with all sorts of precious riches and valuables.

5The wise are mightier than the strong,*
and those with knowledge grow stronger and stronger.

6So don't go to war without wise guidance; victory depends on having many advisers.

7Wisdom is too lofty for fools.
Among leaders at the city gate, they have nothing to say.

8A person who plans evil will get a reputation as a troublemaker.

9The schemes of a fool are sinful; everyone detests a mocker.

10If you fail under pressure, your strength is too small.

11Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to die; save them as they stagger to their death.

12Don't excuse yourself by saying, "Look, we didn't know."
For God understands all hearts, and he sees you.
He who guards your soul knows you knew.
He will repay all people as their actions deserve.

13My child,* eat honey, for it is good, and the honeycomb is sweet to the taste.

14In the same way, wisdom is sweet to your soul.
If you find it, you will have a bright future, and your hopes will not be cut short.

15Don't wait in ambush at the home of the godly, and don't raid the house where the godly live.

16The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again.

But one disaster is enough to overthrow the wicked.

17Don't rejoice when your enemies fall; don't be happy when they stumble.

18For the LORD will be displeased with you and will turn his anger away from them.

19Don't fret because of evildoers; don't envy the wicked.

20For evil people have no future; the light of the wicked will be snuffed out.

21My child, fear the LORD and the king.
Don't associate with rebels,

22for disaster will hit them suddenly.
Who knows what punishment will come from the LORD and the king?

MORE SAYINGS OF THE WISE

23Here are some further sayings of the wise: It is wrong to show favoritism when passing judgment.

24A judge who says to the wicked, "You are innocent,"
will be cursed by many people and denounced by the nations.

25But it will go well for those who convict the guilty; rich blessings will be showered on them.

26An honest answer is like a kiss of friendship.

27Do your planning and prepare your fields before building your house.

28Don't testify against your neighbors without cause; don't lie about them.

29And don't say, "Now I can pay them back for what they've done

to me!
I'll get even with them!"

30I walked by the field of a lazy person, the vineyard of one with no common sense.

31I saw that it was overgrown with nettles.
It was covered with weeds, and its walls were broken down.

32Then, as I looked and thought about it, I learned this lesson:

33A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—

34then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

Proverbs 25

MORE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

1These are more proverbs of Solomon, collected by the advisers of King Hezekiah of Judah.

2It is God's privilege to conceal things and the king's privilege to discover them.

3No one can comprehend the height of heaven, the depth of the earth, or all that goes on in the king's mind!

4Remove the impurities from silver, and the sterling will be ready for the silversmith.

5Remove the wicked from the king's court, and his reign will be made secure by justice.

6Don't demand an audience with the king or push for a place among the great.

7It's better to wait for an invitation to the head table than to be sent

away in public disgrace.
Just because you've seen something,

8don't be in a hurry to go to court.
For what will you do in the end if your neighbor deals you a shameful defeat?

9When arguing with your neighbor, don't betray another person's secret.

10Others may accuse you of gossip, and you will never regain your good reputation.

11Timely advice is lovely, like golden apples in a silver basket.

12To one who listens, valid criticism is like a gold earring or other gold jewelry.

13Trustworthy messengers refresh like snow in summer.
They revive the spirit of their employer.

14A person who promises a gift but doesn't give it is like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

15Patience can persuade a prince, and soft speech can break bones.

16Do you like honey?
Don't eat too much, or it will make you sick!

17Don't visit your neighbors too often, or you will wear out your welcome.

18Telling lies about others is as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword, or shooting them with a sharp arrow.

19Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot.

20Singing cheerful songs to a person with a heavy heart is like
taking someone's coat in cold weather or pouring vinegar in a
wound.*

21If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat.
If they are thirsty, give them water to drink.

22You will heap burning coals of shame on their heads, and the
LORD will reward you.

23As surely as a north wind brings rain, so a gossiping tongue causes
anger!

24It's better to live alone in the corner of an attic than with a
quarrelsome wife in a lovely home.

25Good news from far away is like cold water to the thirsty.

26If the godly give in to the wicked, it's like polluting a fountain or
muddying a spring.

27It's not good to eat too much honey, and it's not good to seek
honors for yourself.

28A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down
walls.

Proverbs 26

1Honor is no more associated with fools than snow with summer or
rain with harvest.

2Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved
curse will not land on its intended victim.

3Guide a horse with a whip, a donkey with a bridle, and a fool with
a rod to his back!

4Don't answer the foolish arguments of fools, or you will become as
foolish as they are.

5Be sure to answer the foolish arguments of fools, or they will
become wise in their own estimation.

6Trusting a fool to convey a message is like cutting off one's feet or
drinking poison!

7A proverb in the mouth of a fool is as useless as a paralyzed leg.

8Honoring a fool is as foolish as tying a stone to a slingshot.

9A proverb in the mouth of a fool is like a thorny branch brandished
by a drunk.

10An employer who hires a fool or a bystander is like an archer who
shoots at random.

11As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness.

12There is more hope for fools than for people who think they are
wise.

13The lazy person claims, "There's a lion on the road!
Yes, I'm sure there's a lion out there!"

14As a door swings back and forth on its hinges, so the lazy person
turns over in bed.

15Lazy people take food in their hand but don't even lift it to their
mouth.

16Lazy people consider themselves smarter than seven wise
counselors.

17Interfering in someone else's argument is as foolish as yanking a
dog's ears.

18Just as damaging as a madman shooting a deadly weapon

19is someone who lies to a friend and then says, "I was only joking."

20Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops.

21A quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood.

22Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one's heart.

23Smooth* words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a clay pot.

24People may cover their hatred with pleasant words, but they're deceiving you.

25They pretend to be kind, but don't believe them.
Their hearts are full of many evils.*

26While their hatred may be concealed by trickery, their wrongdoing will be exposed in public.

27If you set a trap for others, you will get caught in it yourself.
If you roll a boulder down on others, it will crush you instead.

28A lying tongue hates its victims, and flattering words cause ruin.

Proverbs 27

1Don't brag about tomorrow, since you don't know what the day will bring.

2Let someone else praise you, not your own mouth— a stranger, not your own lips.

3A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but the resentment caused by a fool is even heavier.

4Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood, but jealousy is even more dangerous.

5An open rebuke is better than hidden love!

6Wounds from a sincere friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.

7A person who is full refuses honey, but even bitter food tastes sweet to the hungry.

8A person who strays from home is like a bird that strays from its nest.

9The heartfelt counsel of a friend is as sweet as perfume and incense.

10Never abandon a friend— either yours or your father's.
When disaster strikes, you won't have to ask your brother for assistance.
It's better to go to a neighbor than to a brother who lives far away.

11Be wise, my child,* and make my heart glad.
Then I will be able to answer my critics.

12A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions.
The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.

13Get security from someone who guarantees a stranger's debt.
Get a deposit if he does it for foreigners.*

14A loud and cheerful greeting early in the morning will be taken as a curse!

15A quarrelsome wife is as annoying as constant dripping on a rainy day.

16Stopping her complaints is like trying to stop the wind or trying to hold something with greased hands.

17As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

18As workers who tend a fig tree are allowed to eat the fruit, so
workers who protect their employer's interests will be rewarded.

19As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person.

20Just as Death and Destruction* are never satisfied, so human
desire is never satisfied.

21Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but a person is tested by
being praised.*

22You cannot separate fools from their foolishness, even though you
grind them like grain with mortar and pestle.

23Know the state of your flocks, and put your heart into caring for
your herds,

24for riches don't last forever, and the crown might not be passed to
the next generation.

25After the hay is harvested and the new crop appears and the
mountain grasses are gathered in,

26your sheep will provide wool for clothing, and your goats will
provide the price of a field.

27And you will have enough goats' milk for yourself, your family,
and your servant girls.

Proverbs 28

1The wicked run away when no one is chasing them, but the godly
are as bold as lions.

2When there is moral rot within a nation, its government topples
easily.
But wise and knowledgeable leaders bring stability.

3A poor person who oppresses the poor is like a pounding rain that destroys the crops.

4To reject the law is to praise the wicked; to obey the law is to fight them.

5Evil people don't understand justice, but those who follow the LORD understand completely.

6Better to be poor and honest than to be dishonest and rich.

7Young people who obey the law are wise; those with wild friends bring shame to their parents.*

8Income from charging high interest rates will end up in the pocket of someone who is kind to the poor.

9God detests the prayers of a person who ignores the law.

10Those who lead good people along an evil path will fall into their own trap, but the honest will inherit good things.

11Rich people may think they are wise, but a poor person with discernment can see right through them.

12When the godly succeed, everyone is glad.
When the wicked take charge, people go into hiding.

13People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.

14Blessed are those who fear to do wrong,*
but the stubborn are headed for serious trouble.

15A wicked ruler is as dangerous to the poor as a roaring lion or an attacking bear.

16A ruler with no understanding will oppress his people, but one who hates corruption will have a long life.

17A murderer's tormented conscience will drive him into the grave.
Don't protect him!

18The blameless will be rescued from harm, but the crooked will be
suddenly destroyed.

19A hard worker has plenty of food, but a person who chases
fantasies ends up in poverty.

20The trustworthy person will get a rich reward, but a person who
wants quick riches will get into trouble.

21Showing partiality is never good, yet some will do wrong for a
mere piece of bread.

22Greedy people try to get rich quick but don't realize they're
headed for poverty.

23In the end, people appreciate honest criticism far more than
flattery.

24Anyone who steals from his father and mother and says, "What's
wrong with that?"
is no better than a murderer.

25Greed causes fighting; trusting the LORD leads to prosperity.

26Those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who
walks in wisdom is safe.

27Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close
their eyes to poverty will be cursed.

28When the wicked take charge, people go into hiding.
When the wicked meet disaster, the godly flourish.

Proverbs 29

1Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism will suddenly be

destroyed beyond recovery.

2When the godly are in authority, the people rejoice.
But when the wicked are in power, they groan.

3The man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but if he hangs around with prostitutes, his wealth is wasted.

4A just king gives stability to his nation, but one who demands bribes destroys it.

5To flatter friends is to lay a trap for their feet.

6Evil people are trapped by sin, but the righteous escape, shouting for joy.

7The godly care about the rights of the poor; the wicked don't care at all.

8Mockers can get a whole town agitated, but the wise will calm anger.

9If a wise person takes a fool to court, there will be ranting and ridicule but no satisfaction.

10The bloodthirsty hate blameless people, but the upright seek to help them.*

11Fools vent their anger, but the wise quietly hold it back.

12If a ruler pays attention to liars, all his advisers will be wicked.

13The poor and the oppressor have this in common— the LORD gives sight to the eyes of both.

14If a king judges the poor fairly, his throne will last forever.

15To discipline a child produces wisdom, but a mother is disgraced by an undisciplined child.

16When the wicked are in authority, sin flourishes, but the godly
will live to see their downfall.

17Discipline your children, and they will give you peace of mind
and will make your heart glad.

18When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild.
But whoever obeys the law is joyful.

19Words alone will not discipline a servant; the words may be
understood, but they are not heeded.

20There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks
without thinking.

21A servant pampered from childhood will become a rebel.

22An angry person starts fights; a hot-tempered person commits all
kinds of sin.

23Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor.

24If you assist a thief, you only hurt yourself.
You are sworn to tell the truth, but you dare not testify.

25Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the LORD means
safety.

26Many seek the ruler's favor, but justice comes from the LORD.

27The righteous despise the unjust; the wicked despise the godly.

Proverbs 30

THE SAYINGS OF AGUR

1The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh contain this message.*

I am weary, O God; I am weary and worn out, O God.*

2I am too stupid to be human, and I lack common sense.

3I have not mastered human wisdom, nor do I know the Holy One.

4Who but God goes up to heaven and comes back down?
Who holds the wind in his fists?
Who wraps up the oceans in his cloak?
Who has created the whole wide world?
What is his name—and his son's name?
Tell me if you know!

5Every word of God proves true.
He is a shield to all who come to him for protection.

6Do not add to his words, or he may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.

7O God, I beg two favors from you; let me have them before I die.

8First, help me never to tell a lie.
Second, give me neither poverty nor riches!
Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.

9For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?"
And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.

10Never slander a worker to the employer, or the person will curse you, and you will pay for it.

11Some people curse their father and do not thank their mother.

12They are pure in their own eyes, but they are filthy and unwashed.

13They look proudly around, casting disdainful glances.

14They have teeth like swords and fangs like knives.
They devour the poor from the earth and the needy from among humanity.

15The leech has two suckers that cry out, "More, more!"*

There are three things that are never satisfied— no, four that never say, “Enough!”:

16the grave,*
the barren womb, the thirsty desert, the blazing fire.

17The eye that mocks a father and despises a mother’s instructions will be plucked out by ravens of the valley and eaten by vultures.

18There are three things that amaze me— no, four things that I don’t understand:

19how an eagle glides through the sky, how a snake slithers on a rock, how a ship navigates the ocean, how a man loves a woman.

20An adulterous woman consumes a man, then wipes her mouth and says, “What’s wrong with that?”

21There are three things that make the earth tremble— no, four it cannot endure:

22a slave who becomes a king, an overbearing fool who prospers,

23a bitter woman who finally gets a husband, a servant girl who supplants her mistress.

24There are four things on earth that are small but unusually wise:

25Ants—they aren’t strong, but they store up food all summer.

26Hyraxes*—they aren’t powerful, but they make their homes among the rocks.

27Locusts—they have no king, but they march in formation.

28Lizards—they are easy to catch, but they are found even in kings’ palaces.

29There are three things that walk with stately stride— no, four that strut about:

30the lion, king of animals, who won't turn aside for anything,

31the strutting rooster, the male goat, a king as he leads his army.

32If you have been a fool by being proud or plotting evil, cover your mouth in shame.

33As the beating of cream yields butter and striking the nose causes bleeding, so stirring up anger causes quarrels.

Proverbs 31

THE SAYINGS OF KING LEMUEL

1The sayings of King Lemuel contain this message,* which his mother taught him.

2O my son, O son of my womb, O son of my vows,

3do not waste your strength on women, on those who ruin kings.

4It is not for kings, O Lemuel, to guzzle wine.
Rulers should not crave alcohol.

5For if they drink, they may forget the law and not give justice to the oppressed.

6Alcohol is for the dying, and wine for those in bitter distress.

7Let them drink to forget their poverty and remember their troubles no more.

8Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed.

9Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER

10* Who can find a virtuous and capable wife?

She is more precious than rubies.

11 Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life.

12 She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

13 She finds wool and flax and busily spins it.

14 She is like a merchant's ship, bringing her food from afar.

15 She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household and plan the day's work for her servant girls.

16 She goes to inspect a field and buys it; with her earnings she plants a vineyard.

17 She is energetic and strong, a hard worker.

18 She makes sure her dealings are profitable; her lamp burns late into the night.

19 Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber.

20 She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy.

21 She has no fear of winter for her household, for everyone has warm* clothes.

22 She makes her own bedspreads.
She dresses in fine linen and purple gowns.

23 Her husband is well known at the city gates, where he sits with the other civic leaders.

24 She makes belted linen garments and sashes to sell to the merchants.

25 She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future.

26 When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness.

27 She carefully watches everything in her household and suffers nothing from laziness.

28 Her children stand and bless her.
Her husband praises her:

29 "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!"

30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised.

31 Reward her for all she has done.
Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.

Ecclesiastes

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

WELCOME TO

ECCLESIASTES

The book of Ecclesiastes gives us a close look at one man's desperate search for meaning and purpose in life, describing how the author, "the Teacher," has pursued meaning in every way imaginable. All of us wonder from time to time why we are here on earth. The Teacher searches for the answer to this question relentlessly, and his life shows that even extreme wealth, wisdom, popularity, and pleasure are ultimately meaningless. In the end, he realizes that those paths only lead to futility.

The book concludes with the only possible solution to life's puzzle: "Fear God and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty" (12:13). Only when people turn from this world to God will they find true happiness. With him as our focal point, life has meaning and purpose; without him, nothing makes sense.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Ecclesiastes isn't a stop on your route through the Bible, so you may fly over it. Your next stop is at Isaiah 11:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: One short reading in Ecclesiastes—

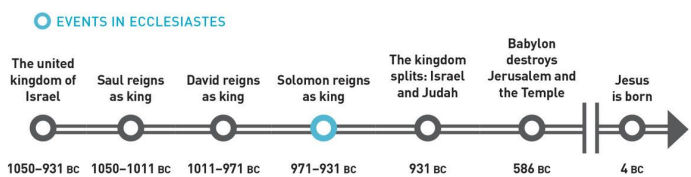
perhaps its most well-known passage—will give you an idea of the book's larger themes. Your next stop is at Ecclesiastes 3:1.

3 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The three readings in Ecclesiastes will give you the highlights of the wisdom contained in this book: True meaning is found not in pleasure or earthly pursuits, but in a godly perspective. Your next stop is at Ecclesiastes 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN ECCLESIASTES

Jesus is the answer to the question raised in Ecclesiastes: What is the meaning and purpose of life? We will find all of life meaningless and empty if we are not living for Jesus Christ. He alone gives life purpose and makes every activity under the sun worthwhile.
Jesus, when he came here to earth, put it this way. He said, “Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). We may live in a world where everything is meaningless under the sun, but Jesus came to this world too and lived under the sun with us. He brought with him a peace and a hope that the world could not give, so we don’t have to live in despair.



Ecclesiastes 1

1These are the words of the Teacher,* King David's son, who ruled
in Jerusalem.

EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS

2"Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely
meaningless!"

3What do people get for all their hard work under the sun?
4Generations come and generations go, but the earth never changes.
5The sun rises and the sun sets, then hurries around to rise again.
6The wind blows south, and then turns north. Around and around it
goes, blowing in circles. 7Rivers run into the sea, but the sea is
never full. Then the water returns again to the rivers and flows out
again to the sea. 8Everything is wearisome beyond description. No
matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how
much we hear, we are not content.

9History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing

under the sun is truly new. 10Sometimes people say, “Here is
something new!” But actually it is old; nothing is ever truly new.
11We don’t remember what happened in the past, and in future
generations, no one will remember what we are doing now.

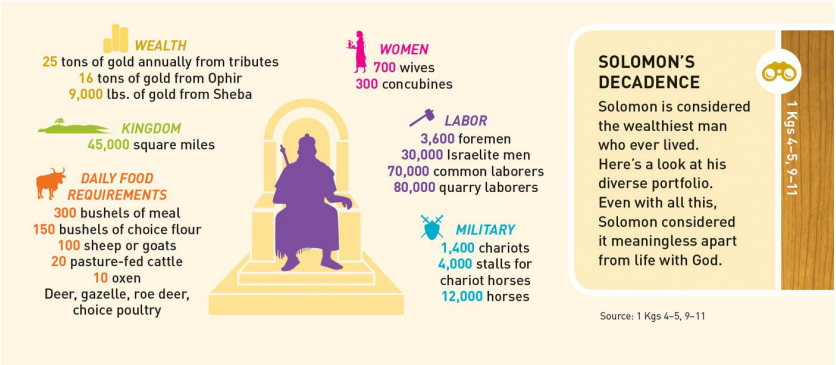
THE TEACHER SPEAKS: THE FUTILITY OF WISDOM

12I, the Teacher, was king of Israel, and I lived in Jerusalem. 13I
devoted myself to search for understanding and to explore by
wisdom everything being done under heaven. I soon discovered that
God has dealt a tragic existence to the human race. 14I observed
everything going on under the sun, and really, it is all meaningless
—like chasing the wind.

15What is wrong cannot be made right.
What is missing cannot be recovered.

16I said to myself, “Look, I am wiser than any of the kings who
ruled in Jerusalem before me. I have greater wisdom and
knowledge than any of them.” 17So I set out to learn everything
from wisdom to madness and folly. But I learned firsthand that
pursuing all this is like chasing the wind.

18The greater my wisdom, the greater my grief.
To increase knowledge only increases sorrow.



SOLOMON'S DECADENCE

Ecclesiastes 2

THE FUTILITY OF PLEASURE

1I said to myself, "Come on, let's try pleasure. Let's look for the
'good things' in life." But I found that this, too, was meaningless.
2So I said, "Laughter is silly. What good does it do to seek
pleasure?" 3After much thought, I decided to cheer myself with
wine. And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In
this way, I tried to experience the only happiness most people find
during their brief life in this world.

4I also tried to find meaning by building huge homes for myself and
by planting beautiful vineyards. 5I made gardens and parks, filling
them with all kinds of fruit trees. 6I built reservoirs to collect the
water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. 7I bought slaves, both
men and women, and others were born into my household. I also
owned large herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who had
lived in Jerusalem before me. 8I collected great sums of silver and
gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful
singers, both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines.
I had everything a man could desire!

9So I became greater than all who had lived in Jerusalem before

me, and my wisdom never failed me. 10Anything I wanted, I would take. I denied myself no pleasure. I even found great pleasure in hard work, a reward for all my labors. 11But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere.

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

12So I decided to compare wisdom with foolishness and madness (for who can do this better than I, the king?*). 13I thought, "Wisdom is better than foolishness, just as light is better than darkness. 14For the wise can see where they are going, but fools walk in the dark." Yet I saw that the wise and the foolish share the same fate. 15Both will die. So I said to myself, "Since I will end up the same as the fool, what's the value of all my wisdom? This is all so meaningless!" 16For the wise and the foolish both die. The wise will not be remembered any longer than the fool. In the days to come, both will be forgotten.

17So I came to hate life because everything done here under the sun is so troubling. Everything is meaningless—like chasing the wind.

THE FUTILITY OF WORK

18I came to hate all my hard work here on earth, for I must leave to others everything I have earned. 19And who can tell whether my successors will be wise or foolish? Yet they will control everything I have gained by my skill and hard work under the sun. How meaningless! 20So I gave up in despair, questioning the value of all my hard work in this world.

21Some people work wisely with knowledge and skill, then must leave the fruit of their efforts to someone who hasn't worked for it. This, too, is meaningless, a great tragedy. 22So what do people get in this life for all their hard work and anxiety? 23Their days of labor are filled with pain and grief; even at night their minds cannot rest.

It is all meaningless.

24So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink
and to find satisfaction in work. Then I realized that these pleasures
are from the hand of God. 25For who can eat or enjoy anything
apart from him?*26God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those
who please him. But if a sinner becomes wealthy, God takes the
wealth away and gives it to those who please him. This, too, is
meaningless—like chasing the wind.

Ecclesiastes 3

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

1For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.

2A time to be born and a time to die.
A time to plant and a time to harvest.

3A time to kill and a time to heal.
A time to tear down and a time to build up.

4A time to cry and a time to laugh.
A time to grieve and a time to dance.

5A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones.
A time to embrace and a time to turn away.

6A time to search and a time to quit searching.
A time to keep and a time to throw away.

7A time to tear and a time to mend.
A time to be quiet and a time to speak.

8A time to love and a time to hate.
A time for war and a time for peace.

9What do people really get for all their hard work? 10I have seen the burden God has placed on us all. 11Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. 12So I concluded there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can. 13And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.

14And I know that whatever God does is final. Nothing can be added to it or taken from it. God's purpose is that people should fear him. 15What is happening now has happened before, and what will happen in the future has happened before, because God makes the same things happen over and over again.

THE INJUSTICES OF LIFE

16I also noticed that under the sun there is evil in the courtroom. Yes, even the courts of law are corrupt! 17I said to myself, "In due season God will judge everyone, both good and bad, for all their deeds."

18I also thought about the human condition—how God proves to people that they are like animals. 19For people and animals share the same fate—both breathe* and both must die. So people have no real advantage over the animals. How meaningless! 20Both go to the same place—they came from dust and they return to dust. 21For who can prove that the human spirit goes up and the spirit of animals goes down into the earth? 22So I saw that there is nothing better for people than to be happy in their work. That is our lot in life. And no one can bring us back to see what happens after we die.

Ecclesiastes 4

1Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun.
I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The
oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless. 2So I
concluded that the dead are better off than the living. 3But most
fortunate of all are those who are not yet born. For they have not
seen all the evil that is done under the sun.

4Then I observed that most people are motivated to success because
they envy their neighbors. But this, too, is meaningless—like
chasing the wind.

5"Fools fold their idle hands, leading them to ruin."

6And yet, "Better to have one handful with quietness than two
handfuls with hard work and chasing the wind."

THE ADVANTAGES OF COMPANIONSHIP

7I observed yet another example of something meaningless under
the sun. 8This is the case of a man who is all alone, without a child
or a brother, yet who works hard to gain as much wealth as he can.
But then he asks himself, "Who am I working for? Why am I giving
up so much pleasure now?" It is all so meaningless and depressing.

9Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other

succeed. 10If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. 11Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? 12A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

THE FUTILITY OF POLITICAL POWER

13It is better to be a poor but wise youth than an old and foolish king who refuses all advice. 14Such a youth could rise from poverty and succeed. He might even become king, though he has been in prison. 15But then everyone rushes to the side of yet another youth* who replaces him. 16Endless crowds stand around him,* but then another generation grows up and rejects him, too. So it is all meaningless—like chasing the wind.

Ecclesiastes 5

APPROACHING GOD WITH CARE

1*As you enter the house of God, keep your ears open and your mouth shut. It is evil to make mindless offerings to God. 2*Don't make rash promises, and don't be hasty in bringing matters before God. After all, God is in heaven, and you are here on earth. So let your words be few.

3Too much activity gives you restless dreams; too many words make you a fool.

4When you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. 5It is better to say nothing than to make a promise and not keep it. 6Don't let your mouth make you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and he might wipe out everything you have achieved.

7Talk is cheap, like daydreams and other useless activities. Fear God instead.

THE FUTILITY OF WEALTH

8Don't be surprised if you see a poor person being oppressed by the powerful and if justice is being miscarried throughout the land. For every official is under orders from higher up, and matters of justice get lost in red tape and bureaucracy. 9Even the king milks the land for his own profit!*

10Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! 11The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth —except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!

12People who work hard sleep well, whether they eat little or much. But the rich seldom get a good night's sleep.

13There is another serious problem I have seen under the sun. Hoarding riches harms the saver. 14Money is put into risky investments that turn sour, and everything is lost. In the end, there is nothing left to pass on to one's children. 15We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we were born. We can't take our riches with us.

16And this, too, is a very serious problem. People leave this world no better off than when they came. All their hard work is for nothing—like working for the wind. 17Throughout their lives, they live under a cloud—frustrated, discouraged, and angry.

18Even so, I have noticed one thing, at least, that is good. It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life.

19And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good
health to enjoy it. To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—
this is indeed a gift from God. 20God keeps such people so busy
enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past.

Ecclesiastes 6

1There is another serious tragedy I have seen under the sun, and it
weighs heavily on humanity. 2God gives some people great wealth
and honor and everything they could ever want, but then he doesn't
give them the chance to enjoy these things. They die, and someone
else, even a stranger, ends up enjoying their wealth! This is
meaningless—a sickening tragedy.

3A man might have a hundred children and live to be very old. But
if he finds no satisfaction in life and doesn't even get a decent
burial, it would have been better for him to be born dead. 4His birth
would have been meaningless, and he would have ended in
darkness. He wouldn't even have had a name, 5and he would never
have seen the sun or known of its existence. Yet he would have had
more peace than in growing up to be an unhappy man. 6He might
live a thousand years twice over but still not find contentment. And
since he must die like everyone else—well, what's the use?

7All people spend their lives scratching for food, but they never
seem to have enough. 8So are wise people really better off than
fools? Do poor people gain anything by being wise and knowing
how to act in front of others?

9Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have.
Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless—like chasing the
wind.

THE FUTURE—DETERMINED AND UNKNOWN

10Everything has already been decided. It was known long ago what

each person would be. So there's no use arguing with God about your destiny.

11The more words you speak, the less they mean. So what good are they?

12In the few days of our meaningless lives, who knows how our days can best be spent? Our lives are like a shadow. Who can tell what will happen on this earth after we are gone?

Ecclesiastes 7

WISDOM FOR LIFE

1A good reputation is more valuable than costly perfume.
And the day you die is better than the day you are born.

2Better to spend your time at funerals than at parties.
After all, everyone dies— so the living should take this to heart.

3Sorrow is better than laughter, for sadness has a refining influence on us.

4A wise person thinks a lot about death, while a fool thinks only about having a good time.

5Better to be criticized by a wise person than to be praised by a fool.

6A fool's laughter is quickly gone, like thorns crackling in a fire.
This also is meaningless.

7Extortion turns wise people into fools, and bribes corrupt the heart.

8Finishing is better than starting.
Patience is better than pride.

9Control your temper, for anger labels you a fool.

10Don't long for "the good old days."
This is not wise.

11Wisdom is even better when you have money.
Both are a benefit as you go through life.

12Wisdom and money can get you almost anything, but only
wisdom can save your life.

13Accept the way God does things, for who can straighten what he
has made crooked?

14Enjoy prosperity while you can, but when hard times strike,
realize that both come from God.
Remember that nothing is certain in this life.

THE LIMITS OF HUMAN WISDOM

15I have seen everything in this meaningless life, including the
death of good young people and the long life of wicked people. 16So
don't be too good or too wise! Why destroy yourself? 17On the other
hand, don't be too wicked either. Don't be a fool! Why die before
your time? 18Pay attention to these instructions, for anyone who
fears God will avoid both extremes.*

19One wise person is stronger than ten leading citizens of a town!

20Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins.

21Don't eavesdrop on others—you may hear your servant curse you.
22For you know how often you yourself have cursed others.

23I have always tried my best to let wisdom guide my thoughts and
actions. I said to myself, "I am determined to be wise." But it didn't
work. 24Wisdom is always distant and difficult to find. 25I searched
everywhere, determined to find wisdom and to understand the

reason for things. I was determined to prove to myself that wickedness is stupid and that foolishness is madness.

26I discovered that a seductive woman* is a trap more bitter than death. Her passion is a snare, and her soft hands are chains. Those who are pleasing to God will escape her, but sinners will be caught in her snare.

27"This is my conclusion," says the Teacher. "I discovered this after looking at the matter from every possible angle. 28Though I have searched repeatedly, I have not found what I was looking for. Only one out of a thousand men is virtuous, but not one woman! 29But I did find this: God created people to be virtuous, but they have each turned to follow their own downward path."

Ecclesiastes 8

1How wonderful to be wise, to analyze and interpret things. Wisdom lights up a person's face, softening its harshness.

OBEDIENCE TO THE KING

2Obey the king since you vowed to God that you would. 3Don't try to avoid doing your duty, and don't stand with those who plot evil, for the king can do whatever he wants. 4His command is backed by great power. No one can resist or question it. 5Those who obey him will not be punished. Those who are wise will find a time and a way to do what is right, 6for there is a time and a way for everything, even when a person is in trouble.

7Indeed, how can people avoid what they don't know is going to happen? 8None of us can hold back our spirit from departing. None of us has the power to prevent the day of our death. There is no escaping that obligation, that dark battle. And in the face of death, wickedness will certainly not rescue the wicked.

THE WICKED AND THE RIGHTEOUS

9I have thought deeply about all that goes on here under the sun,
where people have the power to hurt each other. 10I have seen
wicked people buried with honor. Yet they were the very ones who
frequented the Temple and are now praised* in the same city where
they committed their crimes! This, too, is meaningless. 11When a
crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong.
12But even though a person sins a hundred times and still lives a
long time, I know that those who fear God will be better off. 13The
wicked will not prosper, for they do not fear God. Their days will
never grow long like the evening shadows.

14And this is not all that is meaningless in our world. In this life,
good people are often treated as though they were wicked, and
wicked people are often treated as though they were good. This is
so meaningless!

15So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for
people in this world than to eat, drink, and enjoy life. That way
they will experience some happiness along with all the hard work
God gives them under the sun.

16In my search for wisdom and in my observation of people's
burdens here on earth, I discovered that there is ceaseless activity,
day and night. 17I realized that no one can discover everything God
is doing under the sun. Not even the wisest people discover
everything, no matter what they claim.

Ecclesiastes 9

DEATH COMES TO ALL

1This, too, I carefully explored: Even though the actions of godly
and wise people are in God's hands, no one knows whether God will
show them favor. 2The same destiny ultimately awaits everyone,
whether righteous or wicked, good or bad,* ceremonially clean or

unclean, religious or irreligious. Good people receive the same treatment as sinners, and people who make promises to God are treated like people who don't.

3It seems so wrong that everyone under the sun suffers the same fate. Already twisted by evil, people choose their own mad course, for they have no hope. There is nothing ahead but death anyway. 4There is hope only for the living. As they say, "It's better to be a live dog than a dead lion!"

5The living at least know they will die, but the dead know nothing. They have no further reward, nor are they remembered. 6Whatever they did in their lifetime—loving, hating, envying—is all long gone. They no longer play a part in anything here on earth. 7So go ahead. Eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a happy heart, for God approves of this! 8Wear fine clothes, with a splash of cologne!

9Live happily with the woman you love through all the meaningless days of life that God has given you under the sun. The wife God gives you is your reward for all your earthly toil. 10Whatever you do, do well. For when you go to the grave,* there will be no work or planning or knowledge or wisdom.

11I have observed something else under the sun. The fastest runner doesn't always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn't always win the battle. The wise sometimes go hungry, and the skillful are not necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don't always lead successful lives. It is all decided by chance, by being in the right place at the right time.

12People can never predict when hard times might come. Like fish in a net or birds in a trap, people are caught by sudden tragedy.

THOUGHTS ON WISDOM AND FOLLY

13Here is another bit of wisdom that has impressed me as I have
watched the way our world works. 14There was a small town with
only a few people, and a great king came with his army and
besieged it. 15A poor, wise man knew how to save the town, and so
it was rescued. But afterward no one thought to thank him. 16So
even though wisdom is better than strength, those who are wise will
be despised if they are poor. What they say will not be appreciated
for long.

17Better to hear the quiet words of a wise person than the shouts of
a foolish king.

18Better to have wisdom than weapons of war, but one sinner can
destroy much that is good.

Ecclesiastes 10

1As dead flies cause even a bottle of perfume to stink, so a little
foolishness spoils great wisdom and honor.

2A wise person chooses the right road; a fool takes the wrong one.

3You can identify fools just by the way they walk down the street!

4If your boss is angry at you, don't quit!
A quiet spirit can overcome even great mistakes.

THE IRONIES OF LIFE

5There is another evil I have seen under the sun. Kings and rulers
make a grave mistake 6when they give great authority to foolish
people and low positions to people of proven worth. 7I have even
seen servants riding horseback like princes—and princes walking
like servants!

8When you dig a well, you might fall in.
When you demolish an old wall, you could be bitten by a snake.

9When you work in a quarry, stones might fall and crush you.

When you chop wood, there is danger with each stroke of your ax.

10Using a dull ax requires great strength, so sharpen the blade.
That's the value of wisdom; it helps you succeed.

11If a snake bites before you charm it, what's the use of being a
snake charmer?

12Wise words bring approval, but fools are destroyed by their own
words.

13Fools base their thoughts on foolish assumptions, so their
conclusions will be wicked madness;

14they chatter on and on.
No one really knows what is going to happen; no one can predict
the future.

15Fools are so exhausted by a little work that they can't even find
their way home.

16What sorrow for the land ruled by a servant,*
the land whose leaders feast in the morning.

17Happy is the land whose king is a noble leader and whose leaders
feast at the proper time to gain strength for their work, not to get
drunk.

18Laziness leads to a sagging roof; idleness leads to a leaky house.

19A party gives laughter, wine gives happiness, and money gives
everything!

20Never make light of the king, even in your thoughts.
And don't make fun of the powerful, even in your own bedroom.
For a little bird might deliver your message and tell them what you
said.

Ecclesiastes 11

THE UNCERTAINTIES OF LIFE

1Send your grain across the seas, and in time, profits will flow back
to you.*

2But divide your investments among many places,*
for you do not know what risks might lie ahead.

3When clouds are heavy, the rains come down.
Whether a tree falls north or south, it stays where it falls.

4Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant.
If they watch every cloud, they never harvest.

5Just as you cannot understand the path of the wind or the mystery
of a tiny baby growing in its mother's womb,* so you cannot
understand the activity of God, who does all things.

6Plant your seed in the morning and keep busy all afternoon, for
you don't know if profit will come from one activity or another—or
maybe both.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG AND OLD

7Light is sweet; how pleasant to see a new day dawning.

8When people live to be very old, let them rejoice in every day of
life. But let them also remember there will be many dark days.
Everything still to come is meaningless.

9Young people,* it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of
it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that
you must give an account to God for everything you do. 10So refuse
to worry, and keep your body healthy. But remember that youth,
with a whole life before you, is meaningless.

Ecclesiastes 12

1Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator.
Honor him in your youth before you grow old and say, "Life is not
pleasant anymore." 2Remember him before the light of the sun,
moon, and stars is dim to your old eyes, and rain clouds continually
darken your sky. 3Remember him before your legs—the guards of
your house—start to tremble; and before your shoulders—the
strong men—stoop. Remember him before your teeth—your few
remaining servants—stop grinding; and before your eyes—the
women looking through the windows—see dimly.

4Remember him before the door to life's opportunities is closed and
the sound of work fades. Now you rise at the first chirping of the
birds, but then all their sounds will grow faint.

5Remember him before you become fearful of falling and worry
about danger in the streets; before your hair turns white like an
almond tree in bloom, and you drag along without energy like a
dying grasshopper, and the caperberry no longer inspires sexual
desire. Remember him before you near the grave, your everlasting

home, when the mourners will weep at your funeral.

6Yes, remember your Creator now while you are young, before the
silver cord of life snaps and the golden bowl is broken. Don't wait
until the water jar is smashed at the spring and the pulley is broken
at the well. 7For then the dust will return to the earth, and the spirit
will return to God who gave it.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ABOUT THE TEACHER

8"Everything is meaningless," says the Teacher, "completely
meaningless."

9Keep this in mind: The Teacher was considered wise, and he taught
the people everything he knew. He listened carefully to many
proverbs, studying and classifying them. 10The Teacher sought to
find just the right words to express truths clearly.*

11The words of the wise are like cattle prods—painful but helpful.
Their collected sayings are like a nail-studded stick with which a
shepherd* drives the sheep.

12But, my child,* let me give you some further advice: Be careful,
for writing books is endless, and much study wears you out.

13That's the whole story. Here now is my final conclusion: Fear God
and obey his commands, for this is everyone's duty. 14God will
judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing,
whether good or bad.

Song of Songs

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

WELCOME TO

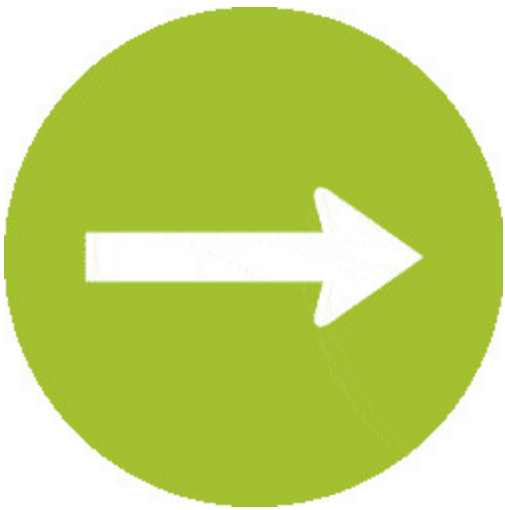
SONG OF SONGS

The Song of Songs has all the elements of a great love story: lovers, friends, tension, passion, and desire. The story is told like a musical, consisting of a series of songs. It is a simple but moving piece, describing the longing of two lovers for each other, their struggle to overcome obstacles and problems, the tender feelings awakened by their love, and the joy that they find in being together. The songs have parts for two characters and a choir: the young man, his beloved, and the women of Jerusalem.

The Song of Songs portrays love as beautiful and pure: a relationship full of unselfishness and restraint, culminating in a commitment of marriage. This is love at its best, the way God meant it to be.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You won't be stopping in Song of Songs, but you may want to skim some of it to experience some of the beautiful poetry it contains. Your next stop is at Isaiah 11:1.



1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: One short reading in this book will

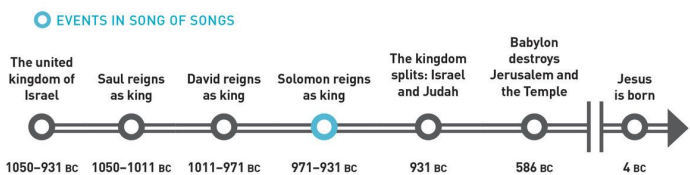
provide you with a good feel for the lush imagery and intense emotions of this love poem. Your next stop is at Song of Songs 2:1.

1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The one stop on your journey through Song of Songs will give you a taste of the joyful passion and godly longing that runs throughout this great song. If you like, indulge yourself by reading more of its lovely poetry. Your next stop is at Song of Songs 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN SONG OF SONGS

In this beautiful poem, Jesus' love for his people is illustrated both by the love between a man and a woman and by their marriage. Because he loves us and wants to have a relationship with us, God passionately pursues his people. Jesus is the bridegroom, and the people of God are his bride.



Song of Songs 1

1This is Solomon’s song of songs, more wonderful than any other.

*Young Woman**

2Kiss me and kiss me again,

for your love is sweeter than wine.

3How fragrant your cologne; your name is like its spreading fragrance.
No wonder all the young women love you!

4Take me with you; come, let’s run!
The king has brought me into his bedroom.

Young Women of Jerusalem

How happy we are for you, O king.

We praise your love even more than wine.

Young Woman

How right they are to adore you.

5I am dark but beautiful, O women of Jerusalem— dark as the tents of Kedar,
dark as the curtains of Solomon's tents.

6Don't stare at me because I am dark— the sun has darkened my skin.
My brothers were angry with me;
they forced me to care for their vineyards, so I couldn't care for myself—my own vineyard.

7Tell me, my love, where are you leading your flock today?
Where will you rest your sheep at noon?
For why should I wander like a prostitute*
among your friends and their flocks?

Young Man

8If you don't know, O most beautiful woman,

follow the trail of my flock,
and graze your young goats by the shepherds' tents.

9You are as exciting, my darling, as a mare among Pharaoh's stallions.

10How lovely are your cheeks; your earrings set them afire!
How lovely is your neck,
enhanced by a string of jewels.

11We will make for you earrings of gold and beads of silver.

Young Woman

12The king is lying on his couch,

enchanted by the fragrance of my perfume.

13My lover is like a sachet of myrrh lying between my breasts.

14He is like a bouquet of sweet henna blossoms from the vineyards
of En-gedi.

Young Man

15How beautiful you are, my darling,

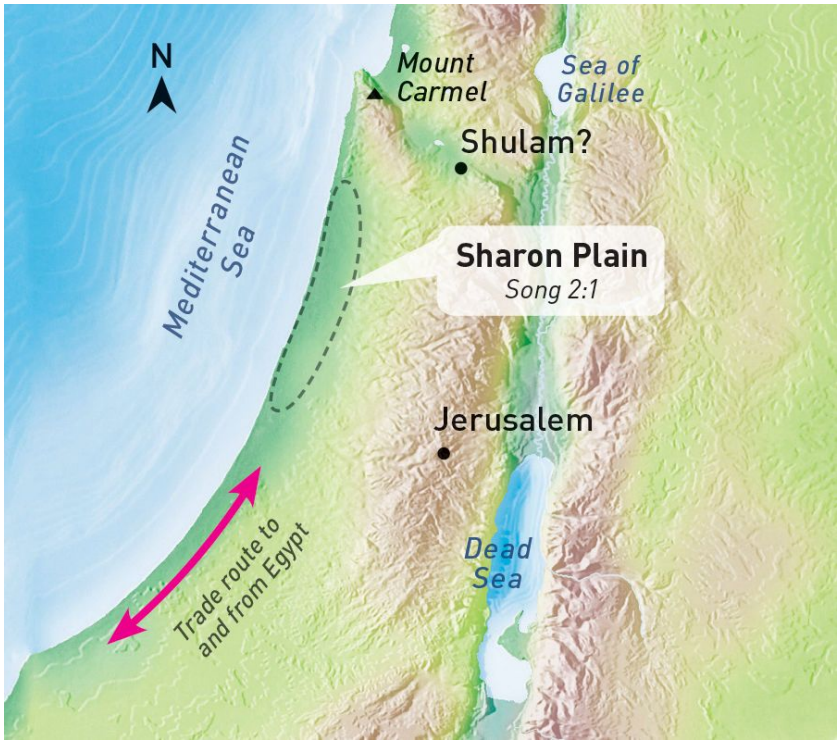
how beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves.

Young Woman

16You are so handsome, my love,

pleasing beyond words!
The soft grass is our bed;

17fragrant cedar branches are the beams of our house, and pleasant
smelling firs are the rafters.



THE SHARON PLAIN

Song of Songs 2

Young Woman

1 I am the spring crocus blooming on the Sharon Plain,*
the lily of the valley.

Young Man

2 Like a lily among thistles

is my darling among young women.

Young Woman

3 Like the finest apple tree in the orchard

is my lover among other young men.
I sit in his delightful shade
and taste his delicious fruit.

4He escorts me to the banquet hall; it's obvious how much he loves me.

5Strengthen me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples,
for I am weak with love.

6His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me.

7Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and wild deer,
not to awaken love until the time is right.*

8Ah, I hear my lover coming!
He is leaping over the mountains,
bounding over the hills.

9My lover is like a swift gazelle or a young stag.
Look, there he is behind the wall,
looking through the window,
peering into the room.

10My lover said to me, "Rise up, my darling!
Come away with me, my fair one!

11Look, the winter is past, and the rains are over and gone.

12The flowers are springing up, the season of singing birds* has come, and the cooing of turtledoves fills the air.

13The fig trees are forming young fruit, and the fragrant grapevines are blossoming.
Rise up, my darling!
Come away with me, my fair one!"

Young Man

14My dove is hiding behind the rocks,

behind an outcrop on the cliff.
Let me see your face;
let me hear your voice.
For your voice is pleasant,
and your face is lovely.

Young Women of Jerusalem

15Catch all the foxes,

those little foxes,
before they ruin the vineyard of love,
for the grapevines are blossoming!

Young Woman

16My lover is mine, and I am his.

He browses among the lilies.

17Before the dawn breezes blow and the night shadows flee,
return to me, my love, like a gazelle
or a young stag on the rugged mountains.*

Song of Songs 3

Young Woman

1One night as I lay in bed, I yearned for my lover.
I yearned for him, but he did not come.

2So I said to myself, “I will get up and roam the city, searching in

all its streets and squares.
I will search for the one I love.”
So I searched everywhere but did not find him.

3The watchmen stopped me as they made their rounds, and I asked,
“Have you seen the one I love?”

4Then scarcely had I left them when I found my love!
I caught and held him tightly,
then I brought him to my mother’s house,
into my mother’s bed, where I had been conceived.

5Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and wild deer,
not to awaken love until the time is right.*

Young Women of Jerusalem

6Who is this sweeping in from the wilderness

like a cloud of smoke?
Who is it, fragrant with myrrh and frankincense and every kind of spice?

7Look, it is Solomon’s carriage, surrounded by sixty heroic men,
the best of Israel’s soldiers.

8They are all skilled swordsmen, experienced warriors.
Each wears a sword on his thigh,
ready to defend the king against an attack in the night.

9King Solomon’s carriage is built of wood imported from Lebanon.

10Its posts are silver, its canopy gold;
its cushions are purple.
It was decorated with love
by the young women of Jerusalem.

Young Woman

11Come out to see King Solomon,

young women of Jerusalem.*
He wears the crown his mother gave him on his wedding day, his most joyous day.

GOD LOVES YOU SONG OF SONGS 4:1-15

Song of Songs 4

Young Man

1You are beautiful, my darling, beautiful beyond words.
Your eyes are like doves
behind your veil.
Your hair falls in waves,
like a flock of goats winding down the slopes of Gilead.

2Your teeth are as white as sheep, recently shorn and freshly washed.
Your smile is flawless,
each tooth matched with its twin.*

3Your lips are like scarlet ribbon; your mouth is inviting.
Your cheeks are like rosy pomegranates
behind your veil.

4Your neck is as beautiful as the tower of David, jeweled with the shields of a thousand heroes.

5Your breasts are like two fawns, twin fawns of a gazelle grazing among the lilies.

6Before the dawn breezes blow and the night shadows flee,
I will hurry to the mountain of myrrh
and to the hill of frankincense.

7You are altogether beautiful, my darling, beautiful in every way.

8Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon.
Come down* from Mount Amana, from the peaks of Senir and Hermon,
where the lions have their dens
and leopards live among the hills.

9You have captured my heart, my treasure,* my bride.
You hold it hostage with one glance of your eyes, with a single jewel of your necklace.

10Your love delights me, my treasure, my bride.
Your love is better than wine,
your perfume more fragrant than spices.

11Your lips are as sweet as nectar, my bride.
Honey and milk are under your tongue.
Your clothes are scented
like the cedars of Lebanon.

12You are my private garden, my treasure, my bride, a secluded spring, a hidden fountain.

13Your thighs shelter a paradise of pomegranates with rare spices—
henna with nard,

14nard and saffron, fragrant calamus and cinnamon,
with all the trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, and every other lovely spice.

15You are a garden fountain, a well of fresh water
streaming down from Lebanon’s mountains.

Young Woman

16Awake, north wind!

Rise up, south wind!

Blow on my garden
and spread its fragrance all around.
Come into your garden, my love;
taste its finest fruits.

Song of Songs 5

Young Man

1 I have entered my garden, my treasure,* my bride!
I gather myrrh with my spices
and eat honeycomb with my honey.
I drink wine with my milk.

Young Women of Jerusalem

Oh, lover and beloved, eat and drink!

Yes, drink deeply of your love!

Young Woman

2 I slept, but my heart was awake,

when I heard my lover knocking and calling: “Open to me, my treasure, my darling,
my dove, my perfect one.
My head is drenched with dew,
my hair with the dampness of the night.”

3 But I responded, “I have taken off my robe.
Should I get dressed again?
I have washed my feet.
Should I get them soiled?”

4 My lover tried to unlatch the door, and my heart thrilled within me.

5 I jumped up to open the door for my love, and my hands dripped with perfume.
My fingers dripped with lovely myrrh

as I pulled back the bolt.

6I opened to my lover, but he was gone!
My heart sank.
I searched for him
but could not find him anywhere.
I called to him,
but there was no reply.

7The night watchmen found me as they made their rounds.
They beat and bruised me
and stripped off my veil,
those watchmen on the walls.

8Make this promise, O women of Jerusalem— If you find my lover,
tell him I am weak with love.

Young Women of Jerusalem

9Why is your lover better than all others,

O woman of rare beauty?
What makes your lover so special
that we must promise this?

Young Woman

10My lover is dark and dazzling,

better than ten thousand others!

11His head is finest gold, his wavy hair is black as a raven.

12His eyes sparkle like doves beside springs of water;
they are set like jewels
washed in milk.

13His cheeks are like gardens of spices giving off fragrance.
His lips are like lilies,
perfumed with myrrh.

14His arms are like rounded bars of gold, set with beryl.

His body is like bright ivory,
glowing with lapis lazuli.

15His legs are like marble pillars set in sockets of finest gold.
His posture is stately,
like the noble cedars of Lebanon.

16His mouth is sweetness itself; he is desirable in every way.
Such, O women of Jerusalem,
is my lover, my friend.

Song of Songs 6

Young Women of Jerusalem

1Where has your lover gone, O woman of rare beauty?
Which way did he turn
so we can help you find him?

Young Woman

2My lover has gone down to his garden,

to his spice beds,
to browse in the gardens
and gather the lilies.

3I am my lover's, and my lover is mine.
He browses among the lilies.

Young Man

4You are beautiful, my darling,

like the lovely city of Tirzah.
Yes, as beautiful as Jerusalem,
as majestic as an army with billowing banners.

5Turn your eyes away, for they overpower me.
Your hair falls in waves,
like a flock of goats winding down the slopes of Gilead.

6Your teeth are as white as sheep that are freshly washed.
Your smile is flawless,
each tooth matched with its twin.*

7Your cheeks are like rosy pomegranates behind your veil.

8Even among sixty queens and eighty concubines
and countless young women,

9I would still choose my dove, my perfect one— the favorite of her mother,
dearly loved by the one who bore her.
The young women see her and praise her;
even queens and royal concubines sing her praises:

10"Who is this, arising like the dawn, as fair as the moon,
as bright as the sun,
as majestic as an army with billowing banners?"

Young Woman

11I went down to the grove of walnut trees

and out to the valley to see the new spring growth, to see whether the grapevines had budded
or the pomegranates were in bloom.

12Before I realized it, my strong desires had taken me to the chariot of a noble man.*

Young Women of Jerusalem

13*Return, return to us, O maid of Shulam.

Come back, come back, that we may see you again.

Young Man

Why do you stare at this young woman of Shulam,

as she moves so gracefully between two lines of dancers?*

Song of Songs 7

1*How beautiful are your sandaled feet, O queenly maiden.
Your rounded thighs are like jewels,
the work of a skilled craftsman.

2Your navel is perfectly formed like a goblet filled with mixed wine.
Between your thighs lies a mound of wheat
bordered with lilies.

3Your breasts are like two fawns, twin fawns of a gazelle.

4Your neck is as beautiful as an ivory tower.
Your eyes are like the sparkling pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim.
Your nose is as fine as the tower of Lebanon
overlooking Damascus.

5Your head is as majestic as Mount Carmel, and the sheen of your hair radiates royalty.
The king is held captive by its tresses.

6Oh, how beautiful you are!
How pleasing, my love, how full of delights!

7You are slender like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters of fruit.

8I said, “I will climb the palm tree and take hold of its fruit.”
May your breasts be like grape clusters,
and the fragrance of your breath like apples.

9May your kisses be as exciting as the best wine— Young Woman

Yes, wine that goes down smoothly for my lover,

flowing gently over lips and teeth.*

10I am my lover's, and he claims me as his own.

11Come, my love, let us go out to the fields and spend the night
among the wildflowers.*

12Let us get up early and go to the vineyards to see if the grapevines
have budded,
if the blossoms have opened,
and if the pomegranates have bloomed.
There I will give you my love.

13There the mandrakes give off their fragrance, and the finest fruits
are at our door,
new delights as well as old,
which I have saved for you, my lover.

Song of Songs 8

Young Woman

1Oh, I wish you were my brother, who nursed at my mother's
breasts.
Then I could kiss you no matter who was watching, and no one
would criticize me.

2I would bring you to my childhood home, and there you would
teach me.*
I would give you spiced wine to drink,
my sweet pomegranate wine.

3Your left arm would be under my head, and your right arm would
embrace me.

4Promise me, O women of Jerusalem, not to awaken love until the
time is right.*

Young Women of Jerusalem

5Who is this sweeping in from the desert,

leaning on her lover?

Young Woman

I aroused you under the apple tree,

where your mother gave you birth,
where in great pain she delivered you.

6Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm.
For love is as strong as death,
its jealousy* as enduring as the grave.*
Love flashes like fire,
the brightest kind of flame.

7Many waters cannot quench love, nor can rivers drown it.
If a man tried to buy love
with all his wealth,
his offer would be utterly scorned.

The Young Woman's Brothers

8We have a little sister

too young to have breasts.
What will we do for our sister
if someone asks to marry her?

9If she is a virgin, like a wall, we will protect her with a silver tower.
But if she is promiscuous, like a swinging door, we will block her door with a cedar bar.

Young Woman

10I was a virgin, like a wall;

now my breasts are like towers.
When my lover looks at me,
he is delighted with what he sees.

11Solomon has a vineyard at Baal-hamon, which he leases out to tenant farmers.
Each of them pays a thousand pieces of silver
for harvesting its fruit.

12But my vineyard is mine to give, and Solomon need not pay a thousand pieces of silver.
But I will give two hundred pieces
to those who care for its vines.

Young Man

13O my darling, lingering in the gardens,

your companions are fortunate to hear your voice.
Let me hear it, too!

Young Woman

14Come away, my love! Be like a gazelle

or a young stag on the mountains of spices.

Isaiah

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66

WELCOME TO

ISAIAH

Isaiah is a prominent spokesperson for God and a historian of

Judah. He lives most of his life in Jerusalem, but he is aware of the destruction of Samaria (the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel), which happens during his nearly sixty-year ministry. He predicts the same fate for Jerusalem if the king and people do not listen to God's warnings. He tells the people what will happen in the future—God will judge Judah and all the nations severely. But Isaiah also gives the people hope through God's promises. He foretells a time when God will restore his people to their homes and send a Messiah to save the world.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: The one stop on your journey through Isaiah contains God's promise that the royal line of David will continue into the future. Your next stop is at Isaiah 11:1.

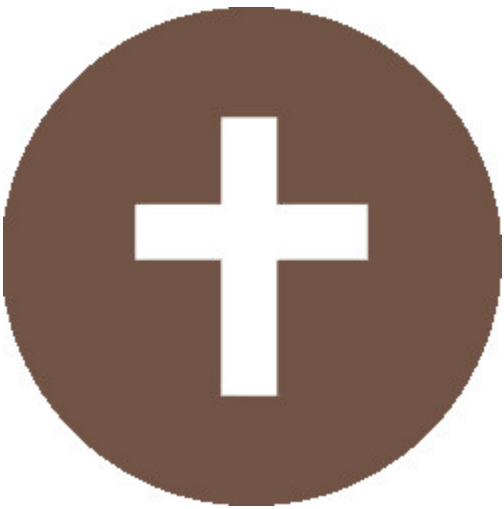
5 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your readings in Isaiah comprise a little Judean history and some prophecies from this great prophet who spoke of the future Messiah. Your next stop is at Isaiah 6:1.

10 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The variety of readings on your route will

give you an overview of historical events during Isaiah's life as well as some of Isaiah's most famous prophecies. Your next stop is at Isaiah 6:1.



FINDING JESUS IN ISAIAH

Jesus appears frequently in Isaiah. The prophet spoke regularly of God's promised Messiah. Early in his book, Isaiah mentions a child born of a virgin who will be called Immanuel (7:14); Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace (9:6); and the Branch from David's line (11:1).
Jesus comes into sharp focus later in the book through vivid descriptions of the Lord's servant (chapters 42–53). Isaiah describes a person who will be a witness for God and a light to all people. This servant will be perfectly faithful to God but also will suffer for the sake of others. Jesus proved to be the servant that Isaiah was speaking of. He suffered in order for God's will to be done, and he made it possible for everyone to live with God forever.

Isaiah 1

1These are the visions that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning
Judah and Jerusalem. He saw these visions during the years when
Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah.*

A MESSAGE FOR REBELLIOUS JUDAH

2Listen, O heavens! Pay attention, earth!

This is what the LORD says:
“The children I raised and cared for
have rebelled against me.

3Even an ox knows its owner, and a donkey recognizes its master’s
care— but Israel doesn’t know its master.
My people don’t recognize my care for them.”

4Oh, what a sinful nation they are— loaded down with a burden of
guilt.
They are evil people,
corrupt children who have rejected the LORD.
They have despised the Holy One of Israel
and turned their backs on him.

5Why do you continue to invite punishment?
Must you rebel forever?
Your head is injured,
and your heart is sick.

6You are battered from head to foot— covered with bruises, welts,
and infected wounds—
without any soothing ointments or bandages.

7Your country lies in ruins, and your towns are burned.
Foreigners plunder your fields before your eyes
and destroy everything they see.

8Beautiful Jerusalem* stands abandoned like a watchman's shelter
in a vineyard,
like a lean-to in a cucumber field after the harvest,
like a helpless city under siege.

9If the LORD of Heaven's Armies had not spared a few of us,*
we would have been wiped out like Sodom,
destroyed like Gomorrah.

10Listen to the LORD, you leaders of "Sodom."
Listen to the law of our God, people of "Gomorrah."

11"What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?"
says the LORD.
"I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of fattened cattle.
I get no pleasure from the blood
of bulls and lambs and goats.

12When you come to worship me, who asked you to parade through
my courts with all your ceremony?

13Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your
offerings disgusts me!
As for your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath
and your special days for fasting—
they are all sinful and false.
I want no more of your pious meetings.

14I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals.
They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them!

15When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will not look.
Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen,
for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims.

16Wash yourselves and be clean!
Get your sins out of my sight.
Give up your evil ways.

17Learn to do good.
Seek justice.
Help the oppressed.
Defend the cause of orphans.
Fight for the rights of widows.

18“Come now, let’s settle this,”
says the LORD.
“Though your sins are like scarlet,
I will make them as white as snow.
Though they are red like crimson,
I will make them as white as wool.

19If you will only obey me, you will have plenty to eat.

20But if you turn away and refuse to listen, you will be devoured by the sword of your enemies.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

UNFAITHFUL JERUSALEM

21See how Jerusalem, once so faithful,

has become a prostitute.
Once the home of justice and righteousness,
she is now filled with murderers.

22Once like pure silver,
you have become like worthless slag.
Once so pure,
you are now like watered-down wine.

23Your leaders are rebels, the companions of thieves.
All of them love bribes
and demand payoffs,
but they refuse to defend the cause of orphans
or fight for the rights of widows.

24Therefore, the Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the Mighty One of Israel, says,

“I will take revenge on my enemies
and pay back my foes!

25I will raise my fist against you.
I will melt you down and skim off your slag.
I will remove all your impurities.

26Then I will give you good judges again and wise counselors like you used to have.
Then Jerusalem will again be called the Home of Justice
and the Faithful City.”

27Zion will be restored by justice; those who repent will be revived by righteousness.

28But rebels and sinners will be completely destroyed, and those who desert the LORD will be consumed.

29You will be ashamed of your idol worship in groves of sacred oaks.
You will blush because you worshiped
in gardens dedicated to idols.

30You will be like a great tree with withered leaves, like a garden without water.

31The strongest among you will disappear like straw; their evil deeds will be the spark that sets it on fire.
They and their evil works will burn up together,
and no one will be able to put out the fire.

Isaiah 2

THE LORD’S FUTURE REIGN

1This is a vision that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

2In the last days, the mountain of the LORD’s house will be the highest of all— the most important place on earth.

It will be raised above the other hills,
and people from all over the world will stream there to worship.

3People from many nations will come and say, “Come, let us go up
to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of Jacob’s God.
There he will teach us his ways,
and we will walk in his paths.”
For the LORD’s teaching will go out from Zion;
his word will go out from Jerusalem.

4The LORD will mediate between nations and will settle
international disputes.
They will hammer their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will no longer fight against nation,
nor train for war anymore.

A WARNING OF JUDGMENT

5Come, descendants of Jacob,

let us walk in the light of the LORD!

6For the LORD has rejected his people, the descendants of Jacob,
because they have filled their land with practices from the East
and with sorcerers, as the Philistines do.
They have made alliances with pagans.

7Israel is full of silver and gold; there is no end to its treasures.
Their land is full of warhorses;
there is no end to its chariots.

8Their land is full of idols; the people worship things they have made
with their own hands.

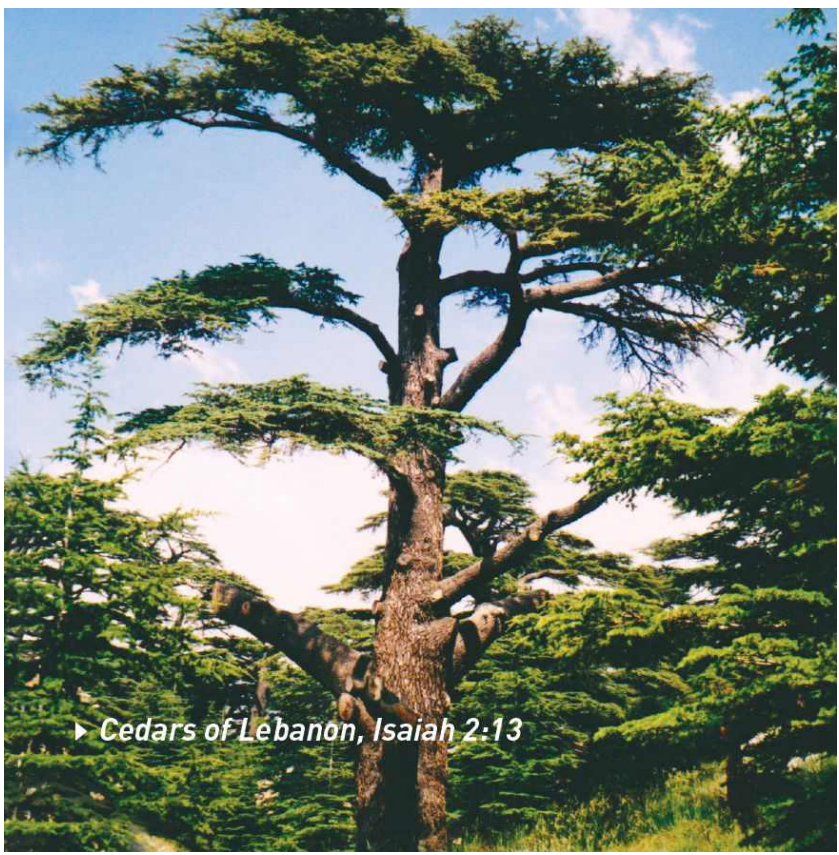
9So now they will be humbled, and all will be brought low— do not forgive them.

10Crawl into caves in the rocks.
Hide in the dust

from the terror of the LORD
and the glory of his majesty.

11Human pride will be brought down, and human arrogance will be humbled.
Only the LORD will be exalted
on that day of judgment.

12For the LORD of Heaven's Armies has a day of reckoning.
He will punish the proud and mighty
and bring down everything that is exalted.



CEDARS OF LEBANON

13He will cut down the tall cedars of Lebanon and all the mighty
oaks of Bashan.

14He will level all the high mountains and all the lofty hills.

15He will break down every high tower and every fortified wall.

16He will destroy all the great trading ships*
and every magnificent vessel.

17Human pride will be humbled, and human arrogance will be
brought down.
Only the LORD will be exalted
on that day of judgment.

18Idols will completely disappear.

19When the LORD rises to shake the earth, his enemies will crawl
into holes in the ground.
They will hide in caves in the rocks
from the terror of the LORD
and the glory of his majesty.

20On that day of judgment they will abandon the gold and silver
idols they made for themselves to worship.
They will leave their gods to the rodents and bats,

21while they crawl away into caverns and hide among the jagged
rocks in the cliffs.
They will try to escape the terror of the LORD
and the glory of his majesty
as he rises to shake the earth.

22Don't put your trust in mere humans.
They are as frail as breath.
What good are they?

Isaiah 3

JUDGMENT AGAINST JUDAH

1The Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, will take away from
Jerusalem and Judah
everything they depend on:
every bit of bread
and every drop of water,

2all their heroes and soldiers, judges and prophets,
fortune-tellers and elders,

3army officers and high officials, advisers, skilled sorcerers, and
astrologers.

4I will make boys their leaders, and toddlers their rulers.

5People will oppress each other— man against man,
neighbor against neighbor.
Young people will insult their elders,
and vulgar people will sneer at the honorable.

6In those days a man will say to his brother, "Since you have a coat,
you be our leader!
Take charge of this heap of ruins!"

7But he will reply,
"No! I can't help.
I don't have any extra food or clothes.
Don't put me in charge!"

8For Jerusalem will stumble, and Judah will fall,
because they speak out against the LORD and refuse to obey him.
They provoke him to his face.

9The very look on their faces gives them away.
They display their sin like the people of Sodom
and don't even try to hide it.
They are doomed!
They have brought destruction upon themselves.

10Tell the godly that all will be well for them.
They will enjoy the rich reward they have earned!

11But the wicked are doomed, for they will get exactly what they deserve.

12Childish leaders oppress my people, and women rule over them.
O my people, your leaders mislead you;
they send you down the wrong road.

13The LORD takes his place in court and presents his case against his people.*

14The LORD comes forward to pronounce judgment on the elders and rulers of his people:
“You have ruined Israel, my vineyard.
Your houses are filled with things stolen from the poor.

15How dare you crush my people, grinding the faces of the poor into the dust?”
demands the Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

A WARNING TO JERUSALEM

16The LORD says, “Beautiful Zion* is haughty: craning her elegant neck,

flirting with her eyes,
walking with dainty steps,
tinkling her ankle bracelets.

17So the Lord will send scabs on her head; the LORD will make beautiful Zion bald.”

18On that day of judgment the Lord will strip away everything that makes her beautiful:
ornaments, headbands, crescent necklaces,

19earrings, bracelets, and veils;

20scarves, ankle bracelets, sashes, perfumes, and charms;

21rings, jewels,

22party clothes, gowns, capes, and purses;

23mirrors, fine linen garments, head ornaments, and shawls.

24Instead of smelling of sweet perfume, she will stink.
She will wear a rope for a sash,
and her elegant hair will fall out.
She will wear rough burlap instead of rich robes.
Shame will replace her beauty.*

25The men of the city will be killed with the sword, and her warriors will die in battle.

26The gates of Zion will weep and mourn.
The city will be like a ravaged woman,
huddled on the ground.

Isaiah 4

1In that day so few men will be left that seven women will fight for each man, saying, “Let us all marry you! We will provide our own food and clothing. Only let us take your name so we won’t be mocked as old maids.”

A PROMISE OF RESTORATION

2But in that day, the branch* of the LORD

will be beautiful and glorious;
the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory
of all who survive in Israel.

3All who remain in Zion
will be a holy people—
those who survive the destruction of Jerusalem
and are recorded among the living.

4The Lord will wash the filth from beautiful Zion*
and cleanse Jerusalem of its bloodstains
with the hot breath of fiery judgment.

5Then the LORD will provide shade for Mount Zion and all who assemble there.
He will provide a canopy of cloud during the day
and smoke and flaming fire at night,
covering the glorious land.

6It will be a shelter from daytime heat and a hiding place from storms and rain.

Isaiah 5

A SONG ABOUT THE LORD'S VINEYARD

1Now I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a rich and fertile hill.

2He plowed the land, cleared its stones, and planted it with the best vines.
In the middle he built a watchtower
and carved a winepress in the nearby rocks.
Then he waited for a harvest of sweet grapes,
but the grapes that grew were bitter.

3Now, you people of Jerusalem and Judah, you judge between me and my vineyard.

4What more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not already done?
When I expected sweet grapes,
why did my vineyard give me bitter grapes?

5Now let me tell you
what I will do to my vineyard:
I will tear down its hedges
and let it be destroyed.

I will break down its walls
and let the animals trample it.

6I will make it a wild place where the vines are not pruned and the ground is not hoed,
a place overgrown with briers and thorns.
I will command the clouds
to drop no rain on it.

7The nation of Israel is the vineyard of the LORD of Heaven's Armies.
The people of Judah are his pleasant garden.
He expected a crop of justice,
but instead he found oppression.
He expected to find righteousness,
but instead he heard cries of violence.

JUDAH'S GUILT AND JUDGMENT

8What sorrow for you who buy up house after house and field after field,

until everyone is evicted and you live alone in the land.

9But I have heard the LORD of Heaven's Armies swear a solemn oath:
"Many houses will stand deserted;
even beautiful mansions will be empty.

10Ten acres* of vineyard will not produce even six gallons* of wine.
Ten baskets of seed will yield only one basket* of grain."

11What sorrow for those who get up early in the morning looking for a drink of alcohol
and spend long evenings drinking wine
to make themselves flaming drunk.

12They furnish wine and lovely music at their grand parties— lyre and harp, tambourine and flute—
but they never think about the LORD

or notice what he is doing.

13So my people will go into exile far away because they do not
know me.
Those who are great and honored will starve,
and the common people will die of thirst.

14The grave* is licking its lips in anticipation, opening its mouth
wide.
The great and the lowly
and all the drunken mob will be swallowed up.

15Humanity will be destroyed, and people brought down; even the
arrogant will lower their eyes in humiliation.

16But the LORD of Heaven's Armies will be exalted by his justice.
The holiness of God will be displayed by his righteousness.

17In that day lambs will find good pastures, and fattened sheep and
young goats* will feed among the ruins.

18What sorrow for those who drag their sins behind them with ropes
made of lies,
who drag wickedness behind them like a cart!

19They even mock God and say, "Hurry up and do something!
We want to see what you can do.
Let the Holy One of Israel carry out his plan,
for we want to know what it is."

20What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil,
that dark is light and light is dark,
that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter.

21What sorrow for those who are wise in their own eyes and think
themselves so clever.

22What sorrow for those who are heroes at drinking wine and boast
about all the alcohol they can hold.

23They take bribes to let the wicked go free, and they punish the innocent.

24Therefore, just as fire licks up stubble and dry grass shrivels in the flame,
so their roots will rot
and their flowers wither.
For they have rejected the law of the LORD of Heaven's Armies;
they have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

25That is why the LORD's anger burns against his people, and why he has raised his fist to crush them.
The mountains tremble,
and the corpses of his people litter the streets like garbage.
But even then the LORD's anger is not satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike!

26He will send a signal to distant nations far away and whistle to those at the ends of the earth.
They will come racing toward Jerusalem.

27They will not get tired or stumble.
They will not stop for rest or sleep.
Not a belt will be loose,
not a sandal strap broken.

28Their arrows will be sharp and their bows ready for battle.
Sparks will fly from their horses' hooves,
and the wheels of their chariots will spin like a whirlwind.

29They will roar like lions, like the strongest of lions.
Growling, they will pounce on their victims and carry them off,
and no one will be there to rescue them.

30They will roar over their victims on that day of destruction like the roaring of the sea.
If someone looks across the land,
only darkness and distress will be seen;
even the light will be darkened by clouds.

Isaiah 6

ISAIAH'S CLEANSING AND CALL

1It was in the year King Uzziah died* that I saw the Lord. He was
sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple.
2Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With
two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their
feet, and with two they flew. 3They were calling out to each other,
"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies!

The whole earth is filled with his glory!"

4Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire
building was filled with smoke.

5Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I
have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I
have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies."

6Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal he had
taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. 7He touched my lips with

it and said, “See, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is removed, and your sins are forgiven.”

8Then I heard the Lord asking, “Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?”

I said, “Here I am. Send me.”

9And he said, “Yes, go, and say to this people,

‘Listen carefully, but do not understand.
Watch closely, but learn nothing.’

10Harden the hearts of these people.
Plug their ears and shut their eyes.
That way, they will not see with their eyes,
nor hear with their ears,
nor understand with their hearts
and turn to me for healing.”*

11Then I said, “Lord, how long will this go on?”

And he replied,

“Until their towns are empty,
their houses are deserted,
and the whole country is a wasteland;

12until the LORD has sent everyone away, and the entire land of Israel lies deserted.

13If even a tenth—a remnant—survive, it will be invaded again and burned.
But as a terebinth or oak tree leaves a stump when it is cut down,
so Israel’s stump will be a holy seed.”

Isaiah 7

A MESSAGE FOR AHAZ

1When Ahaz, son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah, was king of
Judah, King Rezin of Syria* and Pekah son of Remaliah, the king of
Israel, set out to attack Jerusalem. However, they were unable to
carry out their plan.

2The news had come to the royal court of Judah: “Syria is allied
with Israel* against us!” So the hearts of the king and his people
trembled with fear, like trees shaking in a storm.

3Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Take your son Shear-jashub* and go
out to meet King Ahaz. You will find him at the end of the aqueduct
that feeds water into the upper pool, near the road leading to the
field where cloth is washed.*4Tell him to stop worrying. Tell him he
doesn’t need to fear the fierce anger of those two burned-out
embers, King Rezin of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah. 5Yes, the
kings of Syria and Israel are plotting against him, saying, 6‘We will
attack Judah and capture it for ourselves. Then we will install the
son of Tabeel as Judah’s king.’ 7But this is what the Sovereign LORD
says: “This invasion will never happen;

it will never take place;

8for Syria is no stronger than its capital, Damascus, and Damascus is
no stronger than its king, Rezin.
As for Israel, within sixty-five years
it will be crushed and completely destroyed.

9Israel is no stronger than its capital, Samaria, and Samaria is no
stronger than its king, Pekah son of Remaliah.
Unless your faith is firm,
I cannot make you stand firm.”

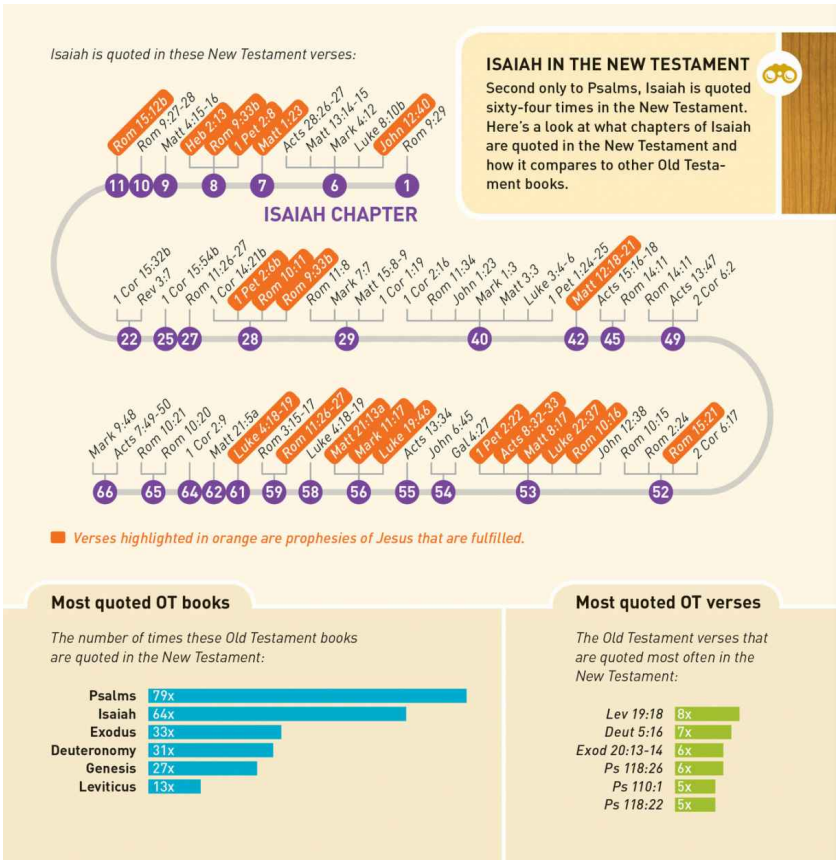
THE MESSIAH ISAIAH 7:10-16

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL

10Later, the LORD sent this message to King Ahaz: 11“Ask the LORD

your God for a sign of confirmation, Ahaz. Make it as difficult as you want—as high as heaven or as deep as the place of the dead.*”

12But the king refused. “No,” he said, “I will not test the LORD like that.”



ISAIAH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

13Then Isaiah said, “Listen well, you royal family of David! Isn’t it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience

of my God as well? 14All right then, the Lord himself will give you
the sign. Look! The virgin* will conceive a child! She will give birth
to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means ‘God is with us’).
15By the time this child is old enough to choose what is right and
reject what is wrong, he will be eating yogurt* and honey. 16For
before the child is that old, the lands of the two kings you fear so
much will both be deserted.

17“Then the LORD will bring things on you, your nation, and your
family unlike anything since Israel broke away from Judah. He will
bring the king of Assyria upon you!”

18In that day the LORD will whistle for the army of southern Egypt
and for the army of Assyria. They will swarm around you like flies
and bees. 19They will come in vast hordes and settle in the fertile
areas and also in the desolate valleys, caves, and thorny places. 20In
that day the Lord will hire a “razor” from beyond the Euphrates
River*—the king of Assyria—and use it to shave off everything:
your land, your crops, and your people.*

21In that day a farmer will be fortunate to have a cow and two
sheep or goats left. 22Nevertheless, there will be enough milk for
everyone because so few people will be left in the land. They will
eat their fill of yogurt and honey. 23In that day the lush vineyards,
now worth 1,000 pieces of silver,* will become patches of briers and
thorns. 24The entire land will become a vast expanse of briers and
thorns, a hunting ground overrun by wildlife. 25No one will go to
the fertile hillsides where the gardens once grew, for briers and
thorns will cover them. Cattle, sheep, and goats will graze there.

Isaiah 8

THE COMING ASSYRIAN INVASION

1Then the LORD said to me, “Make a large signboard and clearly
write this name on it: Maher-shalal-hash-baz.*” 2I asked Uriah the
priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah, both known as honest men,
to witness my doing this.

3Then I slept with my wife, and she became pregnant and gave
birth to a son. And the LORD said, “Call him Maher-shalal-hash-baz.
4For before this child is old enough to say ‘Papa’ or ‘Mama,’ the
king of Assyria will carry away both the abundance of Damascus
and the riches of Samaria.”

5Then the LORD spoke to me again and said, 6“My care for the
people of Judah is like the gently flowing waters of Shiloah, but
they have rejected it. They are rejoicing over what will happen to*
King Rezin and King Pekah.*7Therefore, the Lord will overwhelm
them with a mighty flood from the Euphrates River*—the king of
Assyria and all his glory. This flood will overflow all its channels
8and sweep into Judah until it is chin deep. It will spread its wings,
submerging your land from one end to the other, O Immanuel.

9“Huddle together, you nations, and be terrified.
Listen, all you distant lands.
Prepare for battle, but you will be crushed!
Yes, prepare for battle, but you will be crushed!

10Call your councils of war, but they will be worthless.
Develop your strategies, but they will not succeed.
For God is with us!*”

A CALL TO TRUST THE LORD

11The LORD has given me a strong warning not to think like
everyone else does. He said,

12“Don’t call everything a conspiracy, like they do, and don’t live in
dread of what frightens them.

13Make the LORD of Heaven’s Armies holy in your life.
He is the one you should fear.
He is the one who should make you tremble.

14He will keep you safe.

But to Israel and Judah
he will be a stone that makes people stumble,
a rock that makes them fall.
And for the people of Jerusalem
he will be a trap and a snare.

15Many will stumble and fall, never to rise again.
They will be snared and captured.”

16Preserve the teaching of God; entrust his instructions to those who follow me.

17I will wait for the LORD, who has turned away from the descendants of Jacob.
I will put my hope in him.

THE TEMPLE ON MOUNT ZION

18I and the children the LORD has given me serve as signs and warnings to Israel from the LORD of Heaven’s Armies who dwells in his Temple on Mount Zion.

19Someone may say to you, “Let’s ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do.” But shouldn’t people ask God for guidance? Should the living seek guidance from the dead?

20Look to God’s instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. 21They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They will look up to heaven 22and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the darkness.

Isaiah 9

HOPE IN THE MESSIAH

1*Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on
forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but
there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles,
which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea,
will be filled with glory.

THE MESSIAH ISAIAH 9:2-7

2*The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.
For those who live in a land of deep darkness,*
a light will shine.

3You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice.
They will rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest
and like warriors dividing the plunder.

4For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy
burden from their shoulders.
You will break the oppressor's rod,
just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian.

5The boots of the warrior
and the uniforms bloodstained by war
will all be burned.
They will be fuel for the fire.

6For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.
The government will rest on his shoulders.
And he will be called:
Wonderful Counselor,* Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

7His government and its peace will never end.
He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David
for all eternity.
The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST ISRAEL

8The Lord has spoken out against Jacob;

his judgment has fallen upon Israel.

9And the people of Israel* and Samaria, who spoke with such pride and arrogance,
will soon know it.

10They said, "We will replace the broken bricks of our ruins with finished stone, and replant the felled sycamore-fig trees with cedars."

11But the LORD will bring Rezin's enemies against Israel and stir up
all their foes.

12The Syrians* from the east and the Philistines from the west will
bare their fangs and devour Israel.
But even then the LORD's anger will not be satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike.

13For after all this punishment, the people will still not repent.
They will not seek the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

14Therefore, in a single day the LORD will destroy both the head
and the tail, the noble palm branch and the lowly reed.

15The leaders of Israel are the head, and the lying prophets are the
tail.

16For the leaders of the people have misled them.
They have led them down the path of destruction.

17That is why the Lord takes no pleasure in the young men and
shows no mercy even to the widows and orphans.
For they are all wicked hypocrites,
and they all speak foolishness.
But even then the LORD's anger will not be satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike.

18This wickedness is like a brushfire.
It burns not only briers and thorns
but also sets the forests ablaze.
Its burning sends up clouds of smoke.

19The land will be blackened by the fury of the LORD of Heaven's
Armies.
The people will be fuel for the fire,
and no one will spare even his own brother.

20They will attack their neighbor on the right but will still be
hungry.

They will devour their neighbor on the left
but will not be satisfied.
In the end they will even eat their own children.*

21Manasseh will feed on Ephraim, Ephraim will feed on Manasseh,
and both will devour Judah.
But even then the LORD's anger will not be satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike.

Isaiah 10

1What sorrow awaits the unjust judges and those who issue unfair
laws.

2They deprive the poor of justice and deny the rights of the needy
among my people.
They prey on widows
and take advantage of orphans.

3What will you do when I punish you, when I send disaster upon
you from a distant land?
To whom will you turn for help?
Where will your treasures be safe?

4You will stumble along as prisoners or lie among the dead.
But even then the LORD's anger will not be satisfied.
His fist is still poised to strike.

JUDGMENT AGAINST ASSYRIA

5"What sorrow awaits Assyria, the rod of my anger.

I use it as a club to express my anger.

6I am sending Assyria against a godless nation, against a people
with whom I am angry.
Assyria will plunder them,
trampling them like dirt beneath its feet.

7But the king of Assyria will not understand that he is my tool; his
mind does not work that way.

His plan is simply to destroy,
to cut down nation after nation.

8He will say,
‘Each of my princes will soon be a king.

9We destroyed Calno just as we did Carchemish.
Hamath fell before us as Arpad did.
And we destroyed Samaria just as we did Damascus.

10Yes, we have finished off many a kingdom whose gods were
greater than those in Jerusalem and Samaria.

11So we will defeat Jerusalem and her gods, just as we destroyed
Samaria with hers.’”

12After the Lord has used the king of Assyria to accomplish his
purposes on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will turn against the
king of Assyria and punish him—for he is proud and arrogant. 13He
boasts, “By my own powerful arm I have done this.

With my own shrewd wisdom I planned it.
I have broken down the defenses of nations
and carried off their treasures.
I have knocked down their kings like a bull.

14I have robbed their nests of riches and gathered up kingdoms as a
farmer gathers eggs.
No one can even flap a wing against me
or utter a peep of protest.”

15But can the ax boast greater power than the person who uses it?
Is the saw greater than the person who saws?
Can a rod strike unless a hand moves it?
Can a wooden cane walk by itself?

16Therefore, the Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, will send a
plague among Assyria’s proud troops,
and a flaming fire will consume its glory.

17The LORD, the Light of Israel, will be a fire; the Holy One will be
a flame.

He will devour the thorns and briers with fire,
burning up the enemy in a single night.

18The LORD will consume Assyria's glory like a fire consumes a forest in a fruitful land;
it will waste away like sick people in a plague.

19Of all that glorious forest, only a few trees will survive— so few that a child could count them!

HOPE FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE

20In that day the remnant left in Israel,

the survivors in the house of Jacob,
will no longer depend on allies
who seek to destroy them.
But they will faithfully trust the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel.

21A remnant will return;*
yes, the remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God.

22But though the people of Israel are as numerous as the sand of the seashore,
only a remnant of them will return.
The LORD has rightly decided to destroy his people.

23Yes, the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, has already decided to destroy the entire land.*

24So this is what the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, says: "O my people in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians when they oppress you with rod and club as the Egyptians did long ago. 25In a little while my anger against you will end, and then my anger will rise up to destroy them." 26The LORD of Heaven's Armies will lash them with his whip, as he did when Gideon triumphed over the Midianites at the rock of Oreb, or when the LORD's staff was raised to drown the Egyptian army in the sea.

27In that day the LORD will end the bondage of his people.
He will break the yoke of slavery
and lift it from their shoulders.*

28Look, the Assyrians are now at Aiath.
They are passing through Migron
and are storing their equipment at Micmash.

29They are crossing the pass and are camping at Geba.
Fear strikes the town of Ramah.
All the people of Gibeah, the hometown of Saul,
are running for their lives.

30Scream in terror,
you people of Gallim!
Shout out a warning to Laishah.
Oh, poor Anathoth!

31There go the people of Madmenah, all fleeing.
The citizens of Gebim are trying to hide.

32The enemy stops at Nob for the rest of that day.
He shakes his fist at beautiful Mount Zion, the mountain of Jerusalem.

33But look! The Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, will chop down the mighty tree of Assyria with great power!
He will cut down the proud.
That lofty tree will be brought down.

34He will cut down the forest trees with an ax.
Lebanon will fall to the Mighty One.*

THE MESSIAH ISAIAH 11:1-10

Isaiah 11

A BRANCH FROM DAVID'S LINE

1Out of the stump of David's family* will grow a shoot— yes, a new
Branch bearing fruit from the old root.

2And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom
and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,

the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

3He will delight in obeying the LORD.
He will not judge by appearance
nor make a decision based on hearsay.

4He will give justice to the poor and make fair decisions for the exploited.
The earth will shake at the force of his word,
and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked.

5He will wear righteousness like a belt and truth like an undergarment.

6In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard will lie down with the baby goat.
The calf and the yearling will be safe with the lion,
and a little child will lead them all.

7The cow will graze near the bear.
The cub and the calf will lie down together.
The lion will eat hay like a cow.

8The baby will play safely near the hole of a cobra.
Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes without harm.

9Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, for as the waters fill the sea,
so the earth will be filled with people who know the LORD.

10In that day the heir to David's throne*
will be a banner of salvation to all the world.
The nations will rally to him,
and the land where he lives will be a glorious place.*

11In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to bring back the remnant of his people— those who remain in Assyria and northern Egypt;

in southern Egypt, Ethiopia,* and Elam; in Babylonia,* Hamath, and
all the distant coastlands.

12He will raise a flag among the nations and assemble the exiles of
Israel.
He will gather the scattered people of Judah
from the ends of the earth.

13Then at last the jealousy between Israel* and Judah will end.
They will not be rivals anymore.

14They will join forces to swoop down on Philistia to the west.
Together they will attack and plunder the nations to the east.
They will occupy the lands of Edom and Moab,
and Ammon will obey them.

15The LORD will make a dry path through the gulf of the Red Sea.*
He will wave his hand over the Euphrates River,*
sending a mighty wind to divide it into seven streams
so it can easily be crossed on foot.

16He will make a highway for the remnant of his people, the
remnant coming from Assyria,
just as he did for Israel long ago
when they returned from Egypt.

Isaiah 12

SONGS OF PRAISE FOR SALVATION

1In that day you will sing: “I will praise you, O LORD!
You were angry with me, but not any more.
Now you comfort me.

2See, God has come to save me.
I will trust in him and not be afraid.
The LORD GOD is my strength and my song; he has given me victory.”

3With joy you will drink deeply from the fountain of salvation!

4In that wonderful day you will sing: “Thank the LORD! Praise his name!
Tell the nations what he has done.
Let them know how mighty he is!

5Sing to the LORD, for he has done wonderful things.
Make known his praise around the world.

6Let all the people of Jerusalem* shout his praise with joy!
For great is the Holy One of Israel who lives among you.”

Isaiah 13

A MESSAGE ABOUT BABYLON

1Isaiah son of Amoz received this message concerning the
destruction of Babylon:

2“Raise a signal flag on a bare hilltop.
Call up an army against Babylon.
Wave your hand to encourage them
as they march into the palaces of the high and mighty.

3I, the LORD, have dedicated these soldiers for this task.
Yes, I have called mighty warriors to express my anger,
and they will rejoice when I am exalted.”

4Hear the noise on the mountains!
Listen, as the vast armies march!
It is the noise and shouting of many nations.
The LORD of Heaven’s Armies has called this army together.

5They come from distant countries, from beyond the farthest
horizons.
They are the LORD’s weapons to carry out his anger.
With them he will destroy the whole land.

6Scream in terror, for the day of the LORD has arrived— the time
for the Almighty to destroy.

7Every arm is paralyzed with fear.
Every heart melts,

8and people are terrified.
Pangs of anguish grip them,
like those of a woman in labor.
They look helplessly at one another,
their faces aflame with fear.

9For see, the day of the LORD is coming— the terrible day of his
fury and fierce anger.
The land will be made desolate,
and all the sinners destroyed with it.

10The heavens will be black above them; the stars will give no light.
The sun will be dark when it rises,

and the moon will provide no light.

11“I, the LORD, will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their sin.
I will crush the arrogance of the proud
and humble the pride of the mighty.

12I will make people scarcer than gold— more rare than the fine gold of Ophir.

13For I will shake the heavens.
The earth will move from its place
when the LORD of Heaven’s Armies displays his wrath
in the day of his fierce anger.”

14Everyone in Babylon will run about like a hunted gazelle, like sheep without a shepherd.
They will try to find their own people
and flee to their own land.

15Anyone who is captured will be cut down— run through with a sword.

16Their little children will be dashed to death before their eyes.
Their homes will be sacked, and their wives will be raped.

17“Look, I will stir up the Medes against Babylon.
They cannot be tempted by silver
or bribed with gold.

18The attacking armies will shoot down the young men with arrows.
They will have no mercy on helpless babies
and will show no compassion for children.”

19Babylon, the most glorious of kingdoms, the flower of Chaldean pride,
will be devastated like Sodom and Gomorrah
when God destroyed them.

20Babylon will never be inhabited again.
It will remain empty for generation after generation.
Nomads will refuse to camp there,

and shepherds will not bed down their sheep.

21Desert animals will move into the ruined city, and the houses will
be haunted by howling creatures.
Owls will live among the ruins,
and wild goats will go there to dance.

22Hyenas will howl in its fortresses, and jackals will make dens in
its luxurious palaces.
Babylon's days are numbered;
its time of destruction will soon arrive.

Isaiah 14

A TAUNT FOR BABYLON'S KING

1But the LORD will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob. He will choose Israel as his special people once again. He will bring them back to settle once again in their own land. And people from many different nations will come and join them there and unite with the people of Israel.* 2The nations of the world will help the people of Israel to return, and those who come to live in the LORD's land will serve them. Those who captured Israel will themselves be captured, and Israel will rule over its enemies.

3In that wonderful day when the LORD gives his people rest from sorrow and fear, from slavery and chains, 4you will taunt the king of Babylon. You will say, "The mighty man has been destroyed.

Yes, your insolence* is ended.

5For the LORD has crushed your wicked power and broken your evil rule.

6You struck the people with endless blows of rage and held the nations in your angry grip
with unrelenting tyranny.

7But finally the earth is at rest and quiet.
Now it can sing again!

8Even the trees of the forest— the cypress trees and the cedars of Lebanon—
sing out this joyous song:
‘Since you have been cut down,
no one will come now to cut us down!’

9“In the place of the dead* there is excitement over your arrival.
The spirits of world leaders and mighty kings long dead
stand up to see you.

10With one voice they all cry out, ‘Now you are as weak as we are!

11Your might and power were buried with you.*
The sound of the harp in your palace has ceased.
Now maggots are your sheet,
and worms your blanket.’

12“How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning!
You have been thrown down to the earth,
you who destroyed the nations of the world.

13For you said to yourself, ‘I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God’s stars.
I will preside on the mountain of the gods
far away in the north.*

14I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.’

15Instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths.

16Everyone there will stare at you and ask, ‘Can this be the one who shook the earth
and made the kingdoms of the world tremble?

17Is this the one who destroyed the world and made it into a wasteland?

Is this the king who demolished the world's greatest cities
and had no mercy on his prisoners?'

18"The kings of the nations lie in stately glory, each in his own
tomb,

19but you will be thrown out of your grave like a worthless branch.
Like a corpse trampled underfoot,
you will be dumped into a mass grave
with those killed in battle.
You will descend to the pit.

20You will not be given a proper burial, for you have destroyed your
nation
and slaughtered your people.
The descendants of such an evil person
will never again receive honor.

21Kill this man's children!
Let them die because of their father's sins!
They must not rise and conquer the earth,
filling the world with their cities."

22This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: "I, myself, have
risen against Babylon!
I will destroy its children and its children's children,"
says the LORD.

23"I will make Babylon a desolate place of owls, filled with swamps
and marshes.
I will sweep the land with the broom of destruction.
I, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, have spoken!"

A MESSAGE ABOUT ASSYRIA

24The LORD of Heaven's Armies has sworn this oath:

"It will all happen as I have planned.
It will be as I have decided.

25I will break the Assyrians when they are in Israel; I will trample
them on my mountains.

My people will no longer be their slaves
nor bow down under their heavy loads.

26I have a plan for the whole earth, a hand of judgment upon all the nations.

27The LORD of Heaven's Armies has spoken— who can change his plans?
When his hand is raised,
who can stop him?"

A MESSAGE ABOUT PHILISTIA

28This message came to me the year King Ahaz died:*

29Do not rejoice, you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken— that the king who attacked you is dead.
For from that snake a more poisonous snake will be born,
a fiery serpent to destroy you!

30I will feed the poor in my pasture; the needy will lie down in peace.
But as for you, I will wipe you out with famine
and destroy the few who remain.

31Wail at the gates! Weep in the cities!
Melt with fear, you Philistines!
A powerful army comes like smoke from the north.
Each soldier rushes forward eager to fight.

32What should we tell the Philistine messengers? Tell them,

"The LORD has built Jerusalem*; its walls will give refuge to his oppressed people."

Isaiah 15

A MESSAGE ABOUT MOAB

1This message came to me concerning Moab:

In one night the town of Ar will be leveled,
and the city of Kir will be destroyed.

2Your people will go to their temple in Dibon to mourn.
They will go to their sacred shrines to weep.
They will wail for the fate of Nebo and Medeba,
shaving their heads in sorrow and cutting off their beards.

3They will wear burlap as they wander the streets.
From every home and public square will come the sound of wailing.

4The people of Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out; their voices will be heard as far away as Jahaz!
The bravest warriors of Moab will cry out in utter terror.
They will be helpless with fear.

5My heart weeps for Moab.
Its people flee to Zoar and Eglath-shelishiyah.
Weeping, they climb the road to Luhith.
Their cries of distress can be heard all along the road to Horonaim.

6Even the waters of Nimrim are dried up!
The grassy banks are scorched.
The tender plants are gone;
nothing green remains.

7The people grab their possessions and carry them across the Ravine of Willows.

8A cry of distress echoes through the land of Moab from one end to the other— from Eglaim to Beer-elim.

9The stream near Dibon* runs red with blood, but I am still not finished with Dibon!
Lions will hunt down the survivors—
both those who try to escape
and those who remain behind.

Isaiah 16

1Send lambs from Sela as tribute to the ruler of the land.
Send them through the desert
to the mountain of beautiful Zion.

2The women of Moab are left like homeless birds at the shallow
crossings of the Arnon River.

3“Help us,” they cry.
“Defend us against our enemies.
Protect us from their relentless attack.
Do not betray us now that we have escaped.

4Let our refugees stay among you.
Hide them from our enemies until the terror is past.”
When oppression and destruction have ended
and enemy raiders have disappeared,

5then God will establish one of David’s descendants as king.
He will rule with mercy and truth.
He will always do what is just
and be eager to do what is right.

6We have heard about proud Moab— about its pride and arrogance
and rage.
But all that boasting has disappeared.

7The entire land of Moab weeps.
Yes, everyone in Moab mourns
for the cakes of raisins from Kir-hareseth.
They are all gone now.

8The farms of Heshbon are abandoned; the vineyards at Sibmah are
deserted.
The rulers of the nations have broken down Moab—
that beautiful grapevine.
Its tendrils spread north as far as the town of Jazer
and trailed eastward into the wilderness.

Its shoots reached so far west
that they crossed over the Dead Sea.*

9So now I weep for Jazer and the vineyards of Sibmah; my tears
will flow for Heshbon and Elealeh.
There are no more shouts of joy
over your summer fruits and harvest.

10Gone now is the gladness, gone the joy of harvest.
There will be no singing in the vineyards,
no more happy shouts,
no treading of grapes in the winepresses.
I have ended all their harvest joys.

11My heart's cry for Moab is like a lament on a harp.
I am filled with anguish for Kir-hareseth.*

12The people of Moab will worship at their pagan shrines, but it will
do them no good.
They will cry to the gods in their temples,
but no one will be able to save them.

13The LORD has already said these things about Moab in the past.
14But now the LORD says, "Within three years, counting each day,*
the glory of Moab will be ended. From its great population, only a
feeble few will be left alive."

FACING THE EMPIRE

Isaiah 17

A MESSAGE ABOUT DAMASCUS AND ISRAEL

1This message came to me concerning Damascus:

“Look, the city of Damascus will disappear!
It will become a heap of ruins.

2The towns of Aroer will be deserted.
Flocks will graze in the streets and lie down undisturbed,
with no one to chase them away.

3The fortified towns of Israel* will also be destroyed, and the royal
power of Damascus will end.
All that remains of Syria*
will share the fate of Israel’s departed glory,”
declares the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

4“In that day Israel’s* glory will grow dim; its robust body will
waste away.

5The whole land will look like a grainfield after the harvesters have
gathered the grain.
It will be desolate,
like the fields in the valley of Rephaim after the harvest.

6Only a few of its people will be left, like stray olives left on a tree
after the harvest.
Only two or three remain in the highest branches,
four or five scattered here and there on the limbs,”
declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

7Then at last the people will look to their Creator and turn their
eyes to the Holy One of Israel.

8They will no longer look to their idols for help or worship what
their own hands have made.
They will never again bow down to their Asherah poles
or worship at the pagan shrines they have built.

9Their largest cities will be like a deserted forest, like the land the
Hivites and Amorites abandoned*
when the Israelites came here so long ago.

It will be utterly desolate.

10Why? Because you have turned from the God who can save you.
You have forgotten the Rock who can hide you.
So you may plant the finest grapevines
and import the most expensive seedlings.

11They may sprout on the day you set them out; yes, they may
blossom on the very morning you plant them,
but you will never pick any grapes from them.
Your only harvest will be a load of grief and unrelieved pain.

12Listen! The armies of many nations roar like the roaring of the
sea.
Hear the thunder of the mighty forces
as they rush forward like thundering waves.

13But though they thunder like breakers on a beach, God will
silence them, and they will run away.
They will flee like chaff scattered by the wind,
like a tumbleweed whirling before a storm.

14In the evening Israel waits in terror, but by dawn its enemies are
dead.
This is the just reward of those who plunder us,
a fitting end for those who destroy us.

Isaiah 18

A MESSAGE ABOUT ETHIOPIA

1Listen, Ethiopia*—land of fluttering sails*
that lies at the headwaters of the Nile,

2that sends ambassadors
in swift boats down the river.
Go, swift messengers!
Take a message to a tall, smooth-skinned people,
who are feared far and wide

for their conquests and destruction,
and whose land is divided by rivers.

3All you people of the world, everyone who lives on the earth—
when I raise my battle flag on the mountain, look!
When I blow the ram's horn, listen!

4For the LORD has told me this: "I will watch quietly from my
dwelling place— as quietly as the heat rises on a summer day,
or as the morning dew forms during the harvest."

5Even before you begin your attack,
while your plans are ripening like grapes, the LORD will cut off
your new growth with pruning shears.
He will snip off and discard your spreading branches.

6Your mighty army will be left dead in the fields for the mountain
vultures and wild animals.
The vultures will tear at the corpses all summer.
The wild animals will gnaw at the bones all winter.

7At that time the LORD of Heaven's Armies will receive gifts from
this land divided by rivers, from this tall, smooth-skinned people,
who are feared far and wide for their conquests and destruction.
They will bring the gifts to Jerusalem,*
where the LORD of Heaven's Armies dwells.

Isaiah 19

A MESSAGE ABOUT EGYPT

1This message came to me concerning Egypt: Look! The LORD is
advancing against Egypt, riding on a swift cloud.

The idols of Egypt tremble.
The hearts of the Egyptians melt with fear.

2"I will make Egyptian fight against Egyptian— brother against
brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, province
against province.

3The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will confuse their plans.
They will plead with their idols for wisdom and call on spirits,
mediums, and those who consult the spirits of the dead.

4I will hand Egypt over to a hard, cruel master.
A fierce king will rule them,”
says the Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

5The waters of the Nile will fail to rise and flood the fields.
The riverbed will be parched and dry.

6The canals of the Nile will dry up, and the streams of Egypt will
stink with rotting reeds and rushes.

7All the greenery along the riverbank and all the crops along the
river will dry up and blow away.

8The fishermen will lament for lack of work.
Those who cast hooks into the Nile will groan, and those who use
nets will lose heart.

9There will be no flax for the harvesters, no thread for the weavers.

10They will be in despair, and all the workers will be sick at heart.

11What fools are the officials of Zoan!
Their best counsel to the king of Egypt is stupid and wrong.
Will they still boast to Pharaoh of their wisdom?
Will they dare brag about all their wise ancestors?

12Where are your wise counselors, Pharaoh?
Let them tell you what God plans, what the LORD of Heaven’s
Armies is going to do to Egypt.

13The officials of Zoan are fools, and the officials of Memphis* are
deluded.
The leaders of the people have led Egypt astray.

14The LORD has sent a spirit of foolishness on them, so all their
suggestions are wrong.
They cause Egypt to stagger like a drunk in his vomit.

15There is nothing Egypt can do.
All are helpless— the head and the tail, the noble palm branch and the lowly reed.

16In that day the Egyptians will be as weak as women. They will cower in fear beneath the upraised fist of the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 17Just to speak the name of Israel will terrorize them, for the LORD of Heaven's Armies has laid out his plans against them.

18In that day five of Egypt's cities will follow the LORD of Heaven's Armies. They will even begin to speak Hebrew, the language of Canaan. One of these cities will be Heliopolis, the City of the Sun.*

19In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and there will be a monument to the LORD at its border. 20It will be a sign and a witness that the LORD of Heaven's Armies is worshiped in the land of Egypt. When the people cry to the LORD for help against those who oppress them, he will send them a savior who will rescue them. 21The LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians. Yes, they will know the LORD and will give their sacrifices and offerings to him. They will make a vow to the LORD and will keep it. 22The LORD will strike Egypt, and then he will bring healing. For the Egyptians will turn to the LORD, and he will listen to their pleas and heal them.

23In that day Egypt and Assyria will be connected by a highway. The Egyptians and Assyrians will move freely between their lands, and they will both worship God. 24In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth. 25For the LORD of Heaven's Armies will say, "Blessed be Egypt, my people. Blessed be Assyria, the land I have made. Blessed be Israel, my special possession!"

Isaiah 20

A MESSAGE ABOUT EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA 1IN THE YEAR

WHEN KING SARGON OF ASSYRIA SENT HIS COMMANDER IN CHIEF TO CAPTURE THE PHILISTINE CITY OF ASHDOD,*2THE LORD TOLD ISAIAH SON OF AMOZ, “TAKE OFF THE BURLAP YOU HAVE BEEN WEARING, AND REMOVE YOUR SANDALS.” ISAIAH DID AS HE WAS TOLD AND WALKED AROUND NAKED AND BAREFOOT.

3Then the LORD said, “My servant Isaiah has been walking around naked and barefoot for the last three years. This is a sign—a symbol of the terrible troubles I will bring upon Egypt and Ethiopia.*4For the king of Assyria will take away the Egyptians and Ethiopians* as prisoners. He will make them walk naked and barefoot, both young and old, their buttocks bared, to the shame of Egypt. 5Then the Philistines will be thrown into panic, for they counted on the power of Ethiopia and boasted of their allies in Egypt! 6They will say, ‘If this can happen to Egypt, what chance do we have? We were counting on Egypt to protect us from the king of Assyria.’”

Isaiah 21

A MESSAGE ABOUT BABYLON

1This message came to me concerning Babylon—the desert by the sea*: Disaster is roaring down on you from the desert, like a whirlwind sweeping in from the Negev.

2I see a terrifying vision: I see the betrayer betraying, the destroyer destroying.
Go ahead, you Elamites and Medes, attack and lay siege.
I will make an end to all the groaning Babylon caused.

3My stomach aches and burns with pain.
Sharp pangs of anguish are upon me, like those of a woman in labor.
I grow faint when I hear what God is planning; I am too afraid to look.

4My mind reels and my heart races.
I longed for evening to come, but now I am terrified of the dark.

5Look! They are preparing a great feast.
They are spreading rugs for people to sit on.
Everyone is eating and drinking.
But quick! Grab your shields and prepare for battle.
You are being attacked!

6Meanwhile, the Lord said to me, “Put a watchman on the city wall.
Let him shout out what he sees.

7He should look for chariots drawn by pairs of horses, and for riders on donkeys and camels.
Let the watchman be fully alert.”

8Then the watchman* called out, “Day after day I have stood on the watchtower, my lord.
Night after night I have remained at my post.

9Now at last—look!
Here comes a man in a chariot with a pair of horses!”
Then the watchman said, “Babylon is fallen, fallen!
All the idols of Babylon lie broken on the ground!”

10O my people, threshed and winnowed, I have told you everything the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has said, everything the God of Israel has told me.

A MESSAGE ABOUT EDOM

11This message came to me concerning Edom*: Someone from Edom* keeps calling to me, “Watchman, how much longer until morning?

When will the night be over?”

12The watchman replies, “Morning is coming, but night will soon return.
If you wish to ask again, then come back and ask.”

A MESSAGE ABOUT ARABIA

13This message came to me concerning Arabia: O caravans from
Dedan, hide in the deserts of Arabia.

14O people of Tema, bring water to these thirsty people, food to
these weary refugees.

15They have fled from the sword, from the drawn sword, from the
bent bow and the terrors of battle.

16The Lord said to me, “Within a year, counting each day,* all the
glory of Kedar will come to an end. 17Only a few of its courageous
archers will survive. I, the LORD, the God of Israel, have spoken!”

Isaiah 22

A MESSAGE ABOUT JERUSALEM

1This message came to me concerning Jerusalem—the Valley of
Vision*: What is happening?

Why is everyone running to the rooftops?

2The whole city is in a terrible uproar.
What do I see in this reveling city?
Bodies are lying everywhere, killed not in battle but by famine and
disease.

3All your leaders have fled.
They surrendered without resistance.
The people tried to slip away, but they were captured, too.

4That’s why I said, “Leave me alone to weep; do not try to comfort
me.
Let me cry for my people as I watch them being destroyed.”

5Oh, what a day of crushing defeat!

What a day of confusion and terror brought by the Lord, the LORD
of Heaven's Armies, upon the Valley of Vision!
The walls of Jerusalem have been broken, and cries of death echo
from the mountainsides.

6Elamites are the archers, with their chariots and charioteers.
The men of Kir hold up the shields.

7Chariots fill your beautiful valleys, and charioteers storm your
gates.

8Judah's defenses have been stripped away.
You run to the armory* for your weapons.

9You inspect the breaks in the walls of Jerusalem.*
You store up water in the lower pool.

10You survey the houses and tear some down for stone to strengthen
the walls.

11Between the city walls, you build a reservoir for water from the
old pool.
But you never ask for help from the One who did all this.
You never considered the One who planned this long ago.

12At that time the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, called you to
weep and mourn.
He told you to shave your heads in sorrow for your sins and to wear
clothes of burlap to show your remorse.

13But instead, you dance and play; you slaughter cattle and kill
sheep.
You feast on meat and drink wine.
You say, "Let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

14The LORD of Heaven's Armies has revealed this to me: "Till the
day you die, you will never be forgiven for this sin." That is the
judgment of the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

A MESSAGE FOR SHEBNA

15This is what the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, said to me:
"Confront Shebna, the palace administrator, and give him this message:

16"Who do you think you are, and what are you doing here,
building a beautiful tomb for yourself— a monument high up in the rock?

17For the LORD is about to hurl you away, mighty man.
He is going to grab you,

18crumple you into a ball, and toss you away into a distant, barren land.
There you will die, and your glorious chariots will be broken and useless.
You are a disgrace to your master!

19"Yes, I will drive you out of office," says the LORD. "I will pull you down from your high position. 20And then I will call my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah to replace you. 21I will dress him in your royal robes and will give him your title and your authority. And he will be a father to the people of Jerusalem and Judah. 22I will give him the key to the house of David—the highest position in the royal court. When he opens doors, no one will be able to close them; when he closes doors, no one will be able to open them. 23He will bring honor to his family name, for I will drive him firmly in place like a nail in the wall. 24They will give him great responsibility, and he will bring honor to even the lowliest members of his family.*"

25But the LORD of Heaven's Armies also says: "The time will come when I will pull out the nail that seemed so firm. It will come out and fall to the ground. Everything it supports will fall with it. I, the LORD, have spoken!"

Isaiah 23

A MESSAGE ABOUT TYRE

1This message came to me concerning Tyre: Wail, you trading ships
of Tarshish, for the harbor and houses of Tyre are gone!

The rumors you heard in Cyprus*
are all true.

2Mourn in silence, you people of the coast and you merchants of
Sidon.
Your traders crossed the sea,*

3sailing over deep waters.
They brought you grain from Egypt*
and harvests from along the Nile.
You were the marketplace of the world.

4But now you are put to shame, city of Sidon, for Tyre, the fortress
of the sea, says,*
“Now I am childless; I have no sons or daughters.”

5When Egypt hears the news about Tyre, there will be great sorrow.

6Send word now to Tarshish!
Wail, you people who live in distant lands!

7Is this silent ruin all that is left of your once joyous city?
What a long history was yours!
Think of all the colonists you sent to distant places.

8Who has brought this disaster on Tyre, that great creator of
kingdoms?
Her traders were all princes, her merchants were nobles.

9The LORD of Heaven’s Armies has done it to destroy your pride
and bring low all earth’s nobility.

10Come, people of Tarshish, sweep over the land like the flooding

Nile, for Tyre is defenseless.*

11The LORD held out his hand over the sea and shook the kingdoms
of the earth.
He has spoken out against Phoenicia,*
ordering that her fortresses be destroyed.

12He says, “Never again will you rejoice, O daughter of Sidon, for
you have been crushed.
Even if you flee to Cyprus, you will find no rest.”

13Look at the land of Babylonia*— the people of that land are gone!
The Assyrians have handed Babylon over to the wild animals of the
desert.
They have built siege ramps against its walls, torn down its palaces,
and turned it to a heap of rubble.

14Wail, you ships of Tarshish, for your harbor is destroyed!

15For seventy years, the length of a king’s life, Tyre will be
forgotten. But then the city will come back to life as in the song
about the prostitute:

16Take a harp and walk the streets, you forgotten harlot.
Make sweet melody and sing your songs so you will be remembered
again.

17Yes, after seventy years the LORD will revive Tyre. But she will be
no different than she was before. She will again be a prostitute to
all kingdoms around the world. 18But in the end her profits will be
given to the LORD. Her wealth will not be hoarded but will provide
good food and fine clothing for the LORD’s priests.

Isaiah 24

DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH

1Look! The LORD is about to destroy the earth and make it a vast wasteland.
He devastates the surface of the earth and scatters the people.

2Priests and laypeople, servants and masters, maids and mistresses, buyers and sellers, lenders and borrowers, bankers and debtors—none will be spared.

3The earth will be completely emptied and looted.
The LORD has spoken!

4The earth mourns and dries up, and the land wastes away and withers.
Even the greatest people on earth waste away.

5The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have twisted God's instructions, violated his laws, and broken his everlasting covenant.

6Therefore, a curse consumes the earth.
Its people must pay the price for their sin.
They are destroyed by fire, and only a few are left alive.

7The grapevines waste away, and there is no new wine.
All the merrymakers sigh and mourn.

8The cheerful sound of tambourines is stilled; the happy cries of celebration are heard no more.
The melodious chords of the harp are silent.

9Gone are the joys of wine and song; alcoholic drink turns bitter in the mouth.

10The city writhes in chaos; every home is locked to keep out intruders.

11Mobs gather in the streets, crying out for wine.
Joy has turned to gloom.
Gladness has been banished from the land.

12The city is left in ruins, its gates battered down.

13Throughout the earth the story is the same— only a remnant is
left, like the stray olives left on the tree or the few grapes left on the
vine after harvest.

14But all who are left shout and sing for joy.
Those in the west praise the LORD's majesty.

15In eastern lands, give glory to the LORD.
In the lands beyond the sea, praise the name of the LORD, the God
of Israel.

16We hear songs of praise from the ends of the earth, songs that give
glory to the Righteous One!
But my heart is heavy with grief.
Weep for me, for I wither away.
Deceit still prevails, and treachery is everywhere.

17Terror and traps and snares will be your lot, you people of the
earth.

18Those who flee in terror will fall into a trap, and those who escape
the trap will be caught in a snare.
Destruction falls like rain from the heavens; the foundations of the
earth shake.

19The earth has broken up.
It has utterly collapsed; it is violently shaken.

20The earth staggers like a drunk.
It trembles like a tent in a storm.
It falls and will not rise again, for the guilt of its rebellion is very
heavy.

21In that day the LORD will punish the gods in the heavens and the
proud rulers of the nations on earth.

22They will be rounded up and put in prison.
They will be shut up in prison and will finally be punished.

23Then the glory of the moon will wane, and the brightness of the
sun will fade, for the LORD of Heaven's Armies will rule on Mount
Zion.

He will rule in great glory in Jerusalem, in the sight of all the leaders of his people.

Isaiah 25

PRAISE FOR JUDGMENT AND SALVATION

1O LORD, I will honor and praise your name, for you are my God.
You do such wonderful things!
You planned them long ago, and now you have accomplished them.

2You turn mighty cities into heaps of ruins.
Cities with strong walls are turned to rubble.
Beautiful palaces in distant lands disappear and will never be rebuilt.

3Therefore, strong nations will declare your glory; ruthless nations will fear you.

4But you are a tower of refuge to the poor, O LORD, a tower of refuge to the needy in distress.
You are a refuge from the storm and a shelter from the heat.
For the oppressive acts of ruthless people are like a storm beating against a wall,

5or like the relentless heat of the desert.
But you silence the roar of foreign nations.
As the shade of a cloud cools relentless heat, so the boastful songs of ruthless people are stilled.

6In Jerusalem,* the LORD of Heaven's Armies will spread a wonderful feast for all the people of the world.
It will be a delicious banquet with clear, well-aged wine and choice meat.

7There he will remove the cloud of gloom, the shadow of death that hangs over the earth.

8He will swallow up death forever!

The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears.
He will remove forever all insults and mockery against his land and people.
The LORD has spoken!

9In that day the people will proclaim, “This is our God!
We trusted in him, and he saved us!
This is the LORD, in whom we trusted.
Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings!”

10For the LORD’s hand of blessing will rest on Jerusalem.
But Moab will be crushed.
It will be like straw trampled down and left to rot.

11God will push down Moab’s people as a swimmer pushes down water with his hands.
He will end their pride and all their evil works.

12The high walls of Moab will be demolished.
They will be brought down to the ground, down into the dust.

Isaiah 26

A SONG OF PRAISE TO THE LORD

1In that day, everyone in the land of Judah will sing this song: Our city is strong!

We are surrounded by the walls of God’s salvation.

2Open the gates to all who are righteous; allow the faithful to enter.

3You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

4Trust in the LORD always, for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock.

5He humbles the proud and brings down the arrogant city.
He brings it down to the dust.

6The poor and oppressed trample it underfoot, and the needy walk

all over it.

7But for those who are righteous, the way is not steep and rough.
You are a God who does what is right, and you smooth out the path ahead of them.

8LORD, we show our trust in you by obeying your laws; our heart's desire is to glorify your name.

9In the night I search for you; in the morning* I earnestly seek you.
For only when you come to judge the earth will people learn what is right.

10Your kindness to the wicked does not make them do good.
Although others do right, the wicked keep doing wrong and take no notice of the LORD's majesty.

11O LORD, they pay no attention to your upraised fist.
Show them your eagerness to defend your people.
Then they will be ashamed.
Let your fire consume your enemies.

12LORD, you will grant us peace; all we have accomplished is really from you.

13O LORD our God, others have ruled us, but you alone are the one we worship.

14Those we served before are dead and gone.
Their departed spirits will never return!
You attacked them and destroyed them, and they are long forgotten.

15O LORD, you have made our nation great; yes, you have made us great.
You have extended our borders, and we give you the glory!

16LORD, in distress we searched for you.
We prayed beneath the burden of your discipline.

17Just as a pregnant woman writhes and cries out in pain as she

gives birth, so were we in your presence, LORD.

18We, too, writhe in agony, but nothing comes of our suffering.
We have not given salvation to the earth, nor brought life into the world.

19But those who die in the LORD will live; their bodies will rise again!
Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sing for joy!
For your life-giving light will fall like dew on your people in the place of the dead!

RESTORATION FOR ISRAEL

20Go home, my people, and lock your doors!

Hide yourselves for a little while until the LORD's anger has passed.

21Look! The LORD is coming from heaven to punish the people of the earth for their sins.
The earth will no longer hide those who have been killed.
They will be brought out for all to see.

Isaiah 27

1In that day the LORD will take his terrible, swift sword and punish Leviathan,* the swiftly moving serpent, the coiling, writhing serpent. He will kill the dragon of the sea.

2"In that day, sing about the fruitful vineyard.

3I, the LORD, will watch over it, watering it carefully.
Day and night I will watch so no one can harm it.

4My anger will be gone.
If I find briers and thorns growing, I will attack them; I will burn them up—

5unless they turn to me for help.
Let them make peace with me; yes, let them make peace with me."

6The time is coming when Jacob's descendants will take root.
Israel will bud and blossom and fill the whole earth with fruit!

7Has the LORD struck Israel as he struck her enemies?
Has he punished her as he punished them?

8No, but he exiled Israel to call her to account.
She was exiled from her land as though blown away in a storm
from the east.

9The LORD did this to purge Israel's* wickedness, to take away all
her sin.
As a result, all the pagan altars will be crushed to dust.
No Asherah pole or pagan shrine will be left standing.

10The fortified towns will be silent and empty, the houses
abandoned, the streets overgrown with weeds.
Calves will graze there, chewing on twigs and branches.

11The people are like the dead branches of a tree, broken off and
used for kindling beneath the cooking pots.
Israel is a foolish and stupid nation, for its people have turned away
from God.
Therefore, the one who made them will show them no pity or
mercy.

12Yet the time will come when the LORD will gather them together
like handpicked grain. One by one he will gather them—from the
Euphrates River* in the east to the Brook of Egypt in the west. 13In
that day the great trumpet will sound. Many who were dying in
exile in Assyria and Egypt will return to Jerusalem to worship the
LORD on his holy mountain.

Isaiah 28

A MESSAGE ABOUT SAMARIA

1What sorrow awaits the proud city of Samaria— the glorious

crown of the drunks of Israel.*
It sits at the head of a fertile valley, but its glorious beauty will fade like a flower.
It is the pride of a people brought down by wine.

2For the Lord will send a mighty army against it.
Like a mighty hailstorm and a torrential rain, they will burst upon it like a surging flood and smash it to the ground.

3The proud city of Samaria— the glorious crown of the drunks of Israel*— will be trampled beneath its enemies' feet.

4It sits at the head of a fertile valley, but its glorious beauty will fade like a flower.
Whoever sees it will snatch it up, as an early fig is quickly picked and eaten.

5Then at last the LORD of Heaven's Armies will himself be Israel's glorious crown.
He will be the pride and joy of the remnant of his people.

6He will give a longing for justice to their judges.
He will give great courage to their warriors who stand at the gates.

7Now, however, Israel is led by drunks who reel with wine and stagger with alcohol.
The priests and prophets stagger with alcohol and lose themselves in wine.
They reel when they see visions and stagger as they render decisions.

8Their tables are covered with vomit; filth is everywhere.

9"Who does the LORD think we are?" they ask.
"Why does he speak to us like this?
Are we little children, just recently weaned?

10He tells us everything over and over— one line at a time, one line at a time, a little here, and a little there!"

11So now God will have to speak to his people through foreign
oppressors who speak a strange language!

12God has told his people, “Here is a place of rest; let the weary rest
here.
This is a place of quiet rest.”
But they would not listen.

13So the LORD will spell out his message for them again, one line at
a time, one line at a time, a little here, and a little there, so that
they will stumble and fall.
They will be injured, trapped, and captured.

14Therefore, listen to this message from the LORD, you scoffing
rulers in Jerusalem.

15You boast, “We have struck a bargain to cheat death and have
made a deal to dodge the grave.*
The coming destruction can never touch us, for we have built a
strong refuge made of lies and deception.”

16Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “Look! I am
placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem,*
a firm and tested stone.
It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on.
Whoever believes need never be shaken.*

17I will test you with the measuring line of justice and the plumb
line of righteousness.
Since your refuge is made of lies, a hailstorm will knock it down.
Since it is made of deception, a flood will sweep it away.

18I will cancel the bargain you made to cheat death, and I will
overturn your deal to dodge the grave.
When the terrible enemy sweeps through, you will be trampled into
the ground.

19Again and again that flood will come, morning after morning, day
and night, until you are carried away.”

This message will bring terror to your people.

20The bed you have made is too short to lie on.
The blankets are too narrow to cover you.

21The LORD will come as he did against the Philistines at Mount Perazim and against the Amorites at Gibeon.
He will come to do a strange thing; he will come to do an unusual deed:

22For the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, has plainly said that he is determined to crush the whole land.
So scoff no more, or your punishment will be even greater.

23Listen to me; listen, and pay close attention.

24Does a farmer always plow and never sow?
Is he forever cultivating the soil and never planting?

25Does he not finally plant his seeds— black cumin, cumin, wheat, barley, and emmer wheat— each in its proper way, and each in its proper place?

26The farmer knows just what to do, for God has given him understanding.

27A heavy sledge is never used to thresh black cumin; rather, it is beaten with a light stick.
A threshing wheel is never rolled on cumin; instead, it is beaten lightly with a flail.

28Grain for bread is easily crushed, so he doesn't keep on pounding it.
He threshes it under the wheels of a cart, but he doesn't pulverize it.

29The LORD of Heaven's Armies is a wonderful teacher, and he gives the farmer great wisdom.

Isaiah 29

A MESSAGE ABOUT JERUSALEM

1“What sorrow awaits Ariel,* the City of David.
Year after year you celebrate your feasts.

2Yet I will bring disaster upon you, and there will be much weeping and sorrow.
For Jerusalem will become what her name Ariel means— an altar covered with blood.

3I will be your enemy, surrounding Jerusalem and attacking its walls.
I will build siege towers and destroy it.

4Then deep from the earth you will speak; from low in the dust your words will come.
Your voice will whisper from the ground like a ghost conjured up from the grave.

5“But suddenly, your ruthless enemies will be crushed like the finest of dust.
Your many attackers will be driven away like chaff before the wind.
Suddenly, in an instant,

6I, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, will act for you with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and storm and consuming fire.

7All the nations fighting against Jerusalem*
will vanish like a dream!
Those who are attacking her walls will vanish like a vision in the night.

8A hungry person dreams of eating but wakes up still hungry.
A thirsty person dreams of drinking but is still faint from thirst when morning comes.
So it will be with your enemies, with those who attack Mount Zion.”

9Are you amazed and incredulous?

Don't you believe it?
Then go ahead and be blind.
You are stupid, but not from wine!
You stagger, but not from liquor!

10For the LORD has poured out on you a spirit of deep sleep.
He has closed the eyes of your prophets and visionaries.

11All the future events in this vision are like a sealed book to them.
When you give it to those who can read, they will say, "We can't
read it because it is sealed." 12When you give it to those who cannot
read, they will say, "We don't know how to read."

13And so the Lord says, "These people say they are mine.
They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.
And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by
rote.*

14Because of this, I will once again astound these hypocrites with
amazing wonders.
The wisdom of the wise will pass away, and the intelligence of the
intelligent will disappear."

15What sorrow awaits those who try to hide their plans from the
LORD, who do their evil deeds in the dark!
"The LORD can't see us," they say.
"He doesn't know what's going on!"

16How foolish can you be?
He is the Potter, and he is certainly greater than you, the clay!
Should the created thing say of the one who made it, "He didn't
make me"?
Does a jar ever say, "The potter who made me is stupid"?

17Soon—and it will not be very long— the forests of Lebanon will
become a fertile field, and the fertile field will yield bountiful crops.

18In that day the deaf will hear words read from a book, and the
blind will see through the gloom and darkness.

19The humble will be filled with fresh joy from the LORD.
The poor will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

20The scoffer will be gone, the arrogant will disappear, and those
who plot evil will be killed.

21Those who convict the innocent by their false testimony will
disappear.
A similar fate awaits those who use trickery to pervert justice and
who tell lies to destroy the innocent.

22That is why the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says to the
people of Israel,*

“My people will no longer be ashamed or turn pale with fear.

23For when they see their many children and all the blessings I have
given them, they will recognize the holiness of the Holy One of
Jacob.
They will stand in awe of the God of Israel.

24Then the wayward will gain understanding, and complainers will
accept instruction.

Isaiah 30

JUDAH’S WORTHLESS TREATY WITH EGYPT

1“What sorrow awaits my rebellious children,”
says the LORD.
“You make plans that are contrary to mine.
You make alliances not directed by my Spirit, thus piling up your
sins.

2For without consulting me, you have gone down to Egypt for help.
You have put your trust in Pharaoh’s protection.

You have tried to hide in his shade.

3But by trusting Pharaoh, you will be humiliated, and by depending
on him, you will be disgraced.

4For though his power extends to Zoan and his officials have arrived
in Hanes,

5all who trust in him will be ashamed.
He will not help you.
Instead, he will disgrace you.”

6This message came to me concerning the animals in the Negev:
The caravan moves slowly across the terrible desert to Egypt—
donkeys weighed down with riches and camels loaded with treasure
— all to pay for Egypt’s protection.

They travel through the wilderness, a place of lionesses and lions, a
place where vipers and poisonous snakes live.
All this, and Egypt will give you nothing in return.

7Egypt’s promises are worthless!
Therefore, I call her Rahab— the Harmless Dragon.*

A WARNING FOR REBELLIOUS JUDAH

8Now go and write down these words.

Write them in a book.
They will stand until the end of time as a witness

9that these people are stubborn rebels who refuse to pay attention
to the LORD’s instructions.

10They tell the seers, “Stop seeing visions!”
They tell the prophets, “Don’t tell us what is right.
Tell us nice things.
Tell us lies.

11Forget all this gloom.
Get off your narrow path.

Stop telling us about your ‘Holy One of Israel.’”

12This is the reply of the Holy One of Israel: “Because you despise
what I tell you and trust instead in oppression and lies,

13calamity will come upon you suddenly— like a bulging wall that
bursts and falls.
In an instant it will collapse and come crashing down.

14You will be smashed like a piece of pottery— shattered so
completely that there won’t be a piece big enough to carry coals
from a fireplace or a little water from the well.”

15This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says:
“Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved.
In quietness and confidence is your strength.
But you would have none of it.

16You said, ‘No, we will get our help from Egypt.
They will give us swift horses for riding into battle.’
But the only swiftness you are going to see is the swiftness of your
enemies chasing you!

17One of them will chase a thousand of you.
Five of them will make all of you flee.
You will be left like a lonely flagpole on a hill or a tattered banner
on a distant mountaintop.”

BLESSINGS FOR THE LORD’S PEOPLE

18So the LORD must wait for you to come to him so he can show
you his love and compassion.

For the LORD is a faithful God.
Blessed are those who wait for his help.

19O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more.
He will be gracious if you ask for help.
He will surely respond to the sound of your cries.

20Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and suffering for

drink, he will still be with you to teach you.
You will see your teacher with your own eyes.

21Your own ears will hear him.
Right behind you a voice will say, “This is the way you should go,”
whether to the right or to the left.

22Then you will destroy all your silver idols and your precious gold images.
You will throw them out like filthy rags, saying to them, “Good riddance!”

23Then the LORD will bless you with rain at planting time. There will be wonderful harvests and plenty of pastureland for your livestock. 24The oxen and donkeys that till the ground will eat good grain, its chaff blown away by the wind. 25In that day, when your enemies are slaughtered and the towers fall, there will be streams of water flowing down every mountain and hill. 26The moon will be as bright as the sun, and the sun will be seven times brighter—like the light of seven days in one! So it will be when the LORD begins to heal his people and cure the wounds he gave them.

27Look! The LORD is coming from far away, burning with anger, surrounded by thick, rising smoke.
His lips are filled with fury; his words consume like fire.

28His hot breath pours out like a flood up to the neck of his enemies.
He will sift out the proud nations for destruction.
He will bridle them and lead them away to ruin.

29But the people of God will sing a song of joy, like the songs at the holy festivals.
You will be filled with joy, as when a flutist leads a group of pilgrims to Jerusalem, the mountain of the LORD— to the Rock of Israel.

30And the LORD will make his majestic voice heard.
He will display the strength of his mighty arm.
It will descend with devouring flames, with cloudbursts,

thunderstorms, and huge hailstones.

31At the LORD's command, the Assyrians will be shattered.
He will strike them down with his royal scepter.

32And as the LORD strikes them with his rod of punishment,*
his people will celebrate with tambourines and harps.
Lifting his mighty arm, he will fight the Assyrians.

33Topheth—the place of burning— has long been ready for the
Assyrian king; the pyre is piled high with wood.
The breath of the LORD, like fire from a volcano, will set it ablaze.

Isaiah 31

THE FUTILITY OF RELYING ON EGYPT

1What sorrow awaits those who look to Egypt for help, trusting
their horses, chariots, and charioteers and depending on the
strength of human armies instead of looking to the LORD, the Holy
One of Israel.

2In his wisdom, the LORD will send great disaster; he will not
change his mind.
He will rise against the wicked and against their helpers.

3For these Egyptians are mere humans, not God!
Their horses are puny flesh, not mighty spirits!
When the LORD raises his fist against them, those who help will
stumble, and those being helped will fall.
They will all fall down and die together.

4But this is what the LORD has told me: "When a strong young lion
stands growling over a sheep it has killed, it is not frightened by the
shouts and noise of a whole crowd of shepherds.

In the same way, the LORD of Heaven's Armies will come down and
fight on Mount Zion.

5The LORD of Heaven's Armies will hover over Jerusalem and

protect it like a bird protecting its nest.
He will defend and save the city; he will pass over it and rescue it.”

6Though you are such wicked rebels, my people, come and return to
the LORD. 7I know the glorious day will come when each of you
will throw away the gold idols and silver images your sinful hands
have made.

8“The Assyrians will be destroyed, but not by the swords of men.
The sword of God will strike them, and they will panic and flee.
The strong young Assyrians will be taken away as captives.

9Even the strongest will quake with terror, and princes will flee
when they see your battle flags,”
says the LORD, whose fire burns in Zion, whose flame blazes from
Jerusalem.

Isaiah 32

ISRAEL’S ULTIMATE DELIVERANCE

1Look, a righteous king is coming!
And honest princes will rule under him.

2Each one will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the
storm, like streams of water in the desert and the shadow of a great
rock in a parched land.

3Then everyone who has eyes will be able to see the truth, and
everyone who has ears will be able to hear it.

4Even the hotheads will be full of sense and understanding.
Those who stammer will speak out plainly.

5In that day ungodly fools will not be heroes.
Scoundrels will not be respected.

6For fools speak foolishness and make evil plans.
They practice ungodliness and spread false teachings about the
LORD.

They deprive the hungry of food and give no water to the thirsty.

7The smooth tricks of scoundrels are evil.
They plot crooked schemes.
They lie to convict the poor, even when the cause of the poor is just.

8But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity.

9Listen, you women who lie around in ease.
Listen to me, you who are so smug.

10In a short time—just a little more than a year— you careless ones will suddenly begin to care.
For your fruit crops will fail, and the harvest will never take place.

11Tremble, you women of ease; throw off your complacency.
Strip off your pretty clothes, and put on burlap to show your grief.

12Beat your breasts in sorrow for your bountiful farms and your fruitful grapevines.

13For your land will be overgrown with thorns and briers.
Your joyful homes and happy towns will be gone.

14The palace and the city will be deserted, and busy towns will be empty.
Wild donkeys will frolic and flocks will graze in the empty forts* and watchtowers

15until at last the Spirit is poured out on us from heaven.
Then the wilderness will become a fertile field, and the fertile field will yield bountiful crops.

16Justice will rule in the wilderness and righteousness in the fertile field.

17And this righteousness will bring peace.
Yes, it will bring quietness and confidence forever.

18My people will live in safety, quietly at home.
They will be at rest.

19Even if the forest should be destroyed and the city torn down,

20the LORD will greatly bless his people.
Wherever they plant seed, bountiful crops will spring up.
Their cattle and donkeys will graze freely.

Isaiah 33

A MESSAGE ABOUT ASSYRIA

1What sorrow awaits you Assyrians, who have destroyed others*
but have never been destroyed yourselves.
You betray others, but you have never been betrayed.
When you are done destroying, you will be destroyed.
When you are done betraying, you will be betrayed.

2But LORD, be merciful to us, for we have waited for you.
Be our strong arm each day and our salvation in times of trouble.

3The enemy runs at the sound of your voice.
When you stand up, the nations flee!

4Just as caterpillars and locusts strip the fields and vines, so the
fallen army of Assyria will be stripped!

5Though the LORD is very great and lives in heaven, he will make
Jerusalem* his home of justice and righteousness.

6In that day he will be your sure foundation, providing a rich store
of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.
The fear of the LORD will be your treasure.

7But now your brave warriors weep in public.
Your ambassadors of peace cry in bitter disappointment.

8Your roads are deserted; no one travels them anymore.

The Assyrians have broken their peace treaty and care nothing for
the promises they made before witnesses.*
They have no respect for anyone.

9The land of Israel wilts in mourning.
Lebanon withers with shame.
The plain of Sharon is now a wilderness.
Bashan and Carmel have been plundered.

10But the LORD says: “Now I will stand up.
Now I will show my power and might.

11You Assyrians produce nothing but dry grass and stubble.
Your own breath will turn to fire and consume you.

12Your people will be burned up completely, like thornbushes cut
down and tossed in a fire.

13Listen to what I have done, you nations far away!
And you that are near, acknowledge my might!”

14The sinners in Jerusalem shake with fear.
Terror seizes the godless.
“Who can live with this devouring fire?” they cry.
“Who can survive this all-consuming fire?”

15Those who are honest and fair, who refuse to profit by fraud, who
stay far away from bribes, who refuse to listen to those who plot
murder, who shut their eyes to all enticement to do wrong—

16these are the ones who will dwell on high.
The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress.
Food will be supplied to them, and they will have water in
abundance.

17Your eyes will see the king in all his splendor, and you will see a
land that stretches into the distance.

18You will think back to this time of terror, asking, “Where are the
Assyrian officers who counted our towers?
Where are the bookkeepers who recorded the plunder taken from
our fallen city?”

19You will no longer see these fierce, violent people with their
strange, unknown language.

20Instead, you will see Zion as a place of holy festivals.
You will see Jerusalem, a city quiet and secure.
It will be like a tent whose ropes are taut and whose stakes are
firmly fixed.

21The LORD will be our Mighty One.
He will be like a wide river of protection that no enemy can cross,
that no enemy ship can sail upon.

22For the LORD is our judge, our lawgiver, and our king.
He will care for us and save us.

23The enemies' sails hang loose on broken masts with useless tackle.
Their treasure will be divided by the people of God.
Even the lame will take their share!

24The people of Israel will no longer say, "We are sick and helpless,"
for the LORD will forgive their sins.

Isaiah 34

A MESSAGE FOR THE NATIONS

1Come here and listen, O nations of the earth.
Let the world and everything in it hear my words.

2For the LORD is enraged against the nations.
His fury is against all their armies.
He will completely destroy* them, dooming them to slaughter.

3Their dead will be left unburied, and the stench of rotting bodies
will fill the land.
The mountains will flow with their blood.

4The heavens above will melt away and disappear like a rolled-up
scroll.
The stars will fall from the sky like withered leaves from a

grapevine, or shriveled figs from a fig tree.

5And when my sword has finished its work in the heavens, it will
fall upon Edom, the nation I have marked for destruction.

6The sword of the LORD is drenched with blood and covered with
fat— with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of rams
prepared for sacrifice.
Yes, the LORD will offer a sacrifice in the city of Bozrah.
He will make a mighty slaughter in Edom.

7Even men as strong as wild oxen will die— the young men
alongside the veterans.
The land will be soaked with blood and the soil enriched with fat.

8For it is the day of the LORD's revenge, the year when Edom will
be paid back for all it did to Israel.*

9The streams of Edom will be filled with burning pitch, and the
ground will be covered with fire.

10This judgment on Edom will never end; the smoke of its burning
will rise forever.
The land will lie deserted from generation to generation.
No one will live there anymore.

11It will be haunted by the desert owl and the screech owl, the great
owl and the raven.*
For God will measure that land carefully; he will measure it for
chaos and destruction.

12It will be called the Land of Nothing, and all its nobles will soon
be gone.*

13Thorns will overrun its palaces; nettles and thistles will grow in its
forts.
The ruins will become a haunt for jackals and a home for owls.

14Desert animals will mingle there with hyenas, their howls filling the night.
Wild goats will bleat at one another among the ruins, and night creatures* will come there to rest.

15There the owl will make her nest and lay her eggs.
She will hatch her young and cover them with her wings.
And the buzzards will come, each one with its mate.

16Search the book of the LORD, and see what he will do.
Not one of these birds and animals will be missing, and none will lack a mate, for the LORD has promised this.
His Spirit will make it all come true.

17He has surveyed and divided the land and deeded it over to those creatures.
They will possess it forever, from generation to generation.

Isaiah 35

HOPE FOR RESTORATION

1Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days.
The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses.

2Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy!
The deserts will become as green as the mountains of Lebanon, as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon.
There the LORD will display his glory, the splendor of our God.

3With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands, and encourage those who have weak knees.

4Say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies.
He is coming to save you.”

5And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf.

6The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will

sing for joy!
Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland.

7The parched ground will become a pool, and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land.
Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish where desert jackals once lived.

8And a great road will go through that once deserted land.
It will be named the Highway of Holiness.
Evil-minded people will never travel on it.
It will be only for those who walk in God's ways; fools will never walk there.

9Lions will not lurk along its course, nor any other ferocious beasts.
There will be no other dangers.
Only the redeemed will walk on it.

10Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return.
They will enter Jerusalem* singing, crowned with everlasting joy.
Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be filled with joy and gladness.

ANGELS ISAIAH 36–37

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

After the Assyrians defeated Damascus and Israel, Judah was next on their march south to Egypt. The army marched to Jerusalem and offered terms of peace that would force Judah to become subjects. King Hezekiah had a choice: Would he surrender, or would he trust in God's protection?

Isa 36–37

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

Isaiah 36

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

1In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign,* King Sennacherib
of Assyria came to attack the fortified towns of Judah and
conquered them. 2Then the king of Assyria sent his chief of staff*
from Lachish with a huge army to confront King Hezekiah in
Jerusalem. The Assyrians took up a position beside the aqueduct
that feeds water into the upper pool, near the road leading to the
field where cloth is washed.*

3These are the officials who went out to meet with them: Eliakim
son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the court secretary;
and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian.

SENNACHERIB THREATENS JERUSALEM

4Then the Assyrian king's chief of staff told them to give this
message to Hezekiah:

"This is what the great king of Assyria says: What are you trusting
in that makes you so confident? 5Do you think* that mere words can
substitute for military skill and strength? Who are you counting on,
that you have rebelled against me? 6On Egypt? If you lean on Egypt,
it will be like a reed that splinters beneath your weight and pierces
your hand. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is completely unreliable!

7"But perhaps you will say to me, 'We are trusting in the LORD our
God!' But isn't he the one who was insulted by Hezekiah? Didn't
Hezekiah tear down his shrines and altars and make everyone in
Judah and Jerusalem worship only at the altar here in Jerusalem?

8"I'll tell you what! Strike a bargain with my master, the king of
Assyria. I will give you 2,000 horses if you can find that many men
to ride on them! 9With your tiny army, how can you think of
challenging even the weakest contingent of my master's troops,

even with the help of Egypt's chariots and charioteers? 10What's more, do you think we have invaded your land without the LORD's direction? The LORD himself told us, 'Attack this land and destroy it!'"

11Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Assyrian chief of staff, "Please speak to us in Aramaic, for we understand it well. Don't speak in Hebrew,* for the people on the wall will hear."

12But Sennacherib's chief of staff replied, "Do you think my master sent this message only to you and your master? He wants all the people to hear it, for when we put this city under siege, they will suffer along with you. They will be so hungry and thirsty that they will eat their own dung and drink their own urine."

13Then the chief of staff stood and shouted in Hebrew to the people on the wall, "Listen to this message from the great king of Assyria! 14This is what the king says: Don't let Hezekiah deceive you. He will never be able to rescue you. 15Don't let him fool you into trusting in the LORD by saying, 'The LORD will surely rescue us. This city will never fall into the hands of the Assyrian king!'

16"Don't listen to Hezekiah! These are the terms the king of Assyria is offering: Make peace with me—open the gates and come out. Then each of you can continue eating from your own grapevine and fig tree and drinking from your own well. 17Then I will arrange to take you to another land like this one—a land of grain and new wine, bread and vineyards.

18"Don't let Hezekiah mislead you by saying, 'The LORD will rescue us!' Have the gods of any other nations ever saved their people from the king of Assyria? 19What happened to the gods of Hamath and Arpad? And what about the gods of Sepharvaim? Did any god rescue Samaria from my power? 20What god of any nation has ever been able to save its people from my power? So what makes you think that the LORD can rescue Jerusalem from me?"

21But the people were silent and did not utter a word because
Hezekiah had commanded them, “Do not answer him.”

22Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, the palace administrator; Shebna the
court secretary; and Joah son of Asaph, the royal historian, went
back to Hezekiah. They tore their clothes in despair, and they went
in to see the king and told him what the Assyrian chief of staff had
said.

Isaiah 37

HEZEKIAH SEEKS THE LORD’S HELP

1When King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes and put
on burlap and went into the Temple of the LORD. 2And he sent
Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the court secretary, and
the leading priests, all dressed in burlap, to the prophet Isaiah son
of Amoz. 3They told him, “This is what King Hezekiah says: Today
is a day of trouble, insults, and disgrace. It is like when a child is
ready to be born, but the mother has no strength to deliver the
baby. 4But perhaps the LORD your God has heard the Assyrian chief
of staff,* sent by the king to defy the living God, and will punish
him for his words. Oh, pray for those of us who are left!”

5After King Hezekiah’s officials delivered the king’s message to
Isaiah, 6the prophet replied, “Say to your master, ‘This is what the
LORD says: Do not be disturbed by this blasphemous speech against
me from the Assyrian king’s messengers. 7Listen! I myself will move
against him,* and the king will receive a message that he is needed
at home. So he will return to his land, where I will have him killed
with a sword.’”

8Meanwhile, the Assyrian chief of staff left Jerusalem and went to
consult the king of Assyria, who had left Lachish and was attacking
Libnah.

9Soon afterward King Sennacherib received word that King
Tirhakah of Ethiopia* was leading an army to fight against him.
Before leaving to meet the attack, he sent messengers back to
Hezekiah in Jerusalem with this message:

10"This message is for King Hezekiah of Judah. Don't let your God,
in whom you trust, deceive you with promises that Jerusalem will
not be captured by the king of Assyria. 11You know perfectly well
what the kings of Assyria have done wherever they have gone. They
have completely destroyed everyone who stood in their way! Why
should you be any different? 12Have the gods of other nations
rescued them—such nations as Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the
people of Eden who were in Tel-assar? My predecessors destroyed
them all! 13What happened to the king of Hamath and the king of
Arpad? What happened to the kings of Sepharvaim, Hena, and
Ivvah?"

14After Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read
it, he went up to the LORD's Temple and spread it out before the
LORD. 15And Hezekiah prayed this prayer before the LORD: 16"O
LORD of Heaven's Armies, God of Israel, you are enthroned
between the mighty cherubim! You alone are God of all the
kingdoms of the earth. You alone created the heavens and the earth.
17Bend down, O LORD, and listen! Open your eyes, O LORD, and
see! Listen to Sennacherib's words of defiance against the living
God.

18"It is true, LORD, that the kings of Assyria have destroyed all
these nations. 19And they have thrown the gods of these nations into
the fire and burned them. But of course the Assyrians could destroy
them! They were not gods at all—only idols of wood and stone
shaped by human hands. 20Now, O LORD our God, rescue us from
his power; then all the kingdoms of the earth will know that you
alone, O LORD, are God.*"

ISAIAH PREDICTS JUDAH'S DELIVERANCE

21Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: “This is
what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Because you prayed about
King Sennacherib of Assyria, 22the LORD has spoken this word
against him: “The virgin daughter of Zion

despises you and laughs at you.
The daughter of Jerusalem
shakes her head in derision as you flee.

23“Whom have you been defying and ridiculing?
Against whom did you raise your voice?
At whom did you look with such haughty eyes?
It was the Holy One of Israel!

24By your messengers you have defied the Lord.
You have said, ‘With my many chariots
I have conquered the highest mountains—
yes, the remotest peaks of Lebanon.
I have cut down its tallest cedars
and its finest cypress trees.
I have reached its farthest heights
and explored its deepest forests.

25I have dug wells in many foreign lands*
and refreshed myself with their water.
With the sole of my foot,
I stopped up all the rivers of Egypt!’

26“But have you not heard?
I decided this long ago.
Long ago I planned it,
and now I am making it happen.
I planned for you to crush fortified cities
into heaps of rubble.

27That is why their people have so little power and are so frightened
and confused.
They are as weak as grass,
as easily trampled as tender green shoots.

They are like grass sprouting on a housetop,
scorched* before it can grow lush and tall.

28"But I know you well— where you stay
and when you come and go.
I know the way you have raged against me.

29And because of your raging against me and your arrogance, which
I have heard for myself,
I will put my hook in your nose
and my bit in your mouth.
I will make you return
by the same road on which you came."

30Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Here is the proof that what I say is true: "This year you will eat only what grows up by itself,

and next year you will eat what springs up from that.
But in the third year you will plant crops and harvest them;
you will tend vineyards and eat their fruit.

31And you who are left in Judah, who have escaped the ravages of the siege,
will put roots down in your own soil
and grow up and flourish.

32For a remnant of my people will spread out from Jerusalem, a group of survivors from Mount Zion.
The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

33"And this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria: "'His armies will not enter Jerusalem.

They will not even shoot an arrow at it.
They will not march outside its gates with their shields
nor build banks of earth against its walls.

34The king will return to his own country by the same road on which he came.
He will not enter this city,'

says the LORD.

35‘For my own honor and for the sake of my servant David, I will
defend this city and protect it.’”

36That night the angel of the LORD went out to the Assyrian camp
and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. When the surviving Assyrians*
woke up the next morning, they found corpses everywhere. 37Then
King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and returned to his own
land. He went home to his capital of Nineveh and stayed there.

38One day while he was worshiping in the temple of his god
Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with their
swords. They then escaped to the land of Ararat, and another son,
Esarhaddon, became the next king of Assyria.

Isaiah 38

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

1About that time Hezekiah became deathly ill, and the prophet
Isaiah son of Amoz went to visit him. He gave the king this
message: "This is what the LORD says: 'Set your affairs in order, for
you are going to die. You will not recover from this illness.'"

2When Hezekiah heard this, he turned his face to the wall and
prayed to the LORD, 3"Remember, O LORD, how I have always been
faithful to you and have served you single-mindedly, always doing
what pleases you." Then he broke down and wept bitterly.

4Then this message came to Isaiah from the LORD: 5"Go back to
Hezekiah and tell him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your
ancestor David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears.
I will add fifteen years to your life, 6and I will rescue you and this
city from the king of Assyria. Yes, I will defend this city.

7"'And this is the sign from the LORD to prove that he will do as he

promised: 8I will cause the sun's shadow to move ten steps
backward on the sundial* of Ahaz!'" So the shadow on the sundial
moved backward ten steps.

HEZEKIAH'S POEM OF PRAISE

9When King Hezekiah was well again, he wrote this poem:

10I said, "In the prime of my life, must I now enter the place of the
dead?*
Am I to be robbed of the rest of my years?"

11I said, "Never again will I see the LORD GOD
while still in the land of the living.
Never again will I see my friends
or be with those who live in this world.

12My life has been blown away like a shepherd's tent in a storm.
It has been cut short,
as when a weaver cuts cloth from a loom.
Suddenly, my life was over.

13I waited patiently all night, but I was torn apart as though by
lions.
Suddenly, my life was over.

14Delirious, I chattered like a swallow or a crane, and then I
moaned like a mourning dove.
My eyes grew tired of looking to heaven for help.
I am in trouble, Lord. Help me!"

15But what could I say?
For he himself sent this sickness.
Now I will walk humbly throughout my years
because of this anguish I have felt.

16Lord, your discipline is good, for it leads to life and health.
You restore my health
and allow me to live!

17Yes, this anguish was good for me, for you have rescued me from death
and forgiven all my sins.

18For the dead* cannot praise you; they cannot raise their voices in praise.
Those who go down to the grave
can no longer hope in your faithfulness.

19Only the living can praise you as I do today.
Each generation tells of your faithfulness to the next.

20Think of it—the LORD is ready to heal me!
I will sing his praises with instruments
every day of my life
in the Temple of the LORD.

21Isaiah had said to Hezekiah's servants, "Make an ointment from figs and spread it over the boil, and Hezekiah will recover."

22And Hezekiah had asked, "What sign will prove that I will go to the Temple of the LORD?"

Isaiah 39

ENVOYS FROM BABYLON

1Soon after this, Merodach-baladan son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent Hezekiah his best wishes and a gift. He had heard that Hezekiah had been very sick and that he had recovered. 2Hezekiah was delighted with the Babylonian envoys and showed them everything in his treasure-houses—the silver, the gold, the spices, and the aromatic oils. He also took them to see his armory and showed them everything in his royal treasuries! There was nothing in his palace or kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

3Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked him,

“What did those men want? Where were they from?”

Hezekiah replied, “They came from the distant land of Babylon.”

4“What did they see in your palace?” asked Isaiah.

“They saw everything,” Hezekiah replied. “I showed them everything I own—all my royal treasuries.”

5Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Listen to this message from the LORD of Heaven’s Armies: 6‘The time is coming when everything in your palace—all the treasures stored up by your ancestors until now—will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left,’ says the LORD. 7‘Some of your very own sons will be taken away into exile. They will become eunuchs who will serve in the palace of Babylon’s king.’”

8Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “This message you have given me from the LORD is good.” For the king was thinking, “At least there will be peace and security during my lifetime.”

Isaiah 40

COMFORT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

1"Comfort, comfort my people,"
says your God.

2"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.
Tell her that her sad days are gone
and her sins are pardoned.
Yes, the LORD has punished her twice over for all her sins."

3Listen! It's the voice of someone shouting, "Clear the way through the wilderness
for the LORD!
Make a straight highway through the wasteland
for our God!

4Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills.
Straighten the curves,
and smooth out the rough places.

5Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will

see it together.
The LORD has spoken!”*

6A voice said, “Shout!”
I asked, “What should I shout?”
“Shout that people are like the grass.
Their beauty fades as quickly
as the flowers in a field.

7The grass withers and the flowers fade beneath the breath of the LORD.
And so it is with people.

8The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.”

9O Zion, messenger of good news, shout from the mountaintops!
Shout it louder, O Jerusalem.*
Shout, and do not be afraid.
Tell the towns of Judah,
“Your God is coming!”

10Yes, the Sovereign LORD is coming in power.
He will rule with a powerful arm.
See, he brings his reward with him as he comes.

11He will feed his flock like a shepherd.
He will carry the lambs in his arms,
holding them close to his heart.
He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young.

THE LORD HAS NO EQUAL

12Who else has held the oceans in his hand?

Who has measured off the heavens with his fingers?
Who else knows the weight of the earth
or has weighed the mountains and hills on a scale?

13 Who is able to advise the Spirit of the LORD?*
Who knows enough to give him advice or teach him?

14 Has the LORD ever needed anyone's advice?
Does he need instruction about what is good?
Did someone teach him what is right
or show him the path of justice?

15 No, for all the nations of the world are but a drop in the bucket.
They are nothing more
than dust on the scales.
He picks up the whole earth
as though it were a grain of sand.

16 All the wood in Lebanon's forests and all Lebanon's animals would not be enough
to make a burnt offering worthy of our God.

17 The nations of the world are worth nothing to him.
In his eyes they count for less than nothing—
mere emptiness and froth.

18 To whom can you compare God?
What image can you find to resemble him?

19 Can he be compared to an idol formed in a mold, overlaid with gold, and decorated with silver chains?

20 Or if people are too poor for that, they might at least choose wood that won't decay
and a skilled craftsman
to carve an image that won't fall down!

21 Haven't you heard? Don't you understand?
Are you deaf to the words of God—
the words he gave before the world began?
Are you so ignorant?

22 God sits above the circle of the earth.
The people below seem like grasshoppers to him!
He spreads out the heavens like a curtain

and makes his tent from them.

23He judges the great people of the world and brings them all to
nothing.

24They hardly get started, barely taking root, when he blows on
them and they wither.
The wind carries them off like chaff.

25“To whom will you compare me?
Who is my equal?” asks the Holy One.

26Look up into the heavens.
Who created all the stars?
He brings them out like an army, one after another,
calling each by its name.
Because of his great power and incomparable strength,
not a single one is missing.

27O Jacob, how can you say the LORD does not see your troubles?
O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights?

28Have you never heard?
Have you never understood?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of all the earth.
He never grows weak or weary.
No one can measure the depths of his understanding.

29He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

30Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall
in exhaustion.

31But those who trust in the LORD will find new strength.
They will soar high on wings like eagles.
They will run and not grow weary.
They will walk and not faint.

Isaiah 41

GOD'S HELP FOR ISRAEL

1"Listen in silence before me, you lands beyond the sea.
Bring your strongest arguments.
Come now and speak.
The court is ready for your case.

2"Who has stirred up this king from the east, rightly calling him to God's service?
Who gives this man victory over many nations
and permits him to trample their kings underfoot?
With his sword, he reduces armies to dust.
With his bow, he scatters them like chaff before the wind.

3He chases them away and goes on safely, though he is walking over unfamiliar ground.

4Who has done such mighty deeds, summoning each new generation from the beginning of time?
It is I, the LORD, the First and the Last.
I alone am he."

5The lands beyond the sea watch in fear.
Remote lands tremble and mobilize for war.

6The idol makers encourage one another, saying to each other, "Be strong!"

7The carver encourages the goldsmith, and the molder helps at the anvil.

“Good,” they say. “It’s coming along fine.”
Carefully they join the parts together,
then fasten the thing in place so it won’t fall over.

DON’T FEAR ISAIAH 41:8-16

8“But as for you, Israel my servant, Jacob my chosen one,
descended from Abraham my friend,

9I have called you back from the ends of the earth, saying, ‘You are my servant.’
For I have chosen you
and will not throw you away.

10Don’t be afraid, for I am with you.
Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you.
I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

11“See, all your angry enemies lie there, confused and humiliated.
Anyone who opposes you will die
and come to nothing.

12You will look in vain for those who tried to conquer you.
Those who attack you
will come to nothing.

13For I hold you by your right hand— I, the LORD your God.
And I say to you,

‘Don’t be afraid. I am here to help you.

14Though you are a lowly worm, O Jacob, don’t be afraid, people of Israel, for I will help you.
I am the LORD, your Redeemer.
I am the Holy One of Israel.’

15You will be a new threshing instrument with many sharp teeth.
You will tear your enemies apart,
making chaff of mountains.

16You will toss them into the air, and the wind will blow them all away;
a whirlwind will scatter them.
Then you will rejoice in the LORD.
You will glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17“When the poor and needy search for water and there is none, and their tongues are parched from thirst,
then I, the LORD, will answer them.
I, the God of Israel, will never abandon them.

18I will open up rivers for them on the high plateaus.
I will give them fountains of water in the valleys.
I will fill the desert with pools of water.
Rivers fed by springs will flow across the parched ground.

19I will plant trees in the barren desert— cedar, acacia, myrtle, olive, cypress, fir, and pine.

20I am doing this so all who see this miracle will understand what it means— that it is the LORD who has done this, the Holy One of Israel who created it.

21“Present the case for your idols,”
says the LORD.
“Let them show what they can do,”
says the King of Israel.*

22“Let them try to tell us what happened long ago so that we may

consider the evidence.
Or let them tell us what the future holds,
so we can know what's going to happen.

23Yes, tell us what will occur in the days ahead.
Then we will know you are gods.
In fact, do anything—good or bad!
Do something that will amaze and frighten us.

24But no! You are less than nothing and can do nothing at all.
Those who choose you pollute themselves.

25"But I have stirred up a leader who will approach from the north.
From the east he will call on my name.
I will give him victory over kings and princes.
He will trample them as a potter treads on clay.

26"Who told you from the beginning that this would happen?
Who predicted this,
making you admit that he was right?
No one said a word!

27I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look! Help is on the way!'*
I will send Jerusalem a messenger with good news.

28Not one of your idols told you this.
Not one gave any answer when I asked.

29See, they are all foolish, worthless things.
All your idols are as empty as the wind.

Isaiah 42

THE LORD'S CHOSEN SERVANT

1"Look at my servant, whom I strengthen.
He is my chosen one, who pleases me.
I have put my Spirit upon him.
He will bring justice to the nations.

2He will not shout or raise his voice in public.

3He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle.
He will bring justice to all who have been wronged.

4He will not falter or lose heart until justice prevails throughout the earth.
Even distant lands beyond the sea will wait for his instruction.*”

5God, the LORD, created the heavens and stretched them out.
He created the earth and everything in it.
He gives breath to everyone,
life to everyone who walks the earth.
And it is he who says,

6“I, the LORD, have called you to demonstrate my righteousness.
I will take you by the hand and guard you,
and I will give you to my people, Israel,
as a symbol of my covenant with them.
And you will be a light to guide the nations.

7You will open the eyes of the blind.
You will free the captives from prison,
releasing those who sit in dark dungeons.

8“I am the LORD; that is my name!
I will not give my glory to anyone else,
nor share my praise with carved idols.

9Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again.
I will tell you the future before it happens.”

A SONG OF PRAISE TO THE LORD

10Sing a new song to the LORD!

Sing his praises from the ends of the earth!
Sing, all you who sail the seas,
all you who live in distant coastlands.

11Join in the chorus, you desert towns; let the villages of Kedar rejoice!
Let the people of Sela sing for joy;
shout praises from the mountaintops!

12Let the whole world glorify the LORD; let it sing his praise.

13The LORD will march forth like a mighty hero; he will come out like a warrior, full of fury.
He will shout his battle cry
and crush all his enemies.

14He will say, “I have long been silent; yes, I have restrained myself.
But now, like a woman in labor,
I will cry and groan and pant.

15I will level the mountains and hills and blight all their greenery.
I will turn the rivers into dry land
and will dry up all the pools.

16I will lead blind Israel down a new path, guiding them along an unfamiliar way.
I will brighten the darkness before them
and smooth out the road ahead of them.
Yes, I will indeed do these things;
I will not forsake them.

17But those who trust in idols, who say, ‘You are our gods,’
will be turned away in shame.

ISRAEL’S FAILURE TO LISTEN AND SEE

18“Listen, you who are deaf!

Look and see, you blind!

19Who is as blind as my own people, my servant?
Who is as deaf as my messenger?
Who is as blind as my chosen people,
the servant of the LORD?

20You see and recognize what is right but refuse to act on it.
You hear with your ears,
but you don't really listen."

21Because he is righteous, the LORD has exalted his glorious law.

22But his own people have been robbed and plundered, enslaved,
imprisoned, and trapped.
They are fair game for anyone
and have no one to protect them,
no one to take them back home.

23Who will hear these lessons from the past and see the ruin that
awaits you in the future?

24Who allowed Israel to be robbed and hurt?
It was the LORD, against whom we sinned, for the people would not
walk in his path,
nor would they obey his law.

25Therefore, he poured out his fury on them and destroyed them in
battle.
They were enveloped in flames,
but they still refused to understand.
They were consumed by fire,
but they did not learn their lesson.

Isaiah 43

THE SAVIOR OF ISRAEL

1But now, O Jacob, listen to the LORD who created you.
O Israel, the one who formed you says,
"Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you.
I have called you by name; you are mine.

2When you go through deep waters, I will be with you.
When you go through rivers of difficulty,
you will not drown.
When you walk through the fire of oppression,

you will not be burned up;
the flames will not consume you.

3For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I gave Egypt as a ransom for your freedom;
I gave Ethiopia* and Seba in your place.

4Others were given in exchange for you.
I traded their lives for yours
because you are precious to me.
You are honored, and I love you.

5“Do not be afraid, for I am with you.
I will gather you and your children from east and west.

6I will say to the north and south, ‘Bring my sons and daughters back to Israel
from the distant corners of the earth.

7Bring all who claim me as their God, for I have made them for my glory.
It was I who created them.’”

8Bring out the people who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf.

9Gather the nations together!
Assemble the peoples of the world!
Which of their idols has ever foretold such things?
Which can predict what will happen tomorrow?
Where are the witnesses of such predictions?
Who can verify that they spoke the truth?

10“But you are my witnesses, O Israel!” says the LORD.
“You are my servant.
You have been chosen to know me, believe in me,
and understand that I alone am God.
There is no other God—
there never has been, and there never will be.

11I, yes I, am the LORD, and there is no other Savior.

12First I predicted your rescue, then I saved you and proclaimed it to the world.
No foreign god has ever done this.
You are witnesses that I am the only God,”
says the LORD.

13“From eternity to eternity I am God.
No one can snatch anyone out of my hand.
No one can undo what I have done.”

THE LORD’S PROMISE OF VICTORY

14This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “For your sakes I will send an army against Babylon,

forcing the Babylonians* to flee in those ships they are so proud of.

15I am the LORD, your Holy One, Israel’s Creator and King.

16I am the LORD, who opened a way through the waters, making a dry path through the sea.

17I called forth the mighty army of Egypt with all its chariots and horses.
I drew them beneath the waves, and they drowned,
their lives snuffed out like a smoldering candlewick.

18“But forget all that— it is nothing compared to what I am going to do.

19For I am about to do something new.
See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?
I will make a pathway through the wilderness.
I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

20The wild animals in the fields will thank me, the jackals and owls, too,
for giving them water in the desert.
Yes, I will make rivers in the dry wasteland

so my chosen people can be refreshed.

21I have made Israel for myself, and they will someday honor me
before the whole world.

22“But, dear family of Jacob, you refuse to ask for my help.
You have grown tired of me, O Israel!

23You have not brought me sheep or goats for burnt offerings.
You have not honored me with sacrifices,
though I have not burdened and wearied you
with requests for grain offerings and frankincense.

24You have not brought me fragrant calamus or pleased me with the
fat from sacrifices.
Instead, you have burdened me with your sins
and wearied me with your faults.

25“I—yes, I alone—will blot out your sins for my own sake and will
never think of them again.

26Let us review the situation together, and you can present your
case to prove your innocence.

27From the very beginning, your first ancestor sinned against me; all
your leaders broke my laws.

28That is why I have disgraced your priests; I have decreed
complete destruction* for Jacob and shame for Israel.

Isaiah 44

1“But now, listen to me, Jacob my servant, Israel my chosen one.

2The LORD who made you and helps you says: Do not be afraid, O
Jacob, my servant,
O dear Israel,* my chosen one.

3For I will pour out water to quench your thirst and to irrigate your

parched fields.
And I will pour out my Spirit on your descendants,
and my blessing on your children.

4They will thrive like watered grass, like willows on a riverbank.

5Some will proudly claim, ‘I belong to the LORD.’
Others will say, ‘I am a descendant of Jacob.’
Some will write the LORD’s name on their hands and will take the
name of Israel as their own.”

THE FOOLISHNESS OF IDOLS

6This is what the LORD says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the
LORD of Heaven’s Armies: “I am the First and the Last;

there is no other God.

7Who is like me?
Let him step forward and prove to you his power.
Let him do as I have done since ancient times
when I established a people and explained its future.

8Do not tremble; do not be afraid.
Did I not proclaim my purposes for you long ago?
You are my witnesses—is there any other God?
No! There is no other Rock—not one!”

9How foolish are those who manufacture idols.
These prized objects are really worthless.
The people who worship idols don’t know this,
so they are all put to shame.

10Who but a fool would make his own god— an idol that cannot
help him one bit?

11All who worship idols will be disgraced along with all these
craftsmen—mere humans— who claim they can make a god.
They may all stand together,
but they will stand in terror and shame.

12The blacksmith stands at his forge to make a sharp tool, pounding

and shaping it with all his might.
His work makes him hungry and weak.
It makes him thirsty and faint.

13Then the wood-carver measures a block of wood and draws a pattern on it.
He works with chisel and plane
and carves it into a human figure.
He gives it human beauty
and puts it in a little shrine.

14He cuts down cedars; he selects the cypress and the oak;
he plants the pine in the forest
to be nourished by the rain.

15Then he uses part of the wood to make a fire.
With it he warms himself and bakes his bread.
Then—yes, it's true—he takes the rest of it
and makes himself a god to worship!
He makes an idol
and bows down in front of it!

16He burns part of the tree to roast his meat and to keep himself warm.
He says, "Ah, that fire feels good."

17Then he takes what's left and makes his god: a carved idol!
He falls down in front of it,
worshiping and praying to it.
"Rescue me!" he says.
"You are my god!"

18Such stupidity and ignorance!
Their eyes are closed, and they cannot see.
Their minds are shut, and they cannot think.

19The person who made the idol never stops to reflect, "Why, it's just a block of wood!
I burned half of it for heat
and used it to bake my bread and roast my meat.
How can the rest of it be a god?

Should I bow down to worship a piece of wood?”

20The poor, deluded fool feeds on ashes.
He trusts something that can’t help him at all.
Yet he cannot bring himself to ask,
“Is this idol that I’m holding in my hand a lie?”

RESTORATION FOR JERUSALEM

21“Pay attention, O Jacob,

for you are my servant, O Israel.
I, the LORD, made you,
and I will not forget you.

22I have swept away your sins like a cloud.
I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist.
Oh, return to me,
for I have paid the price to set you free.”

23Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done this wondrous thing.
Shout for joy, O depths of the earth!
Break into song,
O mountains and forests and every tree!
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob
and is glorified in Israel.

24This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer and Creator:
“I am the LORD, who made all things.
I alone stretched out the heavens.
Who was with me
when I made the earth?

25I expose the false prophets as liars and make fools of fortune-tellers.
I cause the wise to give bad advice,
thus proving them to be fools.

26But I carry out the predictions of my prophets!
By them I say to Jerusalem, ‘People will live here again,’
and to the towns of Judah, ‘You will be rebuilt;

I will restore all your ruins!’

27When I speak to the rivers and say, ‘Dry up!’
they will be dry.

28When I say of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd,’
he will certainly do as I say.
He will command, ‘Rebuild Jerusalem’;
he will say, ‘Restore the Temple.’”

Isaiah 45

CYRUS, THE LORD’S CHOSEN ONE

1This is what the LORD says to Cyrus, his anointed one, whose right hand he will empower.
Before him, mighty kings will be paralyzed with fear.
Their fortress gates will be opened,
never to shut again.

2This is what the LORD says: “I will go before you, Cyrus,
and level the mountains.*
I will smash down gates of bronze
and cut through bars of iron.

3And I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness— secret riches.
I will do this so you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, the one who calls you by name.

4“And why have I called you for this work?
Why did I call you by name when you did not know me?
It is for the sake of Jacob my servant,
Israel my chosen one.

5I am the LORD; there is no other God.
I have equipped you for battle,
though you don’t even know me,

6so all the world from east to west will know there is no other God.

I am the LORD, and there is no other.

7I create the light and make the darkness.
I send good times and bad times.
I, the LORD, am the one who does these things.

8“Open up, O heavens, and pour out your righteousness.
Let the earth open wide
so salvation and righteousness can sprout up together.
I, the LORD, created them.

9“What sorrow awaits those who argue with their Creator.
Does a clay pot argue with its maker?
Does the clay dispute with the one who shapes it, saying,
‘Stop, you’re doing it wrong!’
Does the pot exclaim,
‘How clumsy can you be?’

10How terrible it would be if a newborn baby said to its father,
‘Why was I born?’
or if it said to its mother,
‘Why did you make me this way?’”

11This is what the LORD says— the Holy One of Israel and your Creator:
“Do you question what I do for my children?
Do you give me orders about the work of my hands?

12I am the one who made the earth and created people to live on it.
With my hands I stretched out the heavens.
All the stars are at my command.

13I will raise up Cyrus to fulfill my righteous purpose, and I will guide his actions.
He will restore my city and free my captive people—
without seeking a reward!
I, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, have spoken!”

FUTURE CONVERSION OF GENTILES

14This is what the LORD says:

“You will rule the Egyptians,
the Ethiopians,* and the Sabeans.
They will come to you with all their merchandise,
and it will all be yours.
They will follow you as prisoners in chains.
They will fall to their knees in front of you and say,
‘God is with you, and he is the only God.
There is no other.’”

15Truly, O God of Israel, our Savior, you work in mysterious ways.

16All craftsmen who make idols will be humiliated.
They will all be disgraced together.

17But the LORD will save the people of Israel with eternal salvation.
Throughout everlasting ages,
they will never again be humiliated and disgraced.

18For the LORD is God, and he created the heavens and earth
and put everything in place.
He made the world to be lived in,
not to be a place of empty chaos.
“I am the LORD,” he says,
“and there is no other.

19I publicly proclaim bold promises.
I do not whisper obscurities in some dark corner.
I would not have told the people of Israel* to seek me if I could not be found.
I, the LORD, speak only what is true
and declare only what is right.

20“Gather together and come, you fugitives from surrounding nations.
What fools they are who carry around their wooden idols
and pray to gods that cannot save!

21Consult together, argue your case.
Get together and decide what to say.
Who made these things known so long ago?
What idol ever told you they would happen?
Was it not I, the LORD?
For there is no other God but me,
a righteous God and Savior.
There is none but me.

22Let all the world look to me for salvation!
For I am God; there is no other.

23I have sworn by my own name; I have spoken the truth,
and I will never go back on my word:
Every knee will bend to me,
and every tongue will declare allegiance to me.*”

24The people will declare, “The LORD is the source of all my
righteousness and strength.”
And all who were angry with him
will come to him and be ashamed.

25In the LORD all the generations of Israel will be justified, and in
him they will boast.

Isaiah 46

BABYLON’S FALSE GODS

1Bel and Nebo, the gods of Babylon, bow as they are lowered to the
ground.
They are being hauled away on ox carts.
The poor beasts stagger under the weight.

2Both the idols and their owners are bowed down.
The gods cannot protect the people,
and the people cannot protect the gods.
They go off into captivity together.

3“Listen to me, descendants of Jacob, all you who remain in Israel.
I have cared for you since you were born.
Yes, I carried you before you were born.

4I will be your God throughout your lifetime— until your hair is white with age.
I made you, and I will care for you.
I will carry you along and save you.

5“To whom will you compare me?
Who is my equal?

6Some people pour out their silver and gold and hire a craftsman to make a god from it.
Then they bow down and worship it!

7They carry it around on their shoulders, and when they set it down, it stays there.
It can’t even move!
And when someone prays to it, there is no answer.
It can’t rescue anyone from trouble.

8“Do not forget this! Keep it in mind!
Remember this, you guilty ones.

9Remember the things I have done in the past.
For I alone am God!
I am God, and there is none like me.

10Only I can tell you the future before it even happens.
Everything I plan will come to pass,
for I do whatever I wish.

11I will call a swift bird of prey from the east— a leader from a distant land to come and do my bidding.
I have said what I would do,
and I will do it.

12“Listen to me, you stubborn people who are so far from doing right.

13For I am ready to set things right, not in the distant future, but right now!
I am ready to save Jerusalem*
and show my glory to Israel.

Isaiah 47

PREDICTION OF BABYLON'S FALL

1"Come down, virgin daughter of Babylon, and sit in the dust.
For your days of sitting on a throne have ended.
O daughter of Babylonia,* never again will you be the lovely princess, tender and delicate.

2Take heavy millstones and grind flour.
Remove your veil, and strip off your robe.
Expose yourself to public view.*

3You will be naked and burdened with shame.
I will take vengeance against you without pity."

4Our Redeemer, whose name is the LORD of Heaven's Armies, is the Holy One of Israel.

5"O beautiful Babylon, sit now in darkness and silence.
Never again will you be known as the queen of kingdoms.

6For I was angry with my chosen people and punished them by letting them fall into your hands.
But you, Babylon, showed them no mercy.
You oppressed even the elderly.

7You said, 'I will reign forever as queen of the world!'
You did not reflect on your actions
or think about their consequences.

8"Listen to this, you pleasure-loving kingdom, living at ease and feeling secure.
You say, 'I am the only one, and there is no other.
I will never be a widow or lose my children.'

9Well, both these things will come upon you in a moment:
widowhood and the loss of your children.
Yes, these calamities will come upon you,
despite all your witchcraft and magic.

10“You felt secure in your wickedness.
‘No one sees me,’ you said.
But your ‘wisdom’ and ‘knowledge’ have led you astray,
and you said, ‘I am the only one, and there is no other.’

11So disaster will overtake you, and you won’t be able to charm it away.
Calamity will fall upon you,
and you won’t be able to buy your way out.
A catastrophe will strike you suddenly,
one for which you are not prepared.

12“Now use your magical charms!
Use the spells you have worked at all these years!
Maybe they will do you some good.
Maybe they can make someone afraid of you.

13All the advice you receive has made you tired.
Where are all your astrologers,
those stargazers who make predictions each month?
Let them stand up and save you from what the future holds.

14But they are like straw burning in a fire; they cannot save themselves from the flame.
You will get no help from them at all;
their hearth is no place to sit for warmth.

15And all your friends, those with whom you’ve done business since childhood,
will go their own ways,
turning a deaf ear to your cries.

Isaiah 48

GOD'S STUBBORN PEOPLE

1"Listen to me, O family of Jacob, you who are called by the name of Israel
and born into the family of Judah.
Listen, you who take oaths in the name of the LORD
and call on the God of Israel.
You don't keep your promises,

2even though you call yourself the holy city and talk about depending on the God of Israel,
whose name is the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

3Long ago I told you what was going to happen.
Then suddenly I took action,
and all my predictions came true.

4For I know how stubborn and obstinate you are.
Your necks are as unbending as iron.
Your heads are as hard as bronze.

5That is why I told you what would happen; I told you beforehand what I was going to do.
Then you could never say, 'My idols did it.
My wooden image and metal god commanded it to happen!'

6You have heard my predictions and seen them fulfilled, but you refuse to admit it.
Now I will tell you new things,
secrets you have not yet heard.

7They are brand new, not things from the past.
So you cannot say, 'We knew that all the time!'

8"Yes, I will tell you of things that are entirely new, things you never heard of before.
For I know so well what traitors you are.
You have been rebels from birth.

9Yet for my own sake and for the honor of my name, I will hold back my anger and not wipe you out.

10I have refined you, but not as silver is refined.
Rather, I have refined you in the furnace of suffering.

11I will rescue you for my sake— yes, for my own sake!
I will not let my reputation be tarnished,
and I will not share my glory with idols!

FREEDOM FROM BABYLON

12"Listen to me, O family of Jacob,

Israel my chosen one!
I alone am God,
the First and the Last.

13It was my hand that laid the foundations of the earth, my right hand that spread out the heavens above.
When I call out the stars,
they all appear in order."

14Have any of your idols ever told you this?
Come, all of you, and listen:
The LORD has chosen Cyrus as his ally.
He will use him to put an end to the empire of Babylon
and to destroy the Babylonian* armies.

15"I have said it: I am calling Cyrus!
I will send him on this errand and will help him succeed.

16Come closer, and listen to this.
From the beginning I have told you plainly what would happen."
And now the Sovereign LORD and his Spirit have sent me with this message.

17This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
"I am the LORD your God,
who teaches you what is good for you
and leads you along the paths you should follow.

18Oh, that you had listened to my commands!

Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river
and righteousness rolling over you like waves in the sea.

19Your descendants would have been like the sands along the
seashore— too many to count!
There would have been no need for your destruction,
or for cutting off your family name.”

20Yet even now, be free from your captivity!
Leave Babylon and the Babylonians.*
Sing out this message!
Shout it to the ends of the earth!
The LORD has redeemed his servants,
the people of Israel.*

21They were not thirsty when he led them through the desert.
He divided the rock,
and water gushed out for them to drink.

22“But there is no peace for the wicked,”
says the LORD.

Isaiah 49

THE LORD’S SERVANT COMMISSIONED

1Listen to me, all you in distant lands!
Pay attention, you who are far away!
The LORD called me before my birth;
from within the womb he called me by name.

2He made my words of judgment as sharp as a sword.
He has hidden me in the shadow of his hand.
I am like a sharp arrow in his quiver.

3He said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, and you will bring me glory.”

4I replied, “But my work seems so useless!

I have spent my strength for nothing and to no purpose.
Yet I leave it all in the LORD's hand; I will trust God for my reward."

5And now the LORD speaks— the one who formed me in my mother's womb to be his servant, who commissioned me to bring Israel back to him.
The LORD has honored me,
and my God has given me strength.

6He says, "You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me.
I will make you a light to the Gentiles,
and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

7The LORD, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel,
says to the one who is despised and rejected by the nations,
to the one who is the servant of rulers:
"Kings will stand at attention when you pass by.
Princes will also bow low
because of the LORD, the faithful one, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

SUFFERING ISAIAH 49:8-13

PROMISES OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

8This is what the LORD says:

“At just the right time, I will respond to you.*
On the day of salvation I will help you.
I will protect you and give you to the people
as my covenant with them.
Through you I will reestablish the land of Israel
and assign it to its own people again.

9I will say to the prisoners, ‘Come out in freedom,’
and to those in darkness, ‘Come into the light.’
They will be my sheep, grazing in green pastures
and on hills that were previously bare.

10They will neither hunger nor thirst.
The searing sun will not reach them anymore.
For the LORD in his mercy will lead them; he will lead them beside cool waters.

11And I will make my mountains into level paths for them.
The highways will be raised above the valleys.

12See, my people will return from far away, from lands to the north and west,
and from as far south as Egypt.*”

13Sing for joy, O heavens!
Rejoice, O earth!
Burst into song, O mountains!
For the LORD has comforted his people
and will have compassion on them in their suffering.

14Yet Jerusalem* says, “The LORD has deserted us; the Lord has forgotten us.”

15“Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child?
Can she feel no love for the child she has borne?
But even if that were possible,
I would not forget you!

16See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands.

Always in my mind is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins.

17Soon your descendants will come back, and all who are trying to
destroy you will go away.

18Look around you and see, for all your children will come back to
you.
As surely as I live," says the LORD,
"they will be like jewels or bridal ornaments for you to display.

19"Even the most desolate parts of your abandoned land will soon
be crowded with your people.
Your enemies who enslaved you
will be far away.

20The generations born in exile will return and say, 'We need more
room! It's crowded here!'

21Then you will think to yourself, 'Who has given me all these
descendants?
For most of my children were killed,
and the rest were carried away into exile.
I was left here all alone.
Where did all these people come from?
Who bore these children?
Who raised them for me?'"

22This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will give a signal to
the godless nations.
They will carry your little sons back to you in their arms;
they will bring your daughters on their shoulders.

23Kings and queens will serve you and care for all your needs.
They will bow to the earth before you
and lick the dust from your feet.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.
Those who trust in me will never be put to shame."

24Who can snatch the plunder of war from the hands of a warrior?

Who can demand that a tyrant* let his captives go?

25But the LORD says, “The captives of warriors will be released,
and the plunder of tyrants will be retrieved.
For I will fight those who fight you,
and I will save your children.

26I will feed your enemies with their own flesh.
They will be drunk with rivers of their own blood.
All the world will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer,
the Mighty One of Israel.*”

Isaiah 50

1This is what the LORD says:

“Was your mother sent away because I divorced her?
Did I sell you as slaves to my creditors?
No, you were sold because of your sins.
And your mother, too, was taken because of your sins.

2Why was no one there when I came?
Why didn’t anyone answer when I called?
Is it because I have no power to rescue?
No, that is not the reason!
For I can speak to the sea and make it dry up!
I can turn rivers into deserts covered with dying fish.

3I dress the skies in darkness, covering them with clothes of mourning.”

DON'T FEAR ISAIAH 50:4–11

THE LORD'S OBEDIENT SERVANT

4The Sovereign LORD has given me his words of wisdom,

so that I know how to comfort the weary.
Morning by morning he wakens me
and opens my understanding to his will.

5The Sovereign LORD has spoken to me, and I have listened.
I have not rebelled or turned away.

6I offered my back to those who beat me and my cheeks to those
who pulled out my beard.
I did not hide my face
from mockery and spitting.

7Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced.
Therefore, I have set my face like a stone,
determined to do his will.
And I know that I will not be put to shame.

8He who gives me justice is near.
Who will dare to bring charges against me now?
Where are my accusers?
Let them appear!

9See, the Sovereign LORD is on my side!
Who will declare me guilty?

All my enemies will be destroyed
like old clothes that have been eaten by moths!

10Who among you fears the LORD
and obeys his servant?
If you are walking in darkness,
without a ray of light,
trust in the LORD
and rely on your God.

11But watch out, you who live in your own light and warm
yourselves by your own fires.
This is the reward you will receive from me:
You will soon fall down in great torment.

Isaiah 51

A CALL TO TRUST THE LORD

1“Listen to me, all who hope for deliverance— all who seek the
LORD!
Consider the rock from which you were cut,
the quarry from which you were mined.

2Yes, think about Abraham, your ancestor, and Sarah, who gave
birth to your nation.
Abraham was only one man when I called him.
But when I blessed him, he became a great nation.”

3The LORD will comfort Israel* again and have pity on her ruins.
Her desert will blossom like Eden,
her barren wilderness like the garden of the LORD.
Joy and gladness will be found there.
Songs of thanksgiving will fill the air.

4“Listen to me, my people.
Hear me, Israel,
for my law will be proclaimed,
and my justice will become a light to the nations.

5My mercy and justice are coming soon.
My salvation is on the way.
My strong arm will bring justice to the nations.
All distant lands will look to me
and wait in hope for my powerful arm.

6Look up to the skies above, and gaze down on the earth below.
For the skies will disappear like smoke,
and the earth will wear out like a piece of clothing.
The people of the earth will die like flies,
but my salvation lasts forever.
My righteous rule will never end!

7“Listen to me, you who know right from wrong, you who cherish
my law in your hearts.
Do not be afraid of people’s scorn,
nor fear their insults.

8For the moth will devour them as it devours clothing.
The worm will eat at them as it eats wool.
But my righteousness will last forever.
My salvation will continue from generation to generation.”

9Wake up, wake up, O LORD! Clothe yourself with strength!
Flex your mighty right arm!
Rouse yourself as in the days of old
when you slew Egypt, the dragon of the Nile.*

10Are you not the same today, the one who dried up the sea,
making a path of escape through the depths
so that your people could cross over?

11Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return.
They will enter Jerusalem* singing, crowned with everlasting joy.
Sorrow and mourning will disappear,
and they will be filled with joy and gladness.

12“I, yes I, am the one who comforts you.
So why are you afraid of mere humans,

who wither like the grass and disappear?

13Yet you have forgotten the LORD, your Creator, the one who
stretched out the sky like a canopy
and laid the foundations of the earth.
Will you remain in constant dread of human oppressors?
Will you continue to fear the anger of your enemies?
Where is their fury and anger now?
It is gone!

14Soon all you captives will be released!
Imprisonment, starvation, and death will not be your fate!

15For I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea, causing its
waves to roar.
My name is the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

16And I have put my words in your mouth and hidden you safely in
my hand.
I stretched out* the sky like a canopy and laid the foundations of
the earth.
I am the one who says to Israel,
'You are my people!'"

17Wake up, wake up, O Jerusalem!
You have drunk the cup of the LORD's fury.
You have drunk the cup of terror,
tipping out its last drops.

18Not one of your children is left alive to take your hand and guide
you.

19These two calamities have fallen on you: desolation and
destruction, famine and war.
And who is left to sympathize with you?
Who is left to comfort you?*

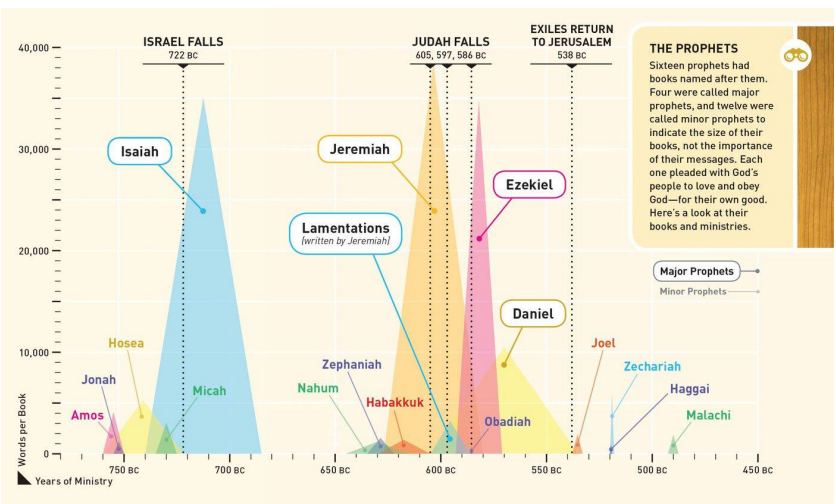
20For your children have fainted and lie in the streets, helpless as
antelopes caught in a net.

The LORD has poured out his fury;
God has rebuked them.

21But now listen to this, you afflicted ones who sit in a drunken stupor,
though not from drinking wine.

22This is what the Sovereign LORD, your God and Defender, says:
“See, I have taken the terrible cup from your hands.
You will drink no more of my fury.

23Instead, I will hand that cup to your tormentors, those who said,
‘We will trample you into the dust
and walk on your backs.’”



THE PROPHETS

Isaiah 52

DELIVERANCE FOR JERUSALEM

1Wake up, wake up, O Zion!
Clothe yourself with strength.
Put on your beautiful clothes, O holy city of Jerusalem,
for unclean and godless people will enter your gates no longer.

2Rise from the dust, O Jerusalem.
Sit in a place of honor.
Remove the chains of slavery from your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion.

3For this is what the LORD says: “When I sold you into exile,
I received no payment.
Now I can redeem you
without having to pay for you.”

4This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “Long ago my people chose to live in Egypt. Now they are oppressed by Assyria. 5What is this?” asks the LORD. “Why are my people enslaved again? Those who rule them shout in exultation.* My name is blasphemed all day long.*6But I will reveal my name to my people, and they will come to know its power. Then at last they will recognize that I am the one who speaks to them.”

7How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news,
the good news of peace and salvation,
the news that the God of Israel* reigns!

8The watchmen shout and sing with joy, for before their very eyes they see the LORD returning to Jerusalem.*

9Let the ruins of Jerusalem break into joyful song, for the LORD has comforted his people.
He has redeemed Jerusalem.

10The LORD has demonstrated his holy power before the eyes of all the nations.
All the ends of the earth will see

the victory of our God.

11Get out! Get out and leave your captivity, where everything you
touch is unclean.
Get out of there and purify yourselves,
you who carry home the sacred objects of the LORD.

12You will not leave in a hurry, running for your lives.
For the LORD will go ahead of you;
yes, the God of Israel will protect you from behind.

EASTER ISAIAH 52:13–53:12

THE LORD'S SUFFERING SERVANT

13See, my servant will prosper;

he will be highly exalted.

14But many were amazed when they saw him.*
His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human,
and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man.

15And he will startle* many nations.
Kings will stand speechless in his presence.
For they will see what they had not been told;
they will understand what they had not heard about.*

Isaiah 53

1Who has believed our message?
To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?

2My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green

shoot, like a root in dry ground.
There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance,
nothing to attract us to him.

3He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.
We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.
He was despised, and we did not care.

4Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows* that weighed him down.
And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God,
a punishment for his own sins!

5But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins.
He was beaten so we could be whole.
He was whipped so we could be healed.

6All of us, like sheep, have strayed away.
We have left God's paths to follow our own.
Yet the LORD laid on him
the sins of us all.

7He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word.
He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.
And as a sheep is silent before the shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

8Unjustly condemned, he was led away.*
No one cared that he died without descendants,
that his life was cut short in midstream.*
But he was struck down
for the rebellion of my people.

9He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone.

But he was buried like a criminal;
he was put in a rich man's grave.

10But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief.
Yet when his life is made an offering for sin,
he will have many descendants.
He will enjoy a long life,
and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands.

11When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied.
And because of his experience,
my righteous servant will make it possible
for many to be counted righteous,
for he will bear all their sins.

12I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death.
He was counted among the rebels.
He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels.

Isaiah 54

FUTURE GLORY FOR JERUSALEM

1"Sing, O childless woman, you who have never given birth!
Break into loud and joyful song, O Jerusalem,
you who have never been in labor.
For the desolate woman now has more children
than the woman who lives with her husband,"
says the LORD.

2“Enlarge your house; build an addition.
Spread out your home, and spare no expense!

3For you will soon be bursting at the seams.
Your descendants will occupy other nations
and resettle the ruined cities.

4“Fear not; you will no longer live in shame.
Don’t be afraid; there is no more disgrace for you.
You will no longer remember the shame of your youth
and the sorrows of widowhood.

5For your Creator will be your husband; the LORD of Heaven’s Armies is his name!
He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,
the God of all the earth.

6For the LORD has called you back from your grief— as though you were a young wife abandoned by her husband,”
says your God.

7“For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will take you back.

8In a burst of anger I turned my face away for a little while.
But with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,”
says the LORD, your Redeemer.

9“Just as I swore in the time of Noah that I would never again let a flood cover the earth,
so now I swear
that I will never again be angry and punish you.

10For the mountains may move and the hills disappear,
but even then my faithful love for you will remain.
My covenant of blessing will never be broken,”
says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

11“O storm-battered city, troubled and desolate!
I will rebuild you with precious jewels
and make your foundations from lapis lazuli.

12I will make your towers of sparkling rubies, your gates of shining gems,
and your walls of precious stones.

13I will teach all your children, and they will enjoy great peace.

14You will be secure under a government that is just and fair.
Your enemies will stay far away.
You will live in peace,
and terror will not come near.

15If any nation comes to fight you, it is not because I sent them.
Whoever attacks you will go down in defeat.

16“I have created the blacksmith who fans the coals beneath the forge
and makes the weapons of destruction.
And I have created the armies that destroy.

17But in that coming day no weapon turned against you will succeed.
You will silence every voice
raised up to accuse you.
These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the LORD; their vindication will come from me.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

Isaiah 55

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SALVATION

1"Is anyone thirsty?
Come and drink—
even if you have no money!
Come, take your choice of wine or milk—
it's all free!

2Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength?
Why pay for food that does you no good?
Listen to me, and you will eat what is good.
You will enjoy the finest food.

3"Come to me with your ears wide open.
Listen, and you will find life.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you.
I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David.

4See how I used him to display my power among the peoples.
I made him a leader among the nations.

5You also will command nations you do not know, and peoples
unknown to you will come running to obey,
because I, the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, have made you glorious."

6Seek the LORD while you can find him.
Call on him now while he is near.

7Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong.
Let them turn to the LORD that he may have mercy on them.
Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously.

8"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD.
"And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.

9For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways
and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

10“The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth.
They cause the grain to grow,
producing seed for the farmer
and bread for the hungry.

11It is the same with my word.
I send it out, and it always produces fruit.
It will accomplish all I want it to,
and it will prosper everywhere I send it.

12You will live in joy and peace.
The mountains and hills will burst into song,
and the trees of the field will clap their hands!

13Where once there were thorns, cypress trees will grow.
Where nettles grew, myrtles will sprout up.
These events will bring great honor to the LORD’s name; they will be an everlasting sign of his power and love.”

Isaiah 56

BLESSINGS FOR ALL NATIONS

1This is what the LORD says:

“Be just and fair to all.
Do what is right and good,
for I am coming soon to rescue you

and to display my righteousness among you.

2Blessed are all those who are careful to do this.
Blessed are those who honor my Sabbath days of rest
and keep themselves from doing wrong.

3“Don’t let foreigners who commit themselves to the LORD say, ‘The
LORD will never let me be part of his people.’
And don’t let the eunuchs say,
‘I’m a dried-up tree with no children and no future.’

4For this is what the LORD says: I will bless those eunuchs
who keep my Sabbath days holy
and who choose to do what pleases me
and commit their lives to me.

5I will give them—within the walls of my house— a memorial and a
name
far greater than sons and daughters could give.
For the name I give them is an everlasting one.
It will never disappear!

6“I will also bless the foreigners who commit themselves to the
LORD, who serve him and love his name,
who worship him and do not desecrate the Sabbath day of rest,
and who hold fast to my covenant.

7I will bring them to my holy mountain of Jerusalem and will fill
them with joy in my house of prayer.
I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices,
because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

8For the Sovereign LORD, who brings back the outcasts of Israel,
says:
I will bring others, too,
besides my people Israel.”

SINFUL LEADERS CONDEMNED

9Come, wild animals of the field!

Come, wild animals of the forest!

Come and devour my people!

10For the leaders of my people— the LORD's watchmen, his shepherds—
are blind and ignorant.
They are like silent watchdogs
that give no warning when danger comes.
They love to lie around, sleeping and dreaming.

11Like greedy dogs, they are never satisfied.
They are ignorant shepherds,
all following their own path
and intent on personal gain.

12"Come," they say, "let's get some wine and have a party.
Let's all get drunk.
Then tomorrow we'll do it again
and have an even bigger party!"

Isaiah 57

1Good people pass away; the godly often die before their time.
But no one seems to care or wonder why.
No one seems to understand
that God is protecting them from the evil to come.

2For those who follow godly paths will rest in peace when they die.

IDOLATROUS WORSHIP CONDEMNED

3"But you—come here, you witches' children,

you offspring of adulterers and prostitutes!

4Whom do you mock,
making faces and sticking out your tongues?
You children of sinners and liars!

5You worship your idols with great passion beneath the oaks and under every green tree.
You sacrifice your children down in the valleys,

among the jagged rocks in the cliffs.

6Your gods are the smooth stones in the valleys.
You worship them with liquid offerings and grain offerings.
They, not I, are your inheritance.
Do you think all this makes me happy?

7You have committed adultery on every high mountain.
There you have worshiped idols
and have been unfaithful to me.

8You have put pagan symbols on your doorposts and behind your doors.
You have left me
and climbed into bed with these detestable gods.
You have committed yourselves to them.
You love to look at their naked bodies.

9You have gone to Molech*
with olive oil and many perfumes,
sending your agents far and wide,
even to the world of the dead.*

10You grew weary in your search, but you never gave up.
Desire gave you renewed strength,
and you did not grow weary.

11"Are you afraid of these idols?
Do they terrify you?
Is that why you have lied to me
and forgotten me and my words?
Is it because of my long silence
that you no longer fear me?

12Now I will expose your so-called good deeds.
None of them will help you.

13Let's see if your idols can save you when you cry to them for help.
Why, a puff of wind can knock them down!
If you just breathe on them, they fall over!

But whoever trusts in me will inherit the land
and possess my holy mountain.”

GOD FORGIVES THE REPENTANT

14God says, “Rebuild the road!

Clear away the rocks and stones
so my people can return from captivity.”

15The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this:
“I live in the high and holy place
with those whose spirits are contrite and humble.
I restore the crushed spirit of the humble
and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.

16For I will not fight against you forever; I will not always be angry.
If I were, all people would pass away—
all the souls I have made.

17I was angry,
so I punished these greedy people.
I withdrew from them,
but they kept going on their own stubborn way.

18I have seen what they do, but I will heal them anyway!
I will lead them.
I will comfort those who mourn,

19bringing words of praise to their lips.
May they have abundant peace, both near and far,”
says the LORD, who heals them.

20“But those who still reject me are like the restless sea, which is never still
but continually churns up mud and dirt.

21There is no peace for the wicked,”
says my God.

Isaiah 58

TRUE AND FALSE WORSHIP

1“Shout with the voice of a trumpet blast.
Shout aloud! Don’t be timid.
Tell my people Israel* of their sins!

2Yet they act so pious!
They come to the Temple every day
and seem delighted to learn all about me.
They act like a righteous nation
that would never abandon the laws of its God.
They ask me to take action on their behalf,
pretending they want to be near me.

3‘We have fasted before you!’ they say.
‘Why aren’t you impressed?
We have been very hard on ourselves,
and you don’t even notice it!’
“I will tell you why!” I respond.
“It’s because you are fasting to please yourselves.
Even while you fast,
you keep oppressing your workers.

4What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling?
This kind of fasting
will never get you anywhere with me.

5You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance,
bowing your heads
like reeds bending in the wind.
You dress in burlap
and cover yourselves with ashes.
Is this what you call fasting?
Do you really think this will please the LORD?

6“No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned;
lighten the burden of those who work for you.

Let the oppressed go free,
and remove the chains that bind people.

7Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless.
Give clothes to those who need them,
and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

8“Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds
will quickly heal.
Your godliness will lead you forward,
and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind.

9Then when you call, the LORD will answer.
‘Yes, I am here,’ he will quickly reply.
“Remove the heavy yoke of oppression.
Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors!

10Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble.
Then your light will shine out from the darkness,
and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon.

11The LORD will guide you continually, giving you water when you
are dry
and restoring your strength.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like an ever-flowing spring.

12Some of you will rebuild the deserted ruins of your cities.
Then you will be known as a rebuilder of walls
and a restorer of homes.

13“Keep the Sabbath day holy.
Don’t pursue your own interests on that day,
but enjoy the Sabbath
and speak of it with delight as the LORD’s holy day.
Honor the Sabbath in everything you do on that day,
and don’t follow your own desires or talk idly.

14Then the LORD will be your delight.
I will give you great honor
and satisfy you with the inheritance I promised to your ancestor

Jacob.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Isaiah 59

WARNINGS AGAINST SIN

1Listen! The LORD’s arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear
too deaf to hear you call.

2It’s your sins that have cut you off from God.
Because of your sins, he has turned away
and will not listen anymore.

3Your hands are the hands of murderers, and your fingers are filthy
with sin.
Your lips are full of lies,
and your mouth spews corruption.

4No one cares about being fair and honest.
The people’s lawsuits are based on lies.
They conceive evil deeds
and then give birth to sin.

5They hatch deadly snakes and weave spiders’ webs.
Whoever eats their eggs will die;
whoever cracks them will hatch a viper.

6Their webs can’t be made into clothing, and nothing they do is
productive.
All their activity is filled with sin,
and violence is their trademark.

7Their feet run to do evil, and they rush to commit murder.
They think only about sinning.
Misery and destruction always follow them.

8They don’t know where to find peace or what it means to be just
and good.

They have mapped out crooked roads,
and no one who follows them knows a moment's peace.

9So there is no justice among us, and we know nothing about right living.
We look for light but find only darkness.
We look for bright skies but walk in gloom.

10We grope like the blind along a wall, feeling our way like people without eyes.
Even at brightest noontime,
we stumble as though it were dark.
Among the living,
we are like the dead.

11We growl like hungry bears; we moan like mournful doves.
We look for justice, but it never comes.
We look for rescue, but it is far away from us.

12For our sins are piled up before God and testify against us.
Yes, we know what sinners we are.

13We know we have rebelled and have denied the LORD.
We have turned our backs on our God.
We know how unfair and oppressive we have been,
carefully planning our deceitful lies.

14Our courts oppose the righteous, and justice is nowhere to be found.
Truth stumbles in the streets,
and honesty has been outlawed.

15Yes, truth is gone, and anyone who renounces evil is attacked.
The LORD looked and was displeased
to find there was no justice.

16He was amazed to see that no one intervened to help the oppressed.
So he himself stepped in to save them with his strong arm,
and his justice sustained him.

17He put on righteousness as his body armor and placed the helmet of salvation on his head.
He clothed himself with a robe of vengeance
and wrapped himself in a cloak of divine passion.

18He will repay his enemies for their evil deeds.
His fury will fall on his foes.
He will pay them back even to the ends of the earth.

19In the west, people will respect the name of the LORD; in the east, they will glorify him.
For he will come like a raging flood tide
driven by the breath of the LORD.*

20"The Redeemer will come to Jerusalem to buy back those in Israel who have turned from their sins,"*
says the LORD.

21"And this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit will not leave them, and neither will these words I have given you. They will be on your lips and on the lips of your children and your children's children forever. I, the LORD, have spoken!

Isaiah 60

FUTURE GLORY FOR JERUSALEM

1"Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all to see.
For the glory of the LORD rises to shine on you.

2Darkness as black as night covers all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the LORD rises and appears over you.

3All nations will come to your light; mighty kings will come to see your radiance.

4"Look and see, for everyone is coming home!

Your sons are coming from distant lands;
your little daughters will be carried home.

5Your eyes will shine, and your heart will thrill with joy,
for merchants from around the world will come to you.
They will bring you the wealth of many lands.

6Vast caravans of camels will converge on you, the camels of
Midian and Ephah.
The people of Sheba will bring gold and frankincense
and will come worshiping the LORD.

7The flocks of Kedar will be given to you, and the rams of Nebaioth
will be brought for my altars.
I will accept their offerings,
and I will make my Temple glorious.

8"And what do I see flying like clouds to Israel, like doves to their
nests?

9They are ships from the ends of the earth, from lands that trust in
me,
led by the great ships of Tarshish.
They are bringing the people of Israel home from far away,
carrying their silver and gold.
They will honor the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
for he has filled you with splendor.

10"Foreigners will come to rebuild your towns, and their kings will
serve you.
For though I have destroyed you in my anger,
I will now have mercy on you through my grace.

11Your gates will stay open day and night to receive the wealth of
many lands.
The kings of the world will be led as captives
in a victory procession.

12For the nations that refuse to serve you will be destroyed.

13“The glory of Lebanon will be yours— the forests of cypress, fir, and pine—
to beautify my sanctuary.
My Temple will be glorious!

14The descendants of your tormentors will come and bow before you.
Those who despised you
will kiss your feet.
They will call you the City of the LORD,
and Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15“Though you were once despised and hated, with no one traveling through you,
I will make you beautiful forever,
a joy to all generations.

16Powerful kings and mighty nations will satisfy your every need,
as though you were a child
nursing at the breast of a queen.
You will know at last that I, the LORD,
am your Savior and your Redeemer,
the Mighty One of Israel.*

17I will exchange your bronze for gold, your iron for silver,
your wood for bronze,
and your stones for iron.
I will make peace your leader
and righteousness your ruler.

18Violence will disappear from your land; the desolation and destruction of war will end.
Salvation will surround you like city walls,
and praise will be on the lips of all who enter there.

19“No longer will you need the sun to shine by day, nor the moon to give its light by night,
for the LORD your God will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.

20 Your sun will never set; your moon will not go down.
For the LORD will be your everlasting light.
Your days of mourning will come to an end.

21 All your people will be righteous.
They will possess their land forever,
for I will plant them there with my own hands
in order to bring myself glory.

22 The smallest family will become a thousand people, and the
tiniest group will become a mighty nation.
At the right time, I, the LORD, will make it happen."

Isaiah 61

GOOD NEWS FOR THE OPPRESSED

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted
and to proclaim that captives will be released
and prisoners will be freed.*

2He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the
LORD's favor has come,*
and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies.

3To all who mourn in Israel,*
he will give a crown of beauty for ashes,
a joyous blessing instead of mourning,
festive praise instead of despair.
In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks
that the LORD has planted for his own glory.

4They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities destroyed long ago.
They will revive them,
though they have been deserted for many generations.

5Foreigners will be your servants.
They will feed your flocks
and plow your fields
and tend your vineyards.

6You will be called priests of the LORD, ministers of our God.
You will feed on the treasures of the nations
and boast in their riches.

7Instead of shame and dishonor, you will enjoy a double share of honor.
You will possess a double portion of prosperity in your land,
and everlasting joy will be yours.

8"For I, the LORD, love justice.
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
I will faithfully reward my people for their suffering
and make an everlasting covenant with them.

9Their descendants will be recognized and honored among the nations.
Everyone will realize that they are a people
the LORD has blessed."

10I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God!
For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation
and draped me in a robe of righteousness.
I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding
or a bride with her jewels.

11The Sovereign LORD will show his justice to the nations of the world.
Everyone will praise him!
His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring,
with plants springing up everywhere.

Isaiah 62

ISAIAH'S PRAYER FOR JERUSALEM

1Because I love Zion, I will not keep still.
Because my heart yearns for Jerusalem,
I cannot remain silent.
I will not stop praying for her
until her righteousness shines like the dawn,
and her salvation blazes like a burning torch.

2The nations will see your righteousness.
World leaders will be blinded by your glory.
And you will be given a new name
by the LORD's own mouth.

3The LORD will hold you in his hand for all to see— a splendid crown in the hand of God.

4Never again will you be called "The Forsaken City"*

or “The Desolate Land.”*
Your new name will be “The City of God’s Delight”*
and “The Bride of God,”*
for the LORD delights in you
and will claim you as his bride.

5Your children will commit themselves to you, O Jerusalem, just as
a young man commits himself to his bride.
Then God will rejoice over you
as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride.

6O Jerusalem, I have posted watchmen on your walls; they will pray
day and night, continually.
Take no rest, all you who pray to the LORD.

7Give the LORD no rest until he completes his work, until he makes
Jerusalem the pride of the earth.

8The LORD has sworn to Jerusalem by his own strength: “I will
never again hand you over to your enemies.
Never again will foreign warriors come
and take away your grain and new wine.

9You raised the grain, and you will eat it, praising the LORD.
Within the courtyards of the Temple,
you yourselves will drink the wine you have pressed.”

10Go out through the gates!
Prepare the highway for my people to return!
Smooth out the road; pull out the boulders;
raise a flag for all the nations to see.

11The LORD has sent this message to every land: “Tell the people of
Israel,*
‘Look, your Savior is coming.
See, he brings his reward with him as he comes.’”

12They will be called “The Holy People”
and “The People Redeemed by the LORD.”
And Jerusalem will be known as “The Desirable Place”
and “The City No Longer Forsaken.”

Isaiah 63

JUDGMENT AGAINST THE LORD'S ENEMIES

1Who is this who comes from Edom, from the city of Bozrah,
with his clothing stained red?
Who is this in royal robes,
marching in his great strength?
"It is I, the LORD, announcing your salvation!
It is I, the LORD, who has the power to save!"

2Why are your clothes so red, as if you have been treading out grapes?

3"I have been treading the winepress alone; no one was there to help me.
In my anger I have trampled my enemies
as if they were grapes.
In my fury I have trampled my foes.
Their blood has stained my clothes.

4For the time has come for me to avenge my people, to ransom them from their oppressors.

5I was amazed to see that no one intervened to help the oppressed.
So I myself stepped in to save them with my strong arm,
and my wrath sustained me.

6I crushed the nations in my anger and made them stagger and fall to the ground,
spilling their blood upon the earth."

PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE

7I will tell of the LORD's unfailing love.

I will praise the LORD for all he has done.
I will rejoice in his great goodness to Israel,
which he has granted according to his mercy and love.

8He said, “They are my very own people.
Surely they will not betray me again.”
And he became their Savior.

9In all their suffering he also suffered, and he personally* rescued them.
In his love and mercy he redeemed them.
He lifted them up and carried them
through all the years.

10But they rebelled against him and grieved his Holy Spirit.
So he became their enemy
and fought against them.

11Then they remembered those days of old when Moses led his people out of Egypt.
They cried out, “Where is the one who brought Israel through the sea,
with Moses as their shepherd?
Where is the one who sent his Holy Spirit
to be among his people?

12Where is the one whose power was displayed when Moses lifted up his hand— the one who divided the sea before them,
making himself famous forever?

13Where is the one who led them through the bottom of the sea?
They were like fine stallions
racing through the desert, never stumbling.

14As with cattle going down into a peaceful valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest.
You led your people, LORD,
and gained a magnificent reputation.”

PRAYER FOR MERCY AND PARDON

15LORD, look down from heaven;

look from your holy, glorious home, and see us.

Where is the passion and the might
you used to show on our behalf?
Where are your mercy and compassion now?

16Surely you are still our Father!
Even if Abraham and Jacob* would disown us, LORD, you would still be our Father.
You are our Redeemer from ages past.

17LORD, why have you allowed us to turn from your path?
Why have you given us stubborn hearts so we no longer fear you?
Return and help us, for we are your servants,
the tribes that are your special possession.

18How briefly your holy people possessed your holy place, and now our enemies have destroyed it.

19Sometimes it seems as though we never belonged to you, as though we had never been known as your people.

Isaiah 64

1*Oh, that you would burst from the heavens and come down!

How the mountains would quake in your presence!

2*As fire causes wood to burn and water to boil,
your coming would make the nations tremble.
Then your enemies would learn the reason for your fame!

3When you came down long ago, you did awesome deeds beyond
our highest expectations.
And oh, how the mountains quaked!

4For since the world began, no ear has heard
and no eye has seen a God like you,
who works for those who wait for him!

5You welcome those who gladly do good, who follow godly ways.
But you have been very angry with us,
for we are not godly.
We are constant sinners;
how can people like us be saved?

6We are all infected and impure with sin.
When we display our righteous deeds,
they are nothing but filthy rags.
Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall,
and our sins sweep us away like the wind.

7Yet no one calls on your name or pleads with you for mercy.
Therefore, you have turned away from us
and turned us over* to our sins.

8And yet, O LORD, you are our Father.
We are the clay, and you are the potter.
We all are formed by your hand.

9Don't be so angry with us, LORD.
Please don't remember our sins forever.

Look at us, we pray,
and see that we are all your people.

10Your holy cities are destroyed.
Zion is a wilderness;
yes, Jerusalem is a desolate ruin.

11The holy and beautiful Temple where our ancestors praised you
has been burned down,
and all the things of beauty are destroyed.

12After all this, LORD, must you still refuse to help us?
Will you continue to be silent and punish us?

SKIP TO 65:17

Isaiah 65

JUDGMENT AND FINAL SALVATION

1The LORD says,

"I was ready to respond, but no one asked for help.
I was ready to be found, but no one was looking for me.
I said, 'Here I am, here I am!'
to a nation that did not call on my name.*

2All day long I opened my arms to a rebellious people.*
But they follow their own evil paths
and their own crooked schemes.

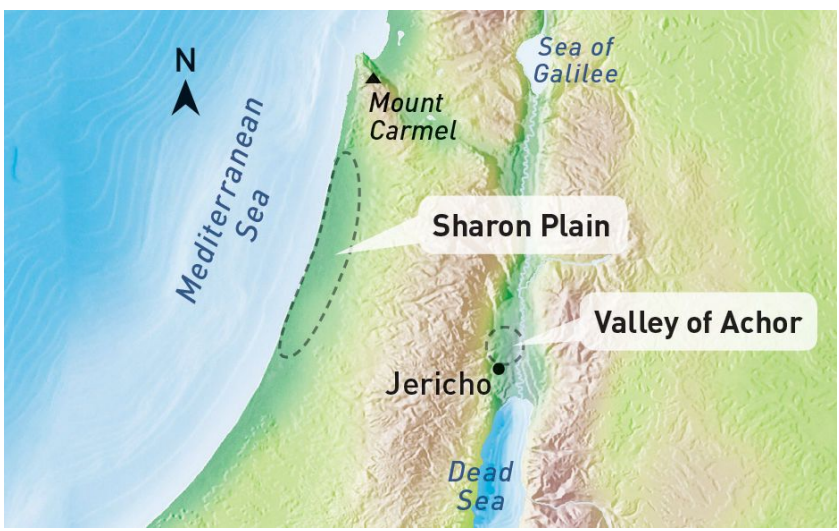
3All day long they insult me to my face by worshiping idols in their
sacred gardens.
They burn incense on pagan altars.

4At night they go out among the graves, worshiping the dead.
They eat the flesh of pigs
and make stews with other forbidden foods.

5Yet they say to each other, ‘Don’t come too close or you will defile me!
I am holier than you!’
These people are a stench in my nostrils,
an acrid smell that never goes away.

6“Look, my decree is written out* in front of me: I will not stand silent;
I will repay them in full!
Yes, I will repay them—

7both for their own sins and for those of their ancestors,”
says the LORD.
“For they also burned incense on the mountains
and insulted me on the hills.
I will pay them back in full!



SHARON AND ACHOR

8“But I will not destroy them all,”

says the LORD.
“For just as good grapes are found among a cluster of bad ones
(and someone will say, ‘Don’t throw them all away—
some of those grapes are good!’),
so I will not destroy all Israel.
For I still have true servants there.

9I will preserve a remnant of the people of Israel*
and of Judah to possess my land.
Those I choose will inherit it,
and my servants will live there.

10The plain of Sharon will again be filled with flocks for my people
who have searched for me,
and the valley of Achor will be a place to pasture herds.

11“But because the rest of you have forsaken the LORD
and have forgotten his Temple,
and because you have prepared feasts to honor the god of Fate
and have offered mixed wine to the god of Destiny,

12now I will ‘destine’ you for the sword.
All of you will bow down before the executioner.
For when I called, you did not answer.
When I spoke, you did not listen.
You deliberately sinned—before my very eyes—
and chose to do what you know I despise.”

13Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “My servants will eat,
but you will starve.
My servants will drink,
but you will be thirsty.
My servants will rejoice,
but you will be sad and ashamed.

14My servants will sing for joy, but you will cry in sorrow and despair.

15Your name will be a curse word among my people, for the

Sovereign LORD will destroy you
and will call his true servants by another name.

16All who invoke a blessing or take an oath will do so by the God of truth.
For I will put aside my anger
and forget the evil of earlier days.

THE FUTURE ISAIAH 65:17-25

17"Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth, and no one will even think about the old ones anymore.

18Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation!
And look! I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness.
Her people will be a source of joy.

19I will rejoice over Jerusalem and delight in my people.
And the sound of weeping and crying
will be heard in it no more.

20"No longer will babies die when only a few days old.
No longer will adults die before they have lived a full life.
No longer will people be considered old at one hundred!
Only the cursed will die that young!

21In those days people will live in the houses they build and eat the fruit of their own vineyards.

22Unlike the past, invaders will not take their houses and confiscate their vineyards.
For my people will live as long as trees,
and my chosen ones will have time to enjoy their hard-won gains.

23They will not work in vain, and their children will not be doomed to misfortune.
For they are people blessed by the LORD,
and their children, too, will be blessed.

24I will answer them before they even call to me.
While they are still talking about their needs,
I will go ahead and answer their prayers!

25The wolf and the lamb will feed together.
The lion will eat hay like a cow.
But the snakes will eat dust.
In those days no one will be hurt or destroyed on my holy mountain.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Isaiah 66

1This is what the LORD says:

“Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
Could you build me a temple as good as that?
Could you build me such a resting place?

2My hands have made both heaven and earth; they and everything in them are mine.*

I, the LORD, have spoken!
“I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts,
who tremble at my word.

3But those who choose their own ways— delighting in their detestable sins—
will not have their offerings accepted.
When such people sacrifice a bull,
it is no more acceptable than a human sacrifice.
When they sacrifice a lamb,
it’s as though they had sacrificed a dog!
When they bring an offering of grain,
they might as well offer the blood of a pig.
When they burn frankincense,
it’s as if they had blessed an idol.

4I will send them great trouble— all the things they feared.
For when I called, they did not answer.
When I spoke, they did not listen.
They deliberately sinned before my very eyes
and chose to do what they know I despise.”

5Hear this message from the LORD, all you who tremble at his words:
“Your own people hate you
and throw you out for being loyal to my name.
‘Let the LORD be honored!’ they scoff.
‘Be joyful in him!’
But they will be put to shame.

6What is all the commotion in the city?
What is that terrible noise from the Temple?
It is the voice of the LORD
taking vengeance against his enemies.

7“Before the birth pains even begin, Jerusalem gives birth to a son.

8Who has ever seen anything as strange as this?
Who ever heard of such a thing?
Has a nation ever been born in a single day?

Has a country ever come forth in a mere moment?
But by the time Jerusalem's* birth pains begin, her children will be born.

9Would I ever bring this nation to the point of birth and then not deliver it?" asks the LORD.
"No! I would never keep this nation from being born,"
says your God.

10"Rejoice with Jerusalem!
Be glad with her, all you who love her
and all you who mourn for her.

11Drink deeply of her glory even as an infant drinks at its mother's comforting breasts."

12This is what the LORD says: "I will give Jerusalem a river of peace and prosperity.
The wealth of the nations will flow to her.
Her children will be nursed at her breasts,
carried in her arms, and held on her lap.

13I will comfort you there in Jerusalem as a mother comforts her child."

14When you see these things, your heart will rejoice.
You will flourish like the grass!
Everyone will see the LORD's hand of blessing on his servants— and his anger against his enemies.

15See, the LORD is coming with fire, and his swift chariots roar like a whirlwind.
He will bring punishment with the fury of his anger
and the flaming fire of his hot rebuke.

16The LORD will punish the world by fire and by his sword.
He will judge the earth,
and many will be killed by him.

17"Those who 'consecrate' and 'purify' themselves in a sacred garden with its idol in the center—feasting on pork and rats and

other detestable meats—will come to a terrible end," says the LORD.

18"I can see what they are doing, and I know what they are thinking. So I will gather all nations and peoples together, and they will see my glory. 19I will perform a sign among them. And I will send those who survive to be messengers to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans* and Lydians* (who are famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece,* and to all the lands beyond the sea that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. There they will declare my glory to the nations. 20They will bring the remnant of your people back from every nation. They will bring them to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD. They will ride on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the LORD. 21"And I will appoint some of them to be my priests and Levites. I, the LORD, have spoken!

22"As surely as my new heavens and earth will remain, so will you always be my people,
with a name that will never disappear,"
says the LORD.

23"All humanity will come to worship me from week to week
and from month to month.

24And as they go out, they will see the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against me.
For the worms that devour them will never die,
and the fire that burns them will never go out.
All who pass by
will view them with utter horror."

WELCOME TO

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah's ministry spans the final forty years of the kingdom of Judah. As God's spokesman, Jeremiah lives in Jerusalem and is appalled by the sinfulness of the people and their leaders. Through words and prophetic actions, he warns them that God will punish them if they do not change their ways. Although Jeremiah faithfully follows God's instructions, his message does not lead the people to repentance and revival. The people scorn Jeremiah and persecute him instead. Because they do not repent, Jeremiah sees God's judgment fall on Judah. The Babylonians invade the land three times, dragging people off to Babylon, and eventually loot and burn Jerusalem and its Temple.

But Jeremiah also provides notes of hope for God's people: a promise that the exile will not be permanent (25:1-14) and that God's people will be restored through a new covenant (chapters 30–31).

1 STOP

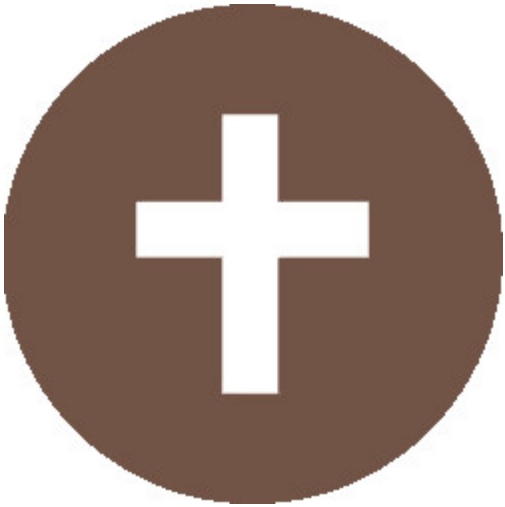
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: The single reading on this route describes the fall of the great city of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonian Empire. Your next stop is at Jeremiah 52:1.

4 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your four readings will cover both a bit of Judah's history and also the life of Jeremiah, a great prophet in Jerusalem. Your next stop is at Jeremiah 18:1.

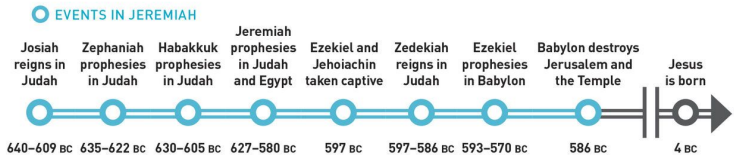
15 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your journey through the book of Jeremiah will provide great insight into the life and times of this prophet. You'll read historical accounts and prophetic words, expressions of sadness and promises of a future hope. Your next stop is at Jeremiah 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN JEREMIAH

Jesus' ministry and purpose are clearly evident in Jeremiah's description of a "new covenant" that God will make with his people (31:31). Jeremiah looked ahead to Jesus as "a righteous descendant from King David's line" who would fulfill all God's requirements (33:15). This covenant was established and fulfilled by Jesus. The broken covenant between God and his people that Jeremiah spoke about has been restored, renewed, and improved by Christ.
The likeness of Jesus is also revealed in the character of Jeremiah. Like Jesus, Jeremiah was rejected by his people; he never gave up trying to bring them back to God; he brought them good news and hope; and he cried over Jerusalem, knowing of its coming destruction.



Jeremiah 1

1These are the words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests
from the town of Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. 2The LORD first
gave messages to Jeremiah during the thirteenth year of the reign
of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah.*3The LORD's messages
continued throughout the reign of King Jehoiakim, Josiah's son,
until the eleventh year of the reign of King Zedekiah, another of
Josiah's sons. In August* of that eleventh year the people of
Jerusalem were taken away as captives.

JEREMIAH'S CALL AND FIRST VISIONS

4The LORD gave me this message:

5“I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb.
Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my
prophet to the nations.”

6“O Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I can’t speak for you! I’m too young!”

7The LORD replied, “Don’t say, ‘I’m too young,’ for you must go
wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. 8And don’t be
afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I,
the LORD, have spoken!” 9Then the LORD reached out and touched
my mouth and said, “Look, I have put my words in your mouth!

10Today I appoint you to stand up against nations and kingdoms.
Some you must uproot and tear down, destroy and overthrow.
Others you must build up and plant.”

11Then the LORD said to me, “Look, Jeremiah! What do you see?”

And I replied, “I see a branch from an almond tree.”

12And the LORD said, “That’s right, and it means that I am
watching,* and I will certainly carry out all my plans.”

13Then the LORD spoke to me again and asked, “What do you see
now?”

And I replied, “I see a pot of boiling water, spilling from the north.”

14“Yes,” the LORD said, “for terror from the north will boil out on
the people of this land. 15Listen! I am calling the armies of the
kingdoms of the north to come to Jerusalem. I, the LORD, have
spoken!

“They will set their thrones at the gates of the city.
They will attack its walls and all the other towns of Judah.

16I will pronounce judgment on my people for all their evil— for
deserting me and burning incense to other gods.
Yes, they worship idols made with their own hands!

17“Get up and prepare for action.
Go out and tell them everything I tell you to say.
Do not be afraid of them, or I will make you look foolish in front of
them.

18For see, today I have made you strong like a fortified city that
cannot be captured, like an iron pillar or a bronze wall.
You will stand against the whole land— the kings, officials, priests,
and people of Judah.

19They will fight you, but they will fail.
For I am with you, and I will take care of you.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Jeremiah 2

THE LORD’S CASE AGAINST HIS PEOPLE

1The LORD gave me another message. He said, 2“Go and shout this
message to Jerusalem. This is what the LORD says: “I remember
how eager you were to please me as a young bride long ago, how
you loved me and followed me even through the barren wilderness.

3In those days Israel was holy to the LORD, the first of his children.*

All who harmed his people were declared guilty, and disaster fell on them.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

4Listen to the word of the LORD, people of Jacob—all you families of Israel! 5This is what the LORD says: “What did your ancestors find wrong with me that led them to stray so far from me?

They worshiped worthless idols, only to become worthless themselves.

6They did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD
who brought us safely out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness— a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought and death, where no one lives or even travels?’

7“And when I brought you into a fruitful land to enjoy its bounty and goodness, you defiled my land and corrupted the possession I had promised you.

8The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?’
Those who taught my word ignored me, the rulers turned against me, and the prophets spoke in the name of Baal, wasting their time on worthless idols.

9Therefore, I will bring my case against you,”
says the LORD.
“I will even bring charges against your children’s children in the years to come.

10“Go west and look in the land of Cyprus*; go east and search through the land of Kedar.
Has anyone ever heard of anything as strange as this?

11Has any nation ever traded its gods for new ones, even though they are not gods at all?
Yet my people have exchanged their glorious God*
for worthless idols!

12The heavens are shocked at such a thing and shrink back in horror and dismay,”
says the LORD.

13“For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me— the fountain of living water.
And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!

THE RESULTS OF ISRAEL’S SIN

14“Why has Israel become a slave?

Why has he been carried away as plunder?

15Strong lions have roared against him, and the land has been destroyed.
The towns are now in ruins, and no one lives in them anymore.

16Egyptians, marching from their cities of Memphis* and Tahpanhes, have destroyed Israel’s glory and power.

17And you have brought this upon yourselves by rebelling against the LORD your God, even though he was leading you on the way!

18“What have you gained by your alliances with Egypt and your covenants with Assyria?
What good to you are the streams of the Nile*
or the waters of the Euphrates River?*

19Your wickedness will bring its own punishment.
Your turning from me will shame you.
You will see what an evil, bitter thing it is to abandon the LORD your God and not to fear him.
I, the Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, have spoken!

20“Long ago I broke the yoke that oppressed you and tore away the chains of your slavery, but still you said, ‘I will not serve you.’
On every hill and under every green tree, you have prostituted yourselves by bowing down to idols.

21But I was the one who planted you, choosing a vine of the purest stock—the very best.
How did you grow into this corrupt wild vine?

22No amount of soap or lye can make you clean.
I still see the stain of your guilt.
I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!

ISRAEL, AN UNFAITHFUL WIFE

23"You say, 'That's not true!

I haven't worshiped the images of Baal!'
But how can you say that?
Go and look in any valley in the land!
Face the awful sins you have done.
You are like a restless female camel desperately searching for a mate.

24You are like a wild donkey, sniffing the wind at mating time.
Who can restrain her lust?
Those who desire her don't need to search, for she goes running to them!

25When will you stop running?
When will you stop panting after other gods?
But you say, 'Save your breath.
I'm in love with these foreign gods, and I can't stop loving them now!'

26"Israel is like a thief who feels shame only when he gets caught.
They, their kings, officials, priests, and prophets— all are alike in this.

27To an image carved from a piece of wood they say, 'You are my father.'
To an idol chiseled from a block of stone they say, 'You are my mother.'
They turn their backs on me, but in times of trouble they cry out to me, 'Come and save us!'

28But why not call on these gods you have made?
When trouble comes, let them save you if they can!
For you have as many gods as there are towns in Judah.

29Why do you accuse me of doing wrong?
You are the ones who have rebelled,”
says the LORD.

30“I have punished your children, but they did not respond to my discipline.
You yourselves have killed your prophets as a lion kills its prey.

31“O my people, listen to the words of the LORD!
Have I been like a desert to Israel?
Have I been to them a land of darkness?
Why then do my people say, ‘At last we are free from God!
We don’t need him anymore!’

32Does a young woman forget her jewelry, or a bride her wedding dress?
Yet for years on end my people have forgotten me.

33“How you plot and scheme to win your lovers.
Even an experienced prostitute could learn from you!

34Your clothing is stained with the blood of the innocent and the poor, though you didn’t catch them breaking into your houses!

35And yet you say, ‘I have done nothing wrong.
Surely God isn’t angry with me!’
But now I will punish you severely because you claim you have not sinned.

36First here, then there— you flit from one ally to another asking for help.
But your new friends in Egypt will let you down, just as Assyria did before.

37In despair, you will be led into exile with your hands on your heads, for the LORD has rejected the nations you trust.
They will not help you at all.

Jeremiah 3

1"If a man divorces a woman and she goes and marries someone
else, he will not take her back again, for that would surely corrupt
the land.
But you have prostituted yourself with many lovers, so why are you
trying to come back to me?"
says the LORD.

2"Look at the shrines on every hilltop.
Is there any place you have not been defiled by your adultery with
other gods?
You sit like a prostitute beside the road waiting for a customer.
You sit alone like a nomad in the desert.
You have polluted the land with your prostitution and your
wickedness.

3That's why even the spring rains have failed.
For you are a brazen prostitute and completely shameless.

4Yet you say to me, 'Father, you have been my guide since my
youth.

5Surely you won't be angry forever!
Surely you can forget about it!'
So you talk, but you keep on doing all the evil you can."

JUDAH FOLLOWS ISRAEL'S EXAMPLE

6During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, "Have you
seen what fickle Israel has done? Like a wife who commits adultery,
Israel has worshiped other gods on every hill and under every green
tree. 7I thought, 'After she has done all this, she will return to me.'
But she did not return, and her faithless sister Judah saw this. 8She
saw* that I divorced faithless Israel because of her adultery. But that
treacherous sister Judah had no fear, and now she, too, has left me
and given herself to prostitution. 9Israel treated it all so lightly—she
thought nothing of committing adultery by worshiping idols made
of wood and stone. So now the land has been polluted. 10But despite

all this, her faithless sister Judah has never sincerely returned to me. She has only pretended to be sorry. I, the LORD, have spoken!”

HOPE FOR WAYWARD ISRAEL

11Then the LORD said to me, “Even faithless Israel is less guilty than
treacherous Judah! 12Therefore, go and give this message to Israel.*
This is what the LORD says: “O Israel, my faithless people, come
home to me again, for I am merciful.

I will not be angry with you forever.

13Only acknowledge your guilt.
Admit that you rebelled against the LORD your God and committed
adultery against him by worshiping idols under every green tree.
Confess that you refused to listen to my voice.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

14“Return home, you wayward children,”
says the LORD, “for I am your master.
I will bring you back to the land of Israel*— one from this town and
two from that family— from wherever you are scattered.

15And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will guide
you with knowledge and understanding.

16“And when your land is once more filled with people,” says the
LORD, “you will no longer wish for ‘the good old days’ when you
possessed the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant. You will not miss those
days or even remember them, and there will be no need to rebuild
the Ark. 17In that day Jerusalem will be known as ‘The Throne of
the LORD.’ All nations will come there to honor the LORD. They
will no longer stubbornly follow their own evil desires. 18In those
days the people of Judah and Israel will return together from exile
in the north. They will return to the land I gave your ancestors as
an inheritance forever.

19“I thought to myself, ‘I would love to treat you as my own
children!’

I wanted nothing more than to give you this beautiful land— the finest possession in the world.
I looked forward to your calling me ‘Father,’
and I wanted you never to turn from me.

20But you have been unfaithful to me, you people of Israel!
You have been like a faithless wife who leaves her husband.
I, the LORD, have spoken.”

21Voices are heard high on the windswept mountains, the weeping and pleading of Israel’s people.
For they have chosen crooked paths and have forgotten the LORD their God.

22“My wayward children,” says the LORD, “come back to me, and I will heal your wayward hearts.”
“Yes, we’re coming,” the people reply, “for you are the LORD our God.

23Our worship of idols on the hills and our religious orgies on the mountains are a delusion.
Only in the LORD our God will Israel ever find salvation.

24From childhood we have watched as everything our ancestors worked for— their flocks and herds, their sons and daughters— was squandered on a delusion.

25Let us now lie down in shame and cover ourselves with dishonor, for we and our ancestors have sinned against the LORD our God.
From our childhood to this day we have never obeyed him.”

Jeremiah 4

1“O Israel,” says the LORD, “if you wanted to return to me, you could.
You could throw away your detestable idols and stray away no more.

2Then when you swear by my name, saying, ‘As surely as the LORD lives,’

you could do so with truth, justice, and righteousness.
Then you would be a blessing to the nations of the world, and all people would come and praise my name."

COMING JUDGMENT AGAINST JUDAH

3This is what the LORD says to the people of Judah and Jerusalem:
"Plow up the hard ground of your hearts!

Do not waste your good seed among thorns.

4O people of Judah and Jerusalem, surrender your pride and power.
Change your hearts before the LORD,*
or my anger will burn like an unquenchable fire because of all your sins.

5"Shout to Judah, and broadcast to Jerusalem!
Tell them to sound the alarm throughout the land: 'Run for your lives!
Flee to the fortified cities!'

6Raise a signal flag as a warning for Jerusalem*: 'Flee now! Do not delay!'
For I am bringing terrible destruction upon you from the north."

7A lion stalks from its den, a destroyer of nations.
It has left its lair and is headed your way.
It's going to devastate your land!
Your towns will lie in ruins, with no one living in them anymore.

8So put on clothes of mourning and weep with broken hearts, for the fierce anger of the LORD
is still upon us.

9"In that day," says the LORD, "the king and the officials will tremble in fear.
The priests will be struck with horror, and the prophets will be appalled."

10Then I said, "O Sovereign LORD, the people have been deceived

by what you said, for you promised peace for Jerusalem.
But the sword is held at their throats!”

11The time is coming when the LORD will say to the people of
Jerusalem, “My dear people, a burning wind is blowing in from the
desert, and it’s not a gentle breeze useful for winnowing grain.

12It is a roaring blast sent by me!
Now I will pronounce your destruction!”

13Our enemy rushes down on us like storm clouds!
His chariots are like whirlwinds.
His horses are swifter than eagles.
How terrible it will be, for we are doomed!

14O Jerusalem, cleanse your heart that you may be saved.
How long will you harbor your evil thoughts?

15Your destruction has been announced from Dan and the hill
country of Ephraim.

16“Warn the surrounding nations and announce this to Jerusalem:
The enemy is coming from a distant land, raising a battle cry
against the towns of Judah.

17They surround Jerusalem like watchmen around a field, for my
people have rebelled against me,”
says the LORD.

18“Your own actions have brought this upon you.
This punishment is bitter, piercing you to the heart!”

JEREMIAH WEEPS FOR HIS PEOPLE

19My heart, my heart—I writhe in pain!

My heart pounds within me! I cannot be still.
For I have heard the blast of enemy trumpets and the roar of their
battle cries.

20Waves of destruction roll over the land, until it lies in complete
desolation.

Suddenly my tents are destroyed; in a moment my shelters are crushed.

21How long must I see the battle flags and hear the trumpets of war?

22"My people are foolish and do not know me," says the LORD.
"They are stupid children who have no understanding.
They are clever enough at doing wrong, but they have no idea how to do right!"

JEREMIAH'S VISION OF COMING DISASTER

23I looked at the earth, and it was empty and formless.

I looked at the heavens, and there was no light.

24I looked at the mountains and hills, and they trembled and shook.

25I looked, and all the people were gone.
All the birds of the sky had flown away.

26I looked, and the fertile fields had become a wilderness.
The towns lay in ruins, crushed by the LORD's fierce anger.

27This is what the LORD says: "The whole land will be ruined, but I will not destroy it completely.

28The earth will mourn and the heavens will be draped in black because of my decree against my people.
I have made up my mind and will not change it."

29At the noise of charioteers and archers, the people flee in terror.
They hide in the bushes and run for the mountains.
All the towns have been abandoned— not a person remains!

30What are you doing, you who have been plundered?
Why do you dress up in beautiful clothing and put on gold jewelry?
Why do you brighten your eyes with mascara?
Your primping will do you no good!
The allies who were your lovers despise you and seek to kill you.

31I hear a cry, like that of a woman in labor, the groans of a woman
giving birth to her first child.
It is beautiful Jerusalem*
gasping for breath and crying out, “Help! I’m being murdered!”

Jeremiah 5

THE SINS OF JUDAH

1“Run up and down every street in Jerusalem,” says the LORD.
“Look high and low; search throughout the city!
If you can find even one just and honest person, I will not destroy
the city.

2But even when they are under oath, saying, ‘As surely as the LORD
lives,’
they are still telling lies!”

3LORD, you are searching for honesty.
You struck your people, but they paid no attention.
You crushed them, but they refused to be corrected.
They are determined, with faces set like stone; they have refused to
repent.

4Then I said, “But what can we expect from the poor?
They are ignorant.
They don’t know the ways of the LORD.
They don’t understand God’s laws.

5So I will go and speak to their leaders.
Surely they know the ways of the LORD
and understand God’s laws.”
But the leaders, too, as one man, had thrown off God’s yoke and
broken his chains.

6So now a lion from the forest will attack them; a wolf from the
desert will pounce on them.
A leopard will lurk near their towns, tearing apart any who dare to
venture out.
For their rebellion is great, and their sins are many.

7“How can I pardon you?
For even your children have turned from me.
They have sworn by gods that are not gods at all!
I fed my people until they were full.
But they thanked me by committing adultery and lining up at the brothels.

8They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor’s wife.

9Should I not punish them for this?” says the LORD.
“Should I not avenge myself against such a nation?

10“Go down the rows of the vineyards and destroy the grapevines, leaving a scattered few alive.
Strip the branches from the vines, for these people do not belong to the LORD.

11The people of Israel and Judah are full of treachery against me,” says the LORD.

12“They have lied about the LORD
and said, ‘He won’t bother us!
No disasters will come upon us.
There will be no war or famine.

13God’s prophets are all windbags who don’t really speak for him.
Let their predictions of disaster fall on themselves!’”

14Therefore, this is what the LORD God of Heaven’s Armies says:
“Because the people are talking like this, my messages will flame out of your mouth and burn the people like kindling wood.

15O Israel, I will bring a distant nation against you,”
says the LORD.
“It is a mighty nation, an ancient nation, a people whose language you do not know, whose speech you cannot understand.

16Their weapons are deadly; their warriors are mighty.

17They will devour the food of your harvest; they will devour your

sons and daughters.
They will devour your flocks and herds; they will devour your grapes and figs.
And they will destroy your fortified towns, which you think are so safe.

18“Yet even in those days I will not blot you out completely,” says the LORD. 19“And when your people ask, ‘Why did the LORD our God do all this to us?’ you must reply, ‘You rejected him and gave yourselves to foreign gods in your own land. Now you will serve foreigners in a land that is not your own.’

A WARNING FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

20“Make this announcement to Israel,*

and say this to Judah:

21Listen, you foolish and senseless people, with eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear.

22Have you no respect for me?
Why don’t you tremble in my presence?
I, the LORD, define the ocean’s sandy shoreline as an everlasting boundary that the waters cannot cross.
The waves may toss and roar, but they can never pass the boundaries I set.

23But my people have stubborn and rebellious hearts.
They have turned away and abandoned me.

24They do not say from the heart, ‘Let us live in awe of the LORD our God, for he gives us rain each spring and fall, assuring us of a harvest when the time is right.’

25Your wickedness has deprived you of these wonderful blessings.
Your sin has robbed you of all these good things.

26“Among my people are wicked men who lie in wait for victims like a hunter hiding in a blind.

They continually set traps to catch people.

27Like a cage filled with birds, their homes are filled with evil plots.
And now they are great and rich.

28They are fat and sleek, and there is no limit to their wicked deeds.
They refuse to provide justice to orphans and deny the rights of the poor.

29Should I not punish them for this?" says the LORD.
"Should I not avenge myself against such a nation?

30A horrible and shocking thing has happened in this land—

31the prophets give false prophecies, and the priests rule with an iron hand.
Worse yet, my people like it that way!
But what will you do when the end comes?

Jeremiah 6

JERUSALEM'S LAST WARNING

1"Run for your lives, you people of Benjamin!
Get out of Jerusalem!
Sound the alarm in Tekoa!
Send up a signal at Beth-hakkerem!
A powerful army is coming from the north, coming with disaster and destruction.

2O Jerusalem,* you are my beautiful and delicate daughter— but I will destroy you!

3Enemies will surround you, like shepherds camped around the city.
Each chooses a place for his troops to devour.

4They shout, 'Prepare for battle!
Attack at noon!'
'No, it's too late; the day is fading, and the evening shadows are falling.'

5‘Well then, let’s attack at night and destroy her palaces!’”

6This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: “Cut down the trees for battering rams.
Build siege ramps against the walls of Jerusalem.
This is the city to be punished, for she is wicked through and through.

7She spouts evil like a fountain.
Her streets echo with the sounds of violence and destruction.
I always see her sickness and sores.

8Listen to this warning, Jerusalem, or I will turn from you in disgust.
Listen, or I will turn you into a heap of ruins, a land where no one lives.”

9This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: “Even the few who remain in Israel will be picked over again, as when a harvester checks each vine a second time to pick the grapes that were missed.”

JUDAH’S CONSTANT REBELLION

10To whom can I give warning?

Who will listen when I speak?
Their ears are closed, and they cannot hear.
They scorn the word of the LORD.
They don’t want to listen at all.

11So now I am filled with the LORD’s fury.
Yes, I am tired of holding it in!
“I will pour out my fury on children playing in the streets and on gatherings of young men, on husbands and wives and on those who are old and gray.

12Their homes will be turned over to their enemies, as will their fields and their wives.
For I will raise my powerful fist against the people of this land,” says the LORD.

13“From the least to the greatest, their lives are ruled by greed.
From prophets to priests, they are all frauds.

14They offer superficial treatments for my people’s mortal wound.
They give assurances of peace when there is no peace.

15Are they ashamed of their disgusting actions?
Not at all—they don’t even know how to blush!
Therefore, they will lie among the slaughtered.
They will be brought down when I punish them,”
says the LORD.

JUDAH REJECTS THE LORD’S WAY

16This is what the LORD says: “Stop at the crossroads and look around.

Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it.
Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls.
But you reply, ‘No, that’s not the road we want!’

17I posted watchmen over you who said, ‘Listen for the sound of the alarm.’
But you replied, ‘No! We won’t pay attention!’

18“Therefore, listen to this, all you nations.
Take note of my people’s situation.

19Listen, all the earth!
I will bring disaster on my people.
It is the fruit of their own schemes, because they refuse to listen to me.
They have rejected my word.

20There’s no use offering me sweet frankincense from Sheba.
Keep your fragrant calamus imported from distant lands!
I will not accept your burnt offerings.
Your sacrifices have no pleasing aroma for me.”

21Therefore, this is what the LORD says: “I will put obstacles in my people’s path.

Fathers and sons will both fall over them.
Neighbors and friends will die together.”

AN INVASION FROM THE NORTH

22This is what the LORD says: “Look! A great army coming from the north!

A great nation is rising against you from far-off lands.

23They are armed with bows and spears.
They are cruel and show no mercy.
They sound like a roaring sea as they ride forward on horses.
They are coming in battle formation, planning to destroy you, beautiful Jerusalem.*”

24We have heard reports about the enemy, and we wring our hands in fright.
Pangs of anguish have gripped us, like those of a woman in labor.

25Don’t go out to the fields!
Don’t travel on the roads!
The enemy’s sword is everywhere and terrorizes us at every turn!

26Oh, my people, dress yourselves in burlap and sit among the ashes.
Mourn and weep bitterly, as for the loss of an only son.
For suddenly the destroying armies will be upon you!

27“Jeremiah, I have made you a tester of metals,*
that you may determine the quality of my people.

28They are the worst kind of rebel, full of slander.
They are as hard as bronze and iron, and they lead others into corruption.

29The bellows fiercely fan the flames to burn out the corruption.
But it does not purify them, for the wickedness remains.

30I will label them ‘Rejected Silver,’

for I, the LORD, am discarding them."

Jeremiah 7

JEREMIAH SPEAKS AT THE TEMPLE

1The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, 2"Go to the
entrance of the LORD's Temple, and give this message to the
people: 'O Judah, listen to this message from the LORD! Listen to it,
all of you who worship here! 3This is what the LORD of Heaven's
Armies, the God of Israel, says: "'Even now, if you quit your evil
ways, I will let you stay in your own land. 4But don't be fooled by
those who promise you safety simply because the LORD's Temple is
here. They chant, "The LORD's Temple is here! The LORD's Temple
is here!" 5But I will be merciful only if you stop your evil thoughts
and deeds and start treating each other with justice; 6only if you
stop exploiting foreigners, orphans, and widows; only if you stop
your murdering; and only if you stop harming yourselves by
worshiping idols. 7Then I will let you stay in this land that I gave to
your ancestors to keep forever.

8"'Don't be fooled into thinking that you will never suffer because
the Temple is here. It's a lie! 9Do you really think you can steal,

murder, commit adultery, lie, and burn incense to Baal and all those other new gods of yours, 10and then come here and stand before me in my Temple and chant, “We are safe!”—only to go right back to all those evils again? 11Don’t you yourselves admit that this Temple, which bears my name, has become a den of thieves? Surely I see all the evil going on there. I, the LORD, have spoken!

12“‘Go now to the place at Shiloh where I once put the Tabernacle that bore my name. See what I did there because of all the wickedness of my people, the Israelites. 13While you were doing these wicked things, says the LORD, I spoke to you about it repeatedly, but you would not listen. I called out to you, but you refused to answer. 14So just as I destroyed Shiloh, I will now destroy this Temple that bears my name, this Temple that you trust in for help, this place that I gave to you and your ancestors. 15And I will send you out of my sight into exile, just as I did your relatives, the people of Israel.*’

JUDAH’S PERSISTENT IDOLATRY

16“Pray no more for these people, Jeremiah. Do not weep or pray for them, and don’t beg me to help them, for I will not listen to you. 17Don’t you see what they are doing throughout the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18No wonder I am so angry! Watch how the children gather wood and the fathers build sacrificial fires. See how the women knead dough and make cakes to offer to the Queen of Heaven. And they pour out liquid offerings to their other idol gods! 19Am I the one they are hurting?” asks the LORD. “Most of all, they hurt themselves, to their own shame.”

20So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “I will pour out my terrible fury on this place. Its people, animals, trees, and crops will be consumed by the unquenchable fire of my anger.”

21This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: “Take your burnt offerings and your other sacrifices and eat them yourselves! 22When I led your ancestors out of Egypt, it was not

burnt offerings and sacrifices I wanted from them. 23This is what I told them: ‘Obey me, and I will be your God, and you will be my people. Do everything as I say, and all will be well!’

24“But my people would not listen to me. They kept doing whatever they wanted, following the stubborn desires of their evil hearts. They went backward instead of forward. 25From the day your ancestors left Egypt until now, I have continued to send my servants, the prophets—day in and day out. 26But my people have not listened to me or even tried to hear. They have been stubborn and sinful—even worse than their ancestors.

27“Tell them all this, but do not expect them to listen. Shout out your warnings, but do not expect them to respond. 28Say to them, ‘This is the nation whose people will not obey the LORD their God and who refuse to be taught. Truth has vanished from among them; it is no longer heard on their lips. 29Shave your head in mourning, and weep alone on the mountains. For the LORD has rejected and forsaken this generation that has provoked his fury.’

THE VALLEY OF BEN-HINNOM

THE VALLEY OF SLAUGHTER

30“The people of Judah have sinned before my very eyes,” says the LORD. “They have set up their abominable idols right in the Temple that bears my name, defiling it. 31They have built pagan shrines at Topheth, the garbage dump in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, and there they burn their sons and daughters in the fire. I have never commanded such a horrible deed; it never even crossed my mind to command such a thing! 32So beware, for the time is coming,” says the LORD, “when that garbage dump will no longer be called Topheth or the valley of Ben-Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.

They will bury the bodies in Topheth until there is no more room
for them. 33The bodies of my people will be food for the vultures
and wild animals, and no one will be left to scare them away. 34I
will put an end to the happy singing and laughter in the streets of
Jerusalem. The joyful voices of bridegrooms and brides will no
longer be heard in the towns of Judah. The land will lie in complete
desolation.

Jeremiah 8

1"In that day," says the LORD, "the enemy will break open the
graves of the kings and officials of Judah, and the graves of the
priests, prophets, and common people of Jerusalem. 2They will
spread out their bones on the ground before the sun, moon, and
stars—the gods my people have loved, served, and worshiped. Their
bones will not be gathered up again or buried but will be scattered
on the ground like manure. 3And the people of this evil nation who
survive will wish to die rather than live where I will send them. I,
the LORD of Heaven's Armies, have spoken!

DECEPTION BY FALSE PROPHETS

4"Jeremiah, say to the people, 'This is what the LORD says: "'When
people fall down, don't they get up again?

When they discover they're on the wrong road, don't they turn
back?

5Then why do these people stay on their self-destructive path?
Why do the people of Jerusalem refuse to turn back?
They cling tightly to their lies and will not turn around.

6I listen to their conversations and don't hear a word of truth.
Is anyone sorry for doing wrong?
Does anyone say, "What a terrible thing I have done"?
No! All are running down the path of sin as swiftly as a horse
galloping into battle!

7Even the stork that flies across the sky knows the time of her
migration, as do the turtledove, the swallow, and the crane.*
They all return at the proper time each year.
But not my people!
They do not know the LORD's laws.

8"'How can you say, "We are wise because we have the word of the
LORD,"
when your teachers have twisted it by writing lies?

9These wise teachers will fall into the trap of their own foolishness,
for they have rejected the word of the LORD.
Are they so wise after all?

10I will give their wives to others and their farms to strangers.
From the least to the greatest, their lives are ruled by greed.
Yes, even my prophets and priests are like that.
They are all frauds.

11They offer superficial treatments for my people's mortal wound.
They give assurances of peace when there is no peace.

12Are they ashamed of these disgusting actions?
Not at all—they don't even know how to blush!
Therefore, they will lie among the slaughtered.
They will be brought down when I punish them, says the LORD.

13I will surely consume them.
There will be no more harvests of figs and grapes.
Their fruit trees will all die.
Whatever I gave them will soon be gone.
I, the LORD, have spoken!'

14"Then the people will say, 'Why should we wait here to die?

Come, let's go to the fortified towns and die there.
For the LORD our God has decreed our destruction and has given us
a cup of poison to drink because we sinned against the LORD.

15We hoped for peace, but no peace came.
We hoped for a time of healing, but found only terror.'

16"The snorting of the enemies' warhorses can be heard all the way
from the land of Dan in the north!
The neighing of their stallions makes the whole land tremble.
They are coming to devour the land and everything in it— cities
and people alike.

17I will send these enemy troops among you like poisonous snakes
you cannot charm.
They will bite you, and you will die.
I, the LORD, have spoken!"

JEREMIAH WEEPS FOR SINFUL JUDAH

18My grief is beyond healing; my heart is broken.

19Listen to the weeping of my people; it can be heard all across the
land.
"Has the LORD abandoned Jerusalem?* " the people ask.
"Is her King no longer there?"
"Oh, why have they provoked my anger with their carved idols and
their worthless foreign gods?" says the LORD.

20"The harvest is finished, and the summer is gone," the people cry,
"yet we are not saved!"

21I hurt with the hurt of my people.
I mourn and am overcome with grief.

22Is there no medicine in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why is there no healing for the wounds of my people?

Jeremiah 9

1*If only my head were a pool of water and my eyes a fountain of
tears, I would weep day and night for all my people who have been
slaughtered.

2*Oh, that I could go away and forget my people and live in a
travelers' shack in the desert.
For they are all adulterers— a pack of treacherous liars.

JUDGMENT FOR DISOBEDIENCE

3"My people bend their tongues like bows to shoot out lies.

They refuse to stand up for the truth.
They only go from bad to worse.
They do not know me,"
says the LORD.

4"Beware of your neighbor!
Don't even trust your brother!
For brother takes advantage of brother, and friend slanders friend.

5They all fool and defraud each other; no one tells the truth.
With practiced tongues they tell lies; they wear themselves out with
all their sinning.

6They pile lie upon lie and utterly refuse to acknowledge me,"
says the LORD.

7Therefore, this is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: "See, I
will melt them down in a crucible and test them like metal.
What else can I do with my people?*

8For their tongues shoot lies like poisoned arrows.
They speak friendly words to their neighbors while scheming in
their heart to kill them.

9Should I not punish them for this?" says the LORD.
"Should I not avenge myself against such a nation?"

10I will weep for the mountains and wail for the wilderness pastures.
For they are desolate and empty of life; the lowing of cattle is heard no more; the birds and wild animals have all fled.

11"I will make Jerusalem into a heap of ruins," says the LORD.
"It will be a place haunted by jackals.
The towns of Judah will be ghost towns, with no one living in them."

12Who is wise enough to understand all this? Who has been instructed by the LORD and can explain it to others? Why has the land been so ruined that no one dares to travel through it?

13The LORD replies, "This has happened because my people have abandoned my instructions; they have refused to obey what I said. 14Instead, they have stubbornly followed their own desires and worshiped the images of Baal, as their ancestors taught them. 15So now, this is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: Look! I will feed them with bitterness and give them poison to drink. 16I will scatter them around the world, in places they and their ancestors never heard of, and even there I will chase them with the sword until I have destroyed them completely."

WEEPING IN JERUSALEM

17This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: "Consider all this, and call for the mourners.

Send for the women who mourn at funerals.

18Quick! Begin your weeping!
Let the tears flow from your eyes.

19Hear the people of Jerusalem* crying in despair, 'We are ruined!
We are completely humiliated!
We must leave our land, because our homes have been torn down.'"

20Listen, you women, to the words of the LORD; open your ears to

what he has to say.
Teach your daughters to wail; teach one another how to lament.

21For death has crept in through our windows and has entered our mansions.
It has killed off the flower of our youth: Children no longer play in the streets, and young men no longer gather in the squares.

22This is what the LORD says: “Bodies will be scattered across the fields like clumps of manure, like bundles of grain after the harvest. No one will be left to bury them.”

23This is what the LORD says: “Don’t let the wise boast in their wisdom, or the powerful boast in their power, or the rich boast in their riches.

24But those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD
who demonstrates unfailing love and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth, and that I delight in these things.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

25“A time is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will punish all those who are circumcised in body but not in spirit—26the Egyptians, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, the people who live in the desert in remote places,* and yes, even the people of Judah. And like all these pagan nations, the people of Israel also have uncircumcised hearts.”

Jeremiah 10

IDOLATRY BRINGS DESTRUCTION

1Hear the word that the LORD speaks to you, O Israel! 2This is what the LORD says: “Do not act like the other nations, who try to read their future in the stars.

Do not be afraid of their predictions, even though other nations are

terrified by them.

3Their ways are futile and foolish.
They cut down a tree, and a craftsman carves an idol.

4They decorate it with gold and silver and then fasten it securely
with hammer and nails so it won't fall over.

5Their gods are like helpless scarecrows in a cucumber field!
They cannot speak, and they need to be carried because they cannot
walk.
Do not be afraid of such gods, for they can neither harm you nor do
you any good."

6LORD, there is no one like you!
For you are great, and your name is full of power.

7Who would not fear you, O King of nations?
That title belongs to you alone!
Among all the wise people of the earth and in all the kingdoms of
the world, there is no one like you.

TARSHISH

8People who worship idols are stupid and foolish.
The things they worship are made of wood!

9They bring beaten sheets of silver from Tarshish and gold from
Uphaz, and they give these materials to skillful craftsmen who make
their idols.
Then they dress these gods in royal blue and purple robes made by
expert tailors.

10But the LORD is the only true God.
He is the living God and the everlasting King!
The whole earth trembles at his anger.
The nations cannot stand up to his wrath.

11Say this to those who worship other gods: “Your so-called gods,
who did not make the heavens and earth, will vanish from the earth
and from under the heavens.”*

12But the LORD made the earth by his power, and he preserves it by
his wisdom.
With his own understanding he stretched out the heavens.

13When he speaks in the thunder, the heavens roar with rain.
He causes the clouds to rise over the earth.
He sends the lightning with the rain and releases the wind from his
storehouses.

14The whole human race is foolish and has no knowledge!
The craftsmen are disgraced by the idols they make, for their
carefully shaped works are a fraud.
These idols have no breath or power.

15Idols are worthless; they are ridiculous lies!
On the day of reckoning they will all be destroyed.

16But the God of Israel* is no idol!
He is the Creator of everything that exists, including Israel, his own
special possession.
The LORD of Heaven’s Armies is his name!

THE COMING DESTRUCTION

17Pack your bags and prepare to leave; the siege is about to begin.

18For this is what the LORD says: “Suddenly, I will fling out all you
who live in this land.
I will pour great troubles upon you, and at last you will feel my
anger.”

19My wound is severe, and my grief is great.
My sickness is incurable, but I must bear it.

20My home is gone, and no one is left to help me rebuild it.
My children have been taken away, and I will never see them again.

21The shepherds of my people have lost their senses.
They no longer seek wisdom from the LORD.
Therefore, they fail completely, and their flocks are scattered.

22Listen! Hear the terrifying roar of great armies as they roll down from the north.
The towns of Judah will be destroyed and become a haunt for jackals.

PRAYERS JEREMIAH 10:23-25

JEREMIAH'S PRAYER

23I know, LORD, that our lives are not our own.

We are not able to plan our own course.

24So correct me, LORD, but please be gentle.
Do not correct me in anger, for I would die.

25Pour out your wrath on the nations that refuse to acknowledge you— on the peoples that do not call upon your name.
For they have devoured your people Israel*; they have devoured and consumed them, making the land a desolate wilderness.

Jeremiah 11

JUDAH'S BROKEN COVENANT

1The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, 2"Remind
the people of Judah and Jerusalem about the terms of my covenant
with them. 3Say to them, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel,
says: Cursed is anyone who does not obey the terms of my
covenant! 4For I said to your ancestors when I brought them out of
the iron-smelting furnace of Egypt, "If you obey me and do
whatever I command you, then you will be my people, and I will be
your God." 5I said this so I could keep my promise to your ancestors
to give you a land flowing with milk and honey—the land you live
in today.'"

Then I replied, "Amen, LORD! May it be so."

6Then the LORD said, "Broadcast this message in the streets of
Jerusalem. Go from town to town throughout the land and say,
'Remember the ancient covenant, and do everything it requires. 7For
I solemnly warned your ancestors when I brought them out of
Egypt, "Obey me!" I have repeated this warning over and over to
this day, 8but your ancestors did not listen or even pay attention.
Instead, they stubbornly followed their own evil desires. And
because they refused to obey, I brought upon them all the curses
described in this covenant.'"

9Again the LORD spoke to me and said, "I have discovered a
conspiracy against me among the people of Judah and Jerusalem.
10They have returned to the sins of their ancestors. They have
refused to listen to me and are worshiping other gods. Israel and
Judah have both broken the covenant I made with their ancestors.
11Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I am going to bring
calamity upon them, and they will not escape. Though they beg for
mercy, I will not listen to their cries. 12Then the people of Judah
and Jerusalem will pray to their idols and burn incense before
them. But the idols will not save them when disaster strikes! 13Look
now, people of Judah; you have as many gods as you have towns.
You have as many altars of shame—altars for burning incense to

your god Baal—as there are streets in Jerusalem.

14“Pray no more for these people, Jeremiah. Do not weep or pray
for them, for I will not listen to them when they cry out to me in
distress.

15“What right do my beloved people have to come to my Temple,
when they have done so many immoral things?
Can their vows and sacrifices prevent their destruction?
They actually rejoice in doing evil!

16I, the LORD, once called them a thriving olive tree, beautiful to
see and full of good fruit.
But now I have sent the fury of their enemies to burn them with
fire, leaving them charred and broken.

17“I, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, who planted this olive tree,
have ordered it destroyed. For the people of Israel and Judah have
done evil, arousing my anger by burning incense to Baal.”

A PLOT AGAINST JEREMIAH

18Then the LORD told me about the plots my enemies were making
against me. 19I was like a lamb being led to the slaughter. I had no
idea that they were planning to kill me! “Let’s destroy this man and
all his words,” they said. “Let’s cut him down, so his name will be
forgotten forever.”

20O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, you make righteous judgments, and
you examine the deepest thoughts and secrets.
Let me see your vengeance against them, for I have committed my
cause to you.

21This is what the LORD says about the men of Anathoth who
wanted me dead. They had said, “We will kill you if you do not stop
prophesying in the LORD’s name.” 22So this is what the LORD of
Heaven’s Armies says about them: “I will punish them! Their young
men will die in battle, and their boys and girls will starve to death.

23Not one of these plotters from Anathoth will survive, for I will
bring disaster upon them when their time of punishment comes.”

Jeremiah 12

JEREMIAH QUESTIONS THE LORD’S JUSTICE

1LORD, you always give me justice when I bring a case before you.
So let me bring you this complaint: Why are the wicked so
prosperous?
Why are evil people so happy?

2You have planted them, and they have taken root and prospered.
Your name is on their lips, but you are far from their hearts.

3But as for me, LORD, you know my heart.
You see me and test my thoughts.
Drag these people away like sheep to be butchered!
Set them aside to be slaughtered!

4How long must this land mourn?
Even the grass in the fields has withered.
The wild animals and birds have disappeared because of the evil in
the land.
For the people have said, “The LORD doesn’t see what’s ahead for
us!”

THE LORD’S REPLY TO JEREMIAH

5“If racing against mere men makes you tired, how will you race
against horses?

If you stumble and fall on open ground, what will you do in the
thickets near the Jordan?

6Even your brothers, members of your own family, have turned
against you.
They plot and raise complaints against you.
Do not trust them, no matter how pleasantly they speak.

7“I have abandoned my people, my special possession.
I have surrendered my dearest ones to their enemies.

8My chosen people have roared at me like a lion of the forest, so I
have treated them with contempt.

9My chosen people act like speckled vultures,*
but they themselves are surrounded by vultures.
Bring on the wild animals to pick their corpses clean!

10“Many rulers have ravaged my vineyard, trampling down the
vines and turning all its beauty into a barren wilderness.

11They have made it an empty wasteland; I hear its mournful cry.
The whole land is desolate, and no one even cares.

12On all the bare hilltops, destroying armies can be seen.
The sword of the LORD devours people from one end of the nation
to the other.
No one will escape!

13My people have planted wheat but are harvesting thorns.
They have worn themselves out, but it has done them no good.
They will harvest a crop of shame because of the fierce anger of the
LORD.”

A MESSAGE FOR ISRAEL’S NEIGHBORS

14Now this is what the LORD says: “I will uproot from their land all
the evil nations reaching out for the possession I gave my people
Israel. And I will uproot Judah from among them. 15But afterward I
will return and have compassion on all of them. I will bring them
home to their own lands again, each nation to its own possession.
16And if these nations truly learn the ways of my people, and if they
learn to swear by my name, saying, ‘As surely as the LORD lives’
(just as they taught my people to swear by the name of Baal), then
they will be given a place among my people. 17But any nation who
refuses to obey me will be uprooted and destroyed. I, the LORD,
have spoken!”

Jeremiah 13

JEREMIAH'S LINEN LOINCLOTH

1This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and buy a linen loincloth
and put it on, but do not wash it." 2So I bought the loincloth as the
LORD directed me, and I put it on.

3Then the LORD gave me another message: 4"Take the linen
loincloth you are wearing, and go to the Euphrates River.* Hide it
there in a hole in the rocks." 5So I went and hid it by the Euphrates
as the LORD had instructed me.

6A long time afterward the LORD said to me, "Go back to the
Euphrates and get the loincloth I told you to hide there." 7So I went
to the Euphrates and dug it out of the hole where I had hidden it.
But now it was rotting and falling apart. The loincloth was good for
nothing.

8Then I received this message from the LORD: 9"This is what the
LORD says: This shows how I will rot away the pride of Judah and
Jerusalem. 10These wicked people refuse to listen to me. They
stubbornly follow their own desires and worship other gods.
Therefore, they will become like this loincloth—good for nothing!
11As a loincloth clings to a man's waist, so I created Judah and
Israel to cling to me, says the LORD. They were to be my people,
my pride, my glory—an honor to my name. But they would not
listen to me.

12"So tell them, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: May
all your jars be filled with wine.' And they will reply, 'Of course!
Jars are made to be filled with wine!'

13"Then tell them, 'No, this is what the LORD means: I will fill
everyone in this land with drunkenness—from the king sitting on

David's throne to the priests and the prophets, right down to the common people of Jerusalem. 14I will smash them against each other, even parents against children, says the LORD. I will not let my pity or mercy or compassion keep me from destroying them.'"

A WARNING AGAINST PRIDE

15Listen and pay attention!

Do not be arrogant, for the LORD has spoken.

16Give glory to the LORD your God before it is too late.
Acknowledge him before he brings darkness upon you, causing you to stumble and fall on the darkening mountains.
For then, when you look for light, you will find only terrible darkness and gloom.

17And if you still refuse to listen, I will weep alone because of your pride.
My eyes will overflow with tears, because the LORD's flock will be led away into exile.

18Say to the king and his mother, "Come down from your thrones and sit in the dust, for your glorious crowns will soon be snatched from your heads."

19The towns of the Negev will close their gates, and no one will be able to open them.
The people of Judah will be taken away as captives.
All will be carried into exile.

20Open up your eyes and see the armies marching down from the north!
Where is your flock— your beautiful flock— that he gave you to care for?

21What will you say when the LORD takes the allies you have cultivated and appoints them as your rulers?
Pangs of anguish will grip you, like those of a woman in labor!

22You may ask yourself, "Why is all this happening to me?"

It is because of your many sins!
That is why you have been stripped and raped by invading armies.

23Can an Ethiopian* change the color of his skin?
Can a leopard take away its spots?
Neither can you start doing good, for you have always done evil.

24"I will scatter you like chaff that is blown away by the desert winds.

25This is your allotment, the portion I have assigned to you,"
says the LORD, "for you have forgotten me, putting your trust in false gods.

26I myself will strip you and expose you to shame.

27I have seen your adultery and lust, and your disgusting idol worship out in the fields and on the hills.
What sorrow awaits you, Jerusalem!
How long before you are pure?"

Jeremiah 14

JUDAH'S TERRIBLE DROUGHT

1This message came to Jeremiah from the LORD, explaining why he was holding back the rain:

2"Judah wilts; commerce at the city gates grinds to a halt.
All the people sit on the ground in mourning, and a great cry rises from Jerusalem.

3The nobles send servants to get water, but all the wells are dry.
The servants return with empty pitchers, confused and desperate, covering their heads in grief.

4The ground is parched and cracked for lack of rain.
The farmers are deeply troubled; they, too, cover their heads.

5Even the doe abandons her newborn fawn because there is no grass
in the field.

6The wild donkeys stand on the bare hills panting like thirsty
jackals.
They strain their eyes looking for grass, but there is none to be
found."

7The people say, "Our wickedness has caught up with us, LORD, but
help us for the sake of your own reputation.
We have turned away from you and sinned against you again and
again.

8O Hope of Israel, our Savior in times of trouble, why are you like a
stranger to us?
Why are you like a traveler passing through the land, stopping only
for the night?

9Are you also confused?
Is our champion helpless to save us?
You are right here among us, LORD.
We are known as your people.
Please don't abandon us now!"

10So this is what the LORD says to his people: "You love to wander
far from me and do not restrain yourselves.
Therefore, I will no longer accept you as my people.
Now I will remember all your wickedness and will punish you for
your sins."

THE LORD FORBIDS JEREMIAH TO INTERCEDE

11Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for these people
anymore. 12When they fast, I will pay no attention. When they
present their burnt offerings and grain offerings to me, I will not
accept them. Instead, I will devour them with war, famine, and
disease."

13Then I said, "O Sovereign LORD, their prophets are telling them,
'All is well—no war or famine will come. The LORD will surely send

you peace.’”

14Then the LORD said, “These prophets are telling lies in my name.
I did not send them or tell them to speak. I did not give them any
messages. They prophesy of visions and revelations they have never
seen or heard. They speak foolishness made up in their own lying
hearts. 15Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I will punish these
lying prophets, for they have spoken in my name even though I
never sent them. They say that no war or famine will come, but
they themselves will die by war and famine! 16As for the people to
whom they prophesy—their bodies will be thrown out into the
streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and war. There will be no
one left to bury them. Husbands, wives, sons, and daughters—all
will be gone. For I will pour out their own wickedness on them.
17Now, Jeremiah, say this to them: “Night and day my eyes
overflow with tears.

I cannot stop weeping, for my virgin daughter—my precious people
— has been struck down and lies mortally wounded.

18If I go out into the fields, I see the bodies of people slaughtered by
the enemy.
If I walk the city streets, I see people who have died of starvation.
The prophets and priests continue with their work, but they don’t
know what they’re doing.”

A PRAYER FOR HEALING

19LORD, have you completely rejected Judah?

Do you really hate Jerusalem?*
Why have you wounded us past all hope of healing?
We hoped for peace, but no peace came.
We hoped for a time of healing, but found only terror.

20LORD, we confess our wickedness and that of our ancestors, too.
We all have sinned against you.

21For the sake of your reputation, LORD, do not abandon us.

Do not disgrace your own glorious throne.
Please remember us, and do not break your covenant with us.

22Can any of the worthless foreign gods send us rain?
Does it fall from the sky by itself?
No, you are the one, O LORD our God!
Only you can do such things.
So we will wait for you to help us.

Jeremiah 15

JUDAH'S INEVITABLE DOOM

1Then the LORD said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me pleading for these people, I wouldn't help them. Away with them! Get them out of my sight! 2And if they say to you, 'But where can we go?' tell them, 'This is what the LORD says: "'Those who are destined for death, to death; those who are destined for war, to war; those who are destined for famine, to famine; those who are destined for captivity, to captivity.'

3"I will send four kinds of destroyers against them," says the LORD. "I will send the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, the vultures to devour, and the wild animals to finish up what is left. 4Because of the wicked things Manasseh son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, did in Jerusalem, I will make my people an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

5"Who will feel sorry for you, Jerusalem?
Who will weep for you?
Who will even bother to ask how you are?

6You have abandoned me and turned your back on me,"
says the LORD.
"Therefore, I will raise my fist to destroy you.
I am tired of always giving you another chance.

7I will winnow you like grain at the gates of your cities and take away the children you hold dear.

I will destroy my own people, because they refuse to change their evil ways.

8There will be more widows than the grains of sand on the seashore.
At noontime I will bring a destroyer against the mothers of young men.
I will cause anguish and terror to come upon them suddenly.

9The mother of seven grows faint and gasps for breath; her sun has gone down while it is still day.
She sits childless now, disgraced and humiliated.
And I will hand over those who are left to be killed by the enemy.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

JEREMIAH’S COMPLAINT

10Then I said, “What sorrow is mine, my mother.

Oh, that I had died at birth!
I am hated everywhere I go.
I am neither a lender who threatens to foreclose nor a borrower who refuses to pay— yet they all curse me.”

11The LORD replied, “I will take care of you, Jeremiah.

Your enemies will ask you to plead on their behalf in times of trouble and distress.

12Can a man break a bar of iron from the north, or a bar of bronze?

13At no cost to them, I will hand over your wealth and treasures as plunder to your enemies, for sin runs rampant in your land.

14I will tell your enemies to take you as captives to a foreign land.
For my anger blazes like a fire that will burn forever.*”

15Then I said, “LORD, you know what’s happening to me.

Please step in and help me. Punish my persecutors!
Please give me time; don’t let me die young.

It’s for your sake that I am suffering.

16When I discovered your words, I devoured them.
They are my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O
LORD God of Heaven’s Armies.

17I never joined the people in their merry feasts.
I sat alone because your hand was on me.
I was filled with indignation at their sins.

18Why then does my suffering continue?
Why is my wound so incurable?
Your help seems as uncertain as a seasonal brook, like a spring that has gone dry.”

19This is how the LORD responds: “If you return to me, I will restore you so you can continue to serve me.

If you speak good words rather than worthless ones, you will be my spokesman.
You must influence them; do not let them influence you!

20They will fight against you like an attacking army, but I will make you as secure as a fortified wall of bronze.
They will not conquer you, for I am with you to protect and rescue you.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

21Yes, I will certainly keep you safe from these wicked men.
I will rescue you from their cruel hands.”

Jeremiah 16

JEREMIAH FORBIDDEN TO MARRY

1The LORD gave me another message. He said, 2“Do not get married
or have children in this place. 3For this is what the LORD says about
the children born here in this city and about their mothers and
fathers: 4They will die from terrible diseases. No one will mourn for
them or bury them, and they will lie scattered on the ground like
manure. They will die from war and famine, and their bodies will
be food for the vultures and wild animals.”

JUDAH’S COMING PUNISHMENT

5This is what the LORD says: “Do not go to funerals to mourn and
show sympathy for these people, for I have removed my protection
and peace from them. I have taken away my unfailing love and my
mercy. 6Both the great and the lowly will die in this land. No one
will bury them or mourn for them. Their friends will not cut
themselves in sorrow or shave their heads in sadness. 7No one will
offer a meal to comfort those who mourn for the dead—not even at
the death of a mother or father. No one will send a cup of wine to
console them.

8“And do not go to their feasts and parties. Do not eat and drink
with them at all. 9For this is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the
God of Israel, says: In your own lifetime, before your very eyes, I
will put an end to the happy singing and laughter in this land. The
joyful voices of bridegrooms and brides will no longer be heard.

10“When you tell the people all these things, they will ask, ‘Why has
the LORD decreed such terrible things against us? What have we
done to deserve such treatment? What is our sin against the LORD
our God?’

11“Then you will give them the LORD’s reply: ‘It is because your
ancestors were unfaithful to me. They worshiped other gods and
served them. They abandoned me and did not obey my word. 12And
you are even worse than your ancestors! You stubbornly follow
your own evil desires and refuse to listen to me. 13So I will throw
you out of this land and send you into a foreign land where you and
your ancestors have never been. There you can worship idols day
and night—and I will grant you no favors!’

HOPE DESPITE THE DISASTER

14“But the time is coming,” says the LORD, “when people who are
taking an oath will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who
rescued the people of Israel from the land of Egypt.’ 15Instead, they
will say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the people of
Israel back to their own land from the land of the north and from
all the countries to which he had exiled them.’ For I will bring them
back to this land that I gave their ancestors.

16“But now I am sending for many fishermen who will catch them,”
says the LORD. “I am sending for hunters who will hunt them down
in the mountains, hills, and caves. 17I am watching them closely,
and I see every sin. They cannot hope to hide from me. 18I will
double their punishment for all their sins, because they have defiled
my land with lifeless images of their detestable gods and have filled
my territory with their evil deeds.”

JEREMIAH'S PRAYER OF CONFIDENCE

19LORD, you are my strength and fortress, my refuge in the day of trouble!

Nations from around the world will come to you and say, "Our ancestors left us a foolish heritage, for they worshiped worthless idols.

20Can people make their own gods?
These are not real gods at all!"

21The LORD says, "Now I will show them my power; now I will show them my might.
At last they will know and understand that I am the LORD.

Jeremiah 17

JUDAH'S SIN AND PUNISHMENT

1"The sin of Judah is inscribed with an iron chisel— engraved with a diamond point on their stony hearts and on the corners of their altars.

2Even their children go to worship at their pagan altars and Asherah poles, beneath every green tree and on every high hill.

3So I will hand over my holy mountain— along with all your wealth and treasures and your pagan shrines— as plunder to your enemies, for sin runs rampant in your land.

4The wonderful possession I have reserved for you will slip from

your hands.
I will tell your enemies to take you as captives to a foreign land.
For my anger blazes like a fire that will burn forever."

WISDOM FROM THE LORD

5This is what the LORD says: "Cursed are those who put their trust
in mere humans, who rely on human strength and turn their hearts
away from the LORD.

6They are like stunted shrubs in the desert, with no hope for the
future.
They will live in the barren wilderness, in an uninhabited salty
land.

7"But blessed are those who trust in the LORD
and have made the LORD their hope and confidence.

8They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach
deep into the water.
Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months
of drought.
Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.

9"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and
desperately wicked.
Who really knows how bad it is?

10But I, the LORD, search all hearts and examine secret motives.
I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions
deserve."

JEREMIAH'S TRUST IN THE LORD

11Like a partridge that hatches eggs she has not laid, so are those
who get their wealth by unjust means.

At midlife they will lose their riches; in the end, they will become
poor old fools.

12But we worship at your throne— eternal, high, and glorious!

13O LORD, the hope of Israel, all who turn away from you will be disgraced.
They will be buried in the dust of the earth, for they have abandoned the LORD, the fountain of living water.

14O LORD, if you heal me, I will be truly healed; if you save me, I will be truly saved.
My praises are for you alone!

15People scoff at me and say, “What is this ‘message from the LORD’ you talk about?
Why don’t your predictions come true?”

16LORD, I have not abandoned my job as a shepherd for your people.
I have not urged you to send disaster.
You have heard everything I’ve said.

17LORD, don’t terrorize me!
You alone are my hope in the day of disaster.

18Bring shame and dismay on all who persecute me, but don’t let me experience shame and dismay.
Bring a day of terror on them.
Yes, bring double destruction upon them!

OBSERVING THE SABBATH

19This is what the LORD said to me: “Go and stand in the gates of Jerusalem, first in the gate where the king goes in and out, and then in each of the other gates. 20Say to all the people, ‘Listen to this message from the LORD, you kings of Judah and all you people of Judah and everyone living in Jerusalem. 21This is what the LORD says: Listen to my warning! Stop carrying on your trade at Jerusalem’s gates on the Sabbath day. 22Do not do your work on the Sabbath, but make it a holy day. I gave this command to your ancestors, 23but they did not listen or obey. They stubbornly refused to pay attention or accept my discipline.

24“‘But if you obey me, says the LORD, and do not carry on your

trade at the gates or work on the Sabbath day, and if you keep it holy, 25then kings and their officials will go in and out of these gates forever. There will always be a descendant of David sitting on the throne here in Jerusalem. Kings and their officials will always ride in and out among the people of Judah in chariots and on horses, and this city will remain forever. 26And from all around Jerusalem, from the towns of Judah and Benjamin, from the western foothills* and the hill country and the Negev, the people will come with their burnt offerings and sacrifices. They will bring their grain offerings, frankincense, and thanksgiving offerings to the LORD's Temple.

27"'But if you do not listen to me and refuse to keep the Sabbath holy, and if on the Sabbath day you bring loads of merchandise through the gates of Jerusalem just as on other days, then I will set fire to these gates. The fire will spread to the palaces, and no one will be able to put out the roaring flames.'"

Jeremiah 18

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

1The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, 2“Go down
to the potter’s shop, and I will speak to you there.” 3So I did as he
told me and found the potter working at his wheel. 4But the jar he
was making did not turn out as he had hoped, so he crushed it into
a lump of clay again and started over.

5Then the LORD gave me this message: 6“O Israel, can I not do to
you as this potter has done to his clay? As the clay is in the potter’s
hand, so are you in my hand. 7If I announce that a certain nation or
kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down, and destroyed, 8but then that
nation renounces its evil ways, I will not destroy it as I had planned.
9And if I announce that I will plant and build up a certain nation or
kingdom, 10but then that nation turns to evil and refuses to obey
me, I will not bless it as I said I would.

11“Therefore, Jeremiah, go and warn all Judah and Jerusalem. Say
to them, ‘This is what the LORD says: I am planning disaster for you
instead of good. So turn from your evil ways, each of you, and do

what is right.’”

12But the people replied, “Don’t waste your breath. We will
continue to live as we want to, stubbornly following our own evil
desires.”

13So this is what the LORD says: “Has anyone ever heard of such a
thing, even among the pagan nations?

My virgin daughter Israel has done something terrible!

14Does the snow ever disappear from the mountaintops of Lebanon?
Do the cold streams flowing from those distant mountains ever run
dry?

15But my people are not so reliable, for they have deserted me; they
burn incense to worthless idols.
They have stumbled off the ancient highways and walk in muddy
paths.

16Therefore, their land will become desolate, a monument to their
stupidity.
All who pass by will be astonished and will shake their heads in
amazement.

17I will scatter my people before their enemies as the east wind
scatters dust.
And in all their trouble I will turn my back on them and refuse to
notice their distress.”

A PLOT AGAINST JEREMIAH

18Then the people said, “Come on, let’s plot a way to stop Jeremiah.
We have plenty of priests and wise men and prophets. We don’t
need him to teach the word and give us advice and prophecies. Let’s
spread rumors about him and ignore what he says.”

19LORD, hear me and help me!
Listen to what my enemies are saying.

20Should they repay evil for good?
They have dug a pit to kill me, though I pleaded for them and tried
to protect them from your anger.

21So let their children starve!
Let them die by the sword!
Let their wives become childless widows.
Let their old men die in a plague, and let their young men be killed
in battle!

22Let screaming be heard from their homes as warriors come
suddenly upon them.
For they have dug a pit for me and have hidden traps along my
path.

23LORD, you know all about their murderous plots against me.
Don’t forgive their crimes and blot out their sins.
Let them die before you.
Deal with them in your anger.

Jeremiah 19

JEREMIAH’S SHATTERED JAR

1This is what the LORD said to me: “Go and buy a clay jar. Then ask
some of the leaders of the people and of the priests to follow you.
2Go out through the Gate of Broken Pots to the garbage dump in the
valley of Ben-Hinnom, and give them this message. 3Say to them,
‘Listen to this message from the LORD, you kings of Judah and
citizens of Jerusalem! This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies,
the God of Israel, says: I will bring a terrible disaster on this place,
and the ears of those who hear about it will ring!

4“‘For Israel has forsaken me and turned this valley into a place of
wickedness. The people burn incense to foreign gods—idols never
before acknowledged by this generation, by their ancestors, or by
the kings of Judah. And they have filled this place with the blood of
innocent children. 5They have built pagan shrines to Baal, and there
they burn their sons as sacrifices to Baal. I have never commanded
such a horrible deed; it never even crossed my mind to command
such a thing! 6So beware, for the time is coming, says the LORD,
when this garbage dump will no longer be called Topheth or the
valley of Ben-Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.

7“‘For I will upset the careful plans of Judah and Jerusalem. I will
allow the people to be slaughtered by invading armies, and I will
leave their dead bodies as food for the vultures and wild animals. 8I
will reduce Jerusalem to ruins, making it a monument to their
stupidity. All who pass by will be astonished and will gasp at the
destruction they see there. 9I will see to it that your enemies lay
siege to the city until all the food is gone. Then those trapped inside
will eat their own sons and daughters and friends. They will be
driven to utter despair.’

10“As these men watch you, Jeremiah, smash the jar you brought.
11Then say to them, ‘This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies
says: As this jar lies shattered, so I will shatter the people of Judah
and Jerusalem beyond all hope of repair. They will bury the bodies
here in Topheth, the garbage dump, until there is no more room for
them. 12This is what I will do to this place and its people, says the
LORD. I will cause this city to become defiled like Topheth. 13Yes,
all the houses in Jerusalem, including the palace of Judah’s kings,

will become like Topheth—all the houses where you burned incense on the rooftops to your star gods, and where liquid offerings were poured out to your idols.'"

14Then Jeremiah returned from Topheth, the garbage dump where he had delivered this message, and he stopped in front of the Temple of the LORD. He said to the people there, 15"This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'I will bring disaster upon this city and its surrounding towns as I promised, because you have stubbornly refused to listen to me.'"

Jeremiah 20

JEREMIAH AND PASHHUR

1Now Pashhur son of Immer, the priest in charge of the Temple of the LORD, heard what Jeremiah was prophesying. 2So he arrested Jeremiah the prophet and had him whipped and put in stocks at the Benjamin Gate of the LORD's Temple.

3The next day, when Pashhur finally released him, Jeremiah said, "Pashhur, the LORD has changed your name. From now on you are to be called 'The Man Who Lives in Terror.'* 4For this is what the LORD says: 'I will send terror upon you and all your friends, and you will watch as they are slaughtered by the swords of the enemy. I will hand the people of Judah over to the king of Babylon. He will take them captive to Babylon or run them through with the sword. 5And I will let your enemies plunder Jerusalem. All the famed treasures of the city—the precious jewels and gold and silver of your kings—will be carried off to Babylon. 6As for you, Pashhur, you and all your household will go as captives to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you prophesied that everything would be all right.'"

JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINT

7O LORD, you misled me, and I allowed myself to be misled.

You are stronger than I am, and you overpowered me.
Now I am mocked every day; everyone laughs at me.

8When I speak, the words burst out.
“Violence and destruction!” I shout.
So these messages from the LORD
have made me a household joke.

9But if I say I’ll never mention the LORD
or speak in his name, his word burns in my heart like a fire.
It’s like a fire in my bones!
I am worn out trying to hold it in!
I can’t do it!

10I have heard the many rumors about me.
They call me “The Man Who Lives in Terror.”
They threaten, “If you say anything, we will report it.”
Even my old friends are watching me, waiting for a fatal slip.
“He will trap himself,” they say, “and then we will get our revenge on him.”

11But the LORD stands beside me like a great warrior.
Before him my persecutors will stumble.
They cannot defeat me.
They will fail and be thoroughly humiliated.
Their dishonor will never be forgotten.

12O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, you test those who are righteous,
and you examine the deepest thoughts and secrets.
Let me see your vengeance against them, for I have committed my cause to you.

13Sing to the LORD!
Praise the LORD!
For though I was poor and needy, he rescued me from my oppressors.

14Yet I curse the day I was born!
May no one celebrate the day of my birth.

15I curse the messenger who told my father, “Good news—you have
a son!”

16Let him be destroyed like the cities of old that the LORD
overthrew without mercy.
Terrify him all day long with battle shouts,

17because he did not kill me at birth.
Oh, that I had died in my mother’s womb, that her body had been
my grave!

18Why was I ever born?
My entire life has been filled with trouble, sorrow, and shame.

Jeremiah 21

NO DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON

1The LORD spoke through Jeremiah when King Zedekiah sent
Pashhur son of Malkijah and Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, the priest,
to speak with him. They begged Jeremiah, 2“Please speak to the
LORD for us and ask him to help us. King Nebuchadnezzar* of
Babylon is attacking Judah. Perhaps the LORD will be gracious and
do a mighty miracle as he has done in the past. Perhaps he will

force Nebuchadnezzar to withdraw his armies."

3Jeremiah replied, "Go back to King Zedekiah and tell him, 4'This is
what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I will make your weapons
useless against the king of Babylon and the Babylonians* who are
outside your walls attacking you. In fact, I will bring your enemies
right into the heart of this city. 5I myself will fight against you with
a strong hand and a powerful arm, for I am very angry. You have
made me furious! 6I will send a terrible plague upon this city, and
both people and animals will die. 7And after all that, says the LORD,
I will hand over King Zedekiah, his staff, and everyone else in the
city who survives the disease, war, and famine. I will hand them
over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and to their other
enemies. He will slaughter them and show them no mercy, pity, or
compassion.'

8"Tell all the people, 'This is what the LORD says: Take your choice
of life or death! 9Everyone who stays in Jerusalem will die from
war, famine, or disease, but those who go out and surrender to the
Babylonians will live. Their reward will be life! 10For I have decided
to bring disaster and not good upon this city, says the LORD. It will
be handed over to the king of Babylon, and he will reduce it to
ashes.'

JUDGMENT ON JUDAH'S KINGS

11"Say to the royal family of Judah, 'Listen to this message from the
LORD! 12This is what the LORD says to the dynasty of David: "'Give
justice each morning to the people you judge!

Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their
oppressors.
Otherwise, my anger will burn like an unquenchable fire because of
all your sins.

13I will personally fight against the people in Jerusalem, that
mighty fortress— the people who boast, "No one can touch us here.
No one can break in here."

14And I myself will punish you for your sinfulness, says the LORD.
I will light a fire in your forests that will burn up everything around
you.’”

Jeremiah 22

A MESSAGE FOR JUDAH’S KINGS

1This is what the LORD said to me: “Go over and speak directly to
the king of Judah. Say to him, 2‘Listen to this message from the
LORD, you king of Judah, sitting on David’s throne. Let your
attendants and your people listen, too. 3This is what the LORD says:
Be fair-minded and just. Do what is right! Help those who have
been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors. Quit your evil
deeds! Do not mistreat foreigners, orphans, and widows. Stop
murdering the innocent! 4If you obey me, there will always be a
descendant of David sitting on the throne here in Jerusalem. The
king will ride through the palace gates in chariots and on horses,
with his parade of attendants and subjects. 5But if you refuse to pay
attention to this warning, I swear by my own name, says the LORD,
that this palace will become a pile of rubble.’”

A MESSAGE ABOUT THE PALACE

6Now this is what the LORD says concerning Judah’s royal palace:
“I love you as much as fruitful Gilead and the green forests of
Lebanon.

But I will turn you into a desert, with no one living within your
walls.

7I will call for wreckers, who will bring out their tools to dismantle

you.
They will tear out all your fine cedar beams and throw them on the fire.

8“People from many nations will pass by the ruins of this city and say to one another, ‘Why did the LORD destroy such a great city?’
9And the answer will be, ‘Because they violated their covenant with the LORD their God by worshiping other gods.’”

A MESSAGE ABOUT JEHOAHAZ

10Do not weep for the dead king or mourn his loss.

Instead, weep for the captive king being led away!
For he will never return to see his native land again.

11For this is what the LORD says about Jehoahaz,* who succeeded his father, King Josiah, and was taken away as a captive: “He will never return. 12He will die in a distant land and will never again see his own country.”

A MESSAGE ABOUT JEHOIAKIM

13And the LORD says, “What sorrow awaits Jehoiakim,*

who builds his palace with forced labor.*
He builds injustice into its walls, for he makes his neighbors work for nothing.
He does not pay them for their labor.

14He says, ‘I will build a magnificent palace with huge rooms and many windows.
I will panel it throughout with fragrant cedar and paint it a lovely red.’

15But a beautiful cedar palace does not make a great king!
Your father, Josiah, also had plenty to eat and drink.
But he was just and right in all his dealings.

That is why God blessed him.

16He gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him.
Isn't that what it means to know me?"
says the LORD.

17"But you! You have eyes only for greed and dishonesty!
You murder the innocent, oppress the poor, and reign ruthlessly."

18Therefore, this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim, son of King Josiah: "The people will not mourn for him, crying to one another, 'Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!'

His subjects will not mourn for him, crying, 'Alas, our master is dead! Alas, his splendor is gone!'

19He will be buried like a dead donkey— dragged out of Jerusalem and dumped outside the gates!

20Weep for your allies in Lebanon.
Shout for them in Bashan.
Search for them in the regions east of the river.*
See, they are all destroyed.
Not one is left to help you.

21I warned you when you were prosperous, but you replied, 'Don't bother me.'
You have been that way since childhood— you simply will not obey me!

22And now the wind will blow away your allies.
All your friends will be taken away as captives.
Surely then you will see your wickedness and be ashamed.

23It may be nice to live in a beautiful palace paneled with wood from the cedars of Lebanon, but soon you will groan with pangs of anguish— anguish like that of a woman in labor.

A MESSAGE FOR JEHOIACHIN

24"As surely as I live," says the LORD, "I will abandon you,
Jehoiachin* son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. Even if you were the
signet ring on my right hand, I would pull you off. 25I will hand you
over to those who seek to kill you, those you so desperately fear—to
King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon and the mighty Babylonian*
army. 26I will expel you and your mother from this land, and you
will die in a foreign country, not in your native land. 27You will
never again return to the land you yearn for.

28"Why is this man Jehoiachin like a discarded, broken jar?
Why are he and his children to be exiled to a foreign land?

29O earth, earth, earth!
Listen to this message from the LORD!

30This is what the LORD says: 'Let the record show that this man
Jehoiachin was childless.
He is a failure, for none of his children will succeed him on the
throne of David to rule over Judah.'

Jeremiah 23

THE RIGHTEOUS DESCENDANT

1"What sorrow awaits the leaders of my people—the shepherds of
my sheep—for they have destroyed and scattered the very ones they
were expected to care for," says the LORD.

2Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to these
shepherds: "Instead of caring for my flock and leading them to
safety, you have deserted them and driven them to destruction.
Now I will pour out judgment on you for the evil you have done to
them. 3But I will gather together the remnant of my flock from the
countries where I have driven them. I will bring them back to their
own sheepfold, and they will be fruitful and increase in number.
4Then I will appoint responsible shepherds who will care for them,
and they will never be afraid again. Not a single one will be lost or

missing. I, the LORD, have spoken!

5“For the time is coming,”
says the LORD, “when I will raise up a righteous descendant*
from King David’s line.
He will be a King who rules with wisdom.
He will do what is just and right throughout the land.

6And this will be his name: ‘The LORD Is Our Righteousness.’*
In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.

7“In that day,” says the LORD, “when people are taking an oath,
they will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who rescued
the people of Israel from the land of Egypt.’ 8Instead, they will say,
‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the people of Israel back
to their own land from the land of the north and from all the
countries to which he had exiled them.’ Then they will live in their
own land.”

JUDGMENT ON FALSE PROPHETS

9My heart is broken because of the false prophets, and my bones
tremble.

I stagger like a drunkard, like someone overcome by wine, because
of the holy words the LORD has spoken against them.

10For the land is full of adultery, and it lies under a curse.
The land itself is in mourning— its wilderness pastures are dried up.
For they all do evil and abuse what power they have.

11“Even the priests and prophets are ungodly, wicked men.
I have seen their despicable acts right here in my own Temple,”
says the LORD.

12“Therefore, the paths they take will become slippery.
They will be chased through the dark, and there they will fall.
For I will bring disaster upon them at the time fixed for their

punishment.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

13“I saw that the prophets of Samaria were terribly evil, for they
prophesied in the name of Baal and led my people of Israel into sin.

14But now I see that the prophets of Jerusalem are even worse!
They commit adultery and love dishonesty.
They encourage those who are doing evil so that no one turns away
from their sins.
These prophets are as wicked as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah
once were.”

15Therefore, this is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says
concerning the prophets: “I will feed them with bitterness and give
them poison to drink.

For it is because of Jerusalem’s prophets that wickedness has filled
this land.”

16This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says to his people: “Do
not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you
with futile hopes.

They are making up everything they say.
They do not speak for the LORD!

17They keep saying to those who despise my word, ‘Don’t worry!
The LORD says you will have peace!’
And to those who stubbornly follow their own desires, they say, ‘No
harm will come your way!’

18“Have any of these prophets been in the LORD’s presence to hear
what he is really saying?
Has even one of them cared enough to listen?

19Look! The LORD’s anger bursts out like a storm, a whirlwind that
swirls down on the heads of the wicked.

20The anger of the LORD will not diminish until it has finished all
he has planned.
In the days to come you will understand all this very clearly.

21“I have not sent these prophets, yet they run around claiming to
speak for me.
I have given them no message, yet they go on prophesying.

22If they had stood before me and listened to me, they would have
spoken my words, and they would have turned my people from
their evil ways and deeds.

23Am I a God who is only close at hand?” says the LORD.
“No, I am far away at the same time.

24Can anyone hide from me in a secret place?
Am I not everywhere in all the heavens and earth?”
says the LORD.

25“I have heard these prophets say, ‘Listen to the dream I had from
God last night.’ And then they proceed to tell lies in my name.
26How long will this go on? If they are prophets, they are prophets
of deceit, inventing everything they say. 27By telling these false
dreams, they are trying to get my people to forget me, just as their
ancestors did by worshiping the idols of Baal.

28“Let these false prophets tell their dreams, but let my true
messengers faithfully proclaim my every word.
There is a difference between straw and grain!

29Does not my word burn like fire?”
says the LORD.
“Is it not like a mighty hammer that smashes a rock to pieces?

30“Therefore,” says the LORD, “I am against these prophets who
steal messages from each other and claim they are from me. 31I am
against these smooth-tongued prophets who say, ‘This prophecy is
from the LORD!’ 32I am against these false prophets. Their
imaginary dreams are flagrant lies that lead my people into sin. I
did not send or appoint them, and they have no message at all for
my people. I, the LORD, have spoken!

FALSE PROPHECIES AND FALSE PROPHETS

33“Suppose one of the people or one of the prophets or priests asks you, ‘What prophecy has the LORD burdened you with now?’ You must reply, ‘You are the burden!* The LORD says he will abandon you!’

34“If any prophet, priest, or anyone else says, ‘I have a prophecy from the LORD,’ I will punish that person along with his entire family. 35You should keep asking each other, ‘What is the LORD’s answer?’ or ‘What is the LORD saying?’ 36But stop using this phrase, ‘prophecy from the LORD.’ For people are using it to give authority to their own ideas, turning upside down the words of our God, the living God, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

37“This is what you should say to the prophets: ‘What is the LORD’s answer?’ or ‘What is the LORD saying?’ 38But suppose they respond, ‘This is a prophecy from the LORD!’ Then you should say, ‘This is what the LORD says: Because you have used this phrase, “prophecy from the LORD,” even though I warned you not to use it, 39I will forget you completely.* I will expel you from my presence, along with this city that I gave to you and your ancestors. 40And I will make you an object of ridicule, and your name will be infamous throughout the ages.’”

Jeremiah 24

GOOD AND BAD FIGS

1After King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon exiled Jehoiachin* son of
Jehoiakim, king of Judah, to Babylon along with the officials of
Judah and all the craftsmen and artisans, the LORD gave me this
vision. I saw two baskets of figs placed in front of the LORD's
Temple in Jerusalem. 2One basket was filled with fresh, ripe figs,
while the other was filled with bad figs that were too rotten to eat.

3Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

I replied, "Figs, some very good and some very bad, too rotten to
eat."

4Then the LORD gave me this message: 5"This is what the LORD, the
God of Israel, says: The good figs represent the exiles I sent from
Judah to the land of the Babylonians.*6I will watch over and care
for them, and I will bring them back here again. I will build them
up and not tear them down. I will plant them and not uproot them.
7I will give them hearts that recognize me as the LORD. They will

be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me wholeheartedly.

8“But the bad figs,” the LORD said, “represent King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, all the people left in Jerusalem, and those who live in Egypt. I will treat them like bad figs, too rotten to eat. 9I will make them an object of horror and a symbol of evil to every nation on earth. They will be disgraced and mocked, taunted and cursed, wherever I scatter them. 10And I will send war, famine, and disease until they have vanished from the land of Israel, which I gave to them and their ancestors.”

Jeremiah 25

SEVENTY YEARS OF CAPTIVITY

1This message for all the people of Judah came to Jeremiah from
the LORD during the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign over Judah.*
This was the year when King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon began his
reign.

2Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people in Judah and
Jerusalem, 3"For the past twenty-three years—from the thirteenth
year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon,* king of Judah, until now—
the LORD has been giving me his messages. I have faithfully passed
them on to you, but you have not listened.

4"Again and again the LORD has sent you his servants, the prophets,
but you have not listened or even paid attention. 5Each time the
message was this: 'Turn from the evil road you are traveling and
from the evil things you are doing. Only then will I let you live in
this land that the LORD gave to you and your ancestors forever. 6Do
not provoke my anger by worshiping idols you made with your own
hands. Then I will not harm you.'

7"But you would not listen to me," says the LORD. "You made me
furious by worshiping idols you made with your own hands,
bringing on yourselves all the disasters you now suffer. 8And now
the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: Because you have not listened to
me, 9I will gather together all the armies of the north under King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, whom I have appointed as my deputy.
I will bring them all against this land and its people and against the
surrounding nations. I will completely destroy* you and make you
an object of horror and contempt and a ruin forever. 10I will take
away your happy singing and laughter. The joyful voices of
bridegrooms and brides will no longer be heard. Your millstones
will fall silent, and the lights in your homes will go out. 11This
entire land will become a desolate wasteland. Israel and her
neighboring lands will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.

12"Then, after the seventy years of captivity are over, I will punish
the king of Babylon and his people for their sins," says the LORD. "I

will make the country of the Babylonians* a wasteland forever. 13I will bring upon them all the terrors I have promised in this book—all the penalties announced by Jeremiah against the nations. 14Many nations and great kings will enslave the Babylonians, just as they enslaved my people. I will punish them in proportion to the suffering they cause my people."

THE CUP OF THE LORD'S ANGER

15This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup filled to the brim with my anger, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink from it. 16When they drink from it, they will stagger, crazed by the warfare I will send against them."

17So I took the cup of anger from the LORD and made all the nations drink from it—every nation to which the LORD sent me. 18I went to Jerusalem and the other towns of Judah, and their kings and officials drank from the cup. From that day until this, they have been a desolate ruin, an object of horror, contempt, and cursing. 19I gave the cup to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, his attendants, his officials, and all his people, 20along with all the foreigners living in that land. I also gave it to all the kings of the land of Uz and the kings of the Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and what remains of Ashdod. 21Then I gave the cup to the nations of Edom, Moab, and Ammon, 22and the kings of Tyre and Sidon, and the kings of the regions across the sea. 23I gave it to Dedan, Tema, and Buz, and to the people who live in distant places.*24I gave it to the kings of Arabia, the kings of the nomadic tribes of the desert, 25and to the kings of Zimri, Elam, and Media. 26And I gave it to the kings of the northern countries, far and near, one after the other—all the kingdoms of the world. And finally, the king of Babylon* himself drank from the cup of the LORD's anger.

27Then the LORD said to me, "Now tell them, 'This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: Drink from this cup of my anger. Get drunk and vomit; fall to rise no more, for I am sending terrible wars against you.' 28And if they refuse to accept the

cup, tell them, ‘The LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: You have no choice but to drink from it. 29I have begun to punish Jerusalem, the city that bears my name. Now should I let you go unpunished? No, you will not escape disaster. I will call for war against all the nations of the earth. I, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, have spoken!’

30“Now prophesy all these things, and say to them, “‘The LORD will roar against his own land from his holy dwelling in heaven.

He will shout like those who tread grapes; he will shout against everyone on earth.

31His cry of judgment will reach the ends of the earth, for the LORD will bring his case against all the nations.
He will judge all the people of the earth, slaughtering the wicked with the sword.
I, the LORD, have spoken!’”

32This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: “Look! Disaster will fall upon nation after nation!
A great whirlwind of fury is rising from the most distant corners of the earth!”

33In that day those the LORD has slaughtered will fill the earth from one end to the other. No one will mourn for them or gather up their bodies to bury them. They will be scattered on the ground like manure.

34Weep and moan, you evil shepherds!
Roll in the dust, you leaders of the flock!
The time of your slaughter has arrived; you will fall and shatter like a fragile vase.

35You will find no place to hide; there will be no way to escape.

36Listen to the frantic cries of the shepherds.
The leaders of the flock are wailing in despair, for the LORD is ruining their pastures.

37Peaceful meadows will be turned into a wasteland by the LORD’s

fierce anger.

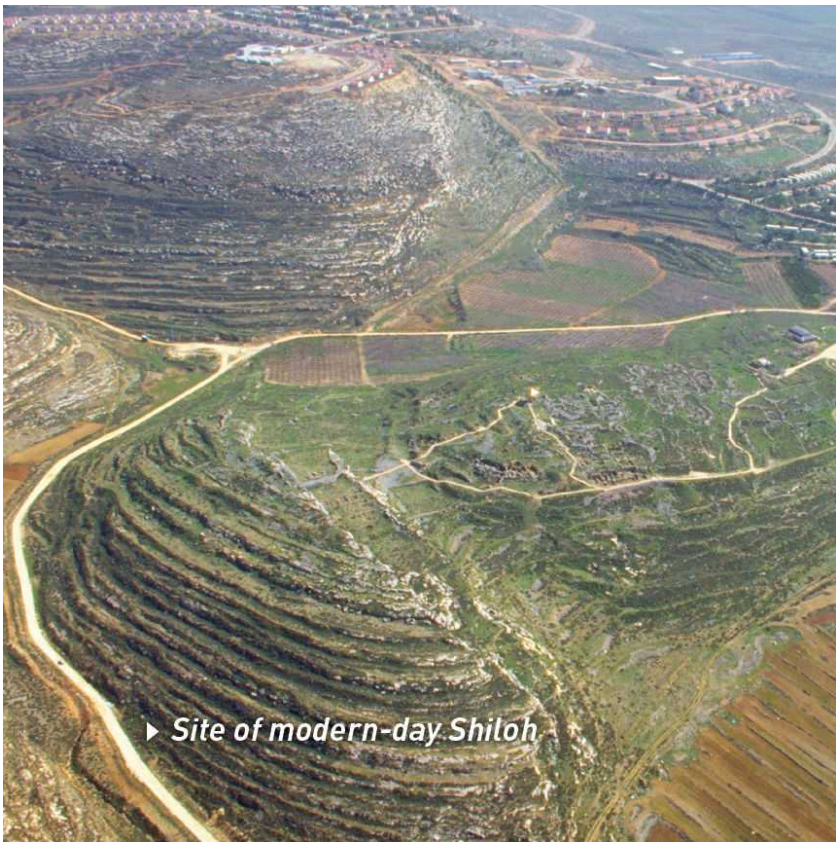
38He has left his den like a strong lion seeking its prey, and their
land will be made desolate by the sword* of the enemy and the
LORD's fierce anger.

Jeremiah 26

JEREMIAH'S ESCAPE FROM DEATH

1This message came to Jeremiah from the LORD early in the reign
of Jehoiakim son of Josiah,* king of Judah. 2"This is what the LORD
says: Stand in the courtyard in front of the Temple of the LORD,
and make an announcement to the people who have come there to
worship from all over Judah. Give them my entire message; include

every word. 3Perhaps they will listen and turn from their evil ways.
Then I will change my mind about the disaster I am ready to pour
out on them because of their sins.



SHILOH

4"Say to them, 'This is what the LORD says: If you will not listen to
me and obey my word I have given you, 5and if you will not listen
to my servants, the prophets—for I sent them again and again to
warn you, but you would not listen to them—6then I will destroy
this Temple as I destroyed Shiloh, the place where the Tabernacle

was located. And I will make Jerusalem an object of cursing in every nation on earth.'"

7The priests, the prophets, and all the people listened to Jeremiah as he spoke in front of the LORD's Temple. 8But when Jeremiah had finished his message, saying everything the LORD had told him to say, the priests and prophets and all the people at the Temple mobbed him. "Kill him!" they shouted. 9"What right do you have to prophesy in the LORD's name that this Temple will be destroyed like Shiloh? What do you mean, saying that Jerusalem will be destroyed and left with no inhabitants?" And all the people threatened him as he stood in front of the Temple.

10When the officials of Judah heard what was happening, they rushed over from the palace and sat down at the New Gate of the Temple to hold court. 11The priests and prophets presented their accusations to the officials and the people. "This man should die!" they said. "You have heard with your own ears what a traitor he is, for he has prophesied against this city."

12Then Jeremiah spoke to the officials and the people in his own defense. "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this Temple and this city," he said. "The LORD gave me every word that I have spoken. 13But if you stop your sinning and begin to obey the LORD your God, he will change his mind about this disaster that he has announced against you. 14As for me, I am in your hands—do with me as you think best. 15But if you kill me, rest assured that you will be killing an innocent man! The responsibility for such a deed will lie on you, on this city, and on every person living in it. For it is absolutely true that the LORD sent me to speak every word you have heard."

16Then the officials and the people said to the priests and prophets, "This man does not deserve the death sentence, for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."

17Then some of the wise old men stood and spoke to all the people

assembled there. 18They said, “Remember when Micah of Moresheth
prophesied during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah. He told the
people of Judah, ‘This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says:
Mount Zion will be plowed like an open field; Jerusalem will be
reduced to ruins!

A thicket will grow on the heights where the Temple now stands.’*

19But did King Hezekiah and the people kill him for saying this? No,
they turned from their sins and worshiped the LORD. They begged
him for mercy. Then the LORD changed his mind about the terrible
disaster he had pronounced against them. So we are about to do
ourselves great harm.”

KIRIATH-JEARIM

20At this time Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim was also
prophesying for the LORD. And he predicted the same terrible
disaster against the city and nation as Jeremiah did. 21When King
Jehoiakim and the army officers and officials heard what he was
saying, the king sent someone to kill him. But Uriah heard about
the plan and escaped in fear to Egypt. 22Then King Jehoiakim sent
Elnathan son of Acbor to Egypt along with several other men to
capture Uriah. 23They took him prisoner and brought him back to
King Jehoiakim. The king then killed Uriah with a sword and had
him buried in an unmarked grave.

24Nevertheless, Ahikam son of Shaphan stood up for Jeremiah and
persuaded the court not to turn him over to the mob to be killed.

Jeremiah 27

JEREMIAH WEARS AN OX YOKE

1This message came to Jeremiah from the LORD early in the reign
of Zedekiah* son of Josiah, king of Judah.

2This is what the LORD said to me: “Make a yoke, and fasten it on
your neck with leather straps. 3Then send messages to the kings of
Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon through their ambassadors
who have come to see King Zedekiah in Jerusalem. 4Give them this
message for their masters: ‘This is what the LORD of Heaven’s
Armies, the God of Israel, says: 5With my great strength and
powerful arm I made the earth and all its people and every animal.
I can give these things of mine to anyone I choose. 6Now I will give
your countries to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who is my
servant. I have put everything, even the wild animals, under his
control. 7All the nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson
until his time is up. Then many nations and great kings will conquer
and rule over Babylon. 8So you must submit to Babylon’s king and
serve him; put your neck under Babylon’s yoke! I will punish any
nation that refuses to be his slave, says the LORD. I will send war,
famine, and disease upon that nation until Babylon has conquered
it.

9“‘Do not listen to your false prophets, fortune-tellers, interpreters
of dreams, mediums, and sorcerers who say, “The king of Babylon
will not conquer you.” 10They are all liars, and their lies will lead to
your being driven out of your land. I will drive you out and send
you far away to die. 11But the people of any nation that submits to
the king of Babylon will be allowed to stay in their own country to
farm the land as usual. I, the LORD, have spoken!’”

12Then I repeated this same message to King Zedekiah of Judah. “If
you want to live, submit to the yoke of the king of Babylon and his
people. 13Why do you insist on dying—you and your people? Why
should you choose war, famine, and disease, which the LORD will
bring against every nation that refuses to submit to Babylon’s king?

14Do not listen to the false prophets who keep telling you, ‘The king
of Babylon will not conquer you.’ They are liars. 15This is what the
LORD says: ‘I have not sent these prophets! They are telling you lies
in my name, so I will drive you from this land. You will all die—
you and all these prophets, too.’”

16Then I spoke to the priests and the people and said, “This is what
the LORD says: ‘Do not listen to your prophets who claim that soon
the gold articles taken from my Temple will be returned from
Babylon. It is all a lie! 17Do not listen to them. Surrender to the king
of Babylon, and you will live. Why should this whole city be
destroyed? 18If they really are prophets and speak the LORD’s
messages, let them pray to the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. Let them
pray that the articles remaining in the LORD’s Temple and in the
king’s palace and in the palaces of Jerusalem will not be carried
away to Babylon!’

19“For the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has spoken about the pillars in
front of the Temple, the great bronze basin called the Sea, the water
carts, and all the other ceremonial articles. 20King Nebuchadnezzar
of Babylon left them here when he exiled Jehoiachin* son of
Jehoiakim, king of Judah, to Babylon, along with all the other
nobles of Judah and Jerusalem. 21Yes, this is what the LORD of
Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says about the precious things
still in the Temple, in the palace of Judah’s king, and in Jerusalem:
22‘They will all be carried away to Babylon and will stay there until
I send for them,’ says the LORD. ‘Then I will bring them back to
Jerusalem again.’”

JEREMIAH CONDEMNS HANANIAH

1One day in late summer* of that same year—the fourth year of the
reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah—Hananiah son of Azzur, a prophet
from Gibeon, addressed me publicly in the Temple while all the
priests and people listened. He said, 2"This is what the LORD of
Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'I will remove the yoke of
the king of Babylon from your necks. 3Within two years I will bring
back all the Temple treasures that King Nebuchadnezzar carried off
to Babylon. 4And I will bring back Jehoiachin* son of Jehoiakim,
king of Judah, and all the other captives that were taken to
Babylon. I will surely break the yoke that the king of Babylon has
put on your necks. I, the LORD, have spoken!'"

5Jeremiah responded to Hananiah as they stood in front of all the
priests and people at the Temple. 6He said, "Amen! May your
prophecies come true! I hope the LORD does everything you say. I
hope he does bring back from Babylon the treasures of this Temple
and all the captives. 7But listen now to the solemn words I speak to
you in the presence of all these people. 8The ancient prophets who
preceded you and me spoke against many nations, always warning
of war, disaster, and disease. 9So a prophet who predicts peace must
show he is right. Only when his predictions come true can we know
that he is really from the LORD."

10Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke off Jeremiah's neck and
broke it in pieces. 11And Hananiah said again to the crowd that had
gathered, "This is what the LORD says: 'Just as this yoke has been
broken, within two years I will break the yoke of oppression from
all the nations now subject to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.'"
With that, Jeremiah left the Temple area.

12Soon after this confrontation with Hananiah, the LORD gave this
message to Jeremiah: 13"Go and tell Hananiah, 'This is what the
LORD says: You have broken a wooden yoke, but you have replaced
it with a yoke of iron. 14The LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of
Israel, says: I have put a yoke of iron on the necks of all these

nations, forcing them into slavery under King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. I have put everything, even the wild animals, under his control.’”

15Then Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah, “Listen, Hananiah! The LORD has not sent you, but the people believe your lies. 16Therefore, this is what the LORD says: ‘You must die. Your life will end this very year because you have rebelled against the LORD.’”

17Two months later* the prophet Hananiah died.

Jeremiah 29

A LETTER TO THE EXILES

1Jeremiah wrote a letter from Jerusalem to the elders, priests, prophets, and all the people who had been exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. 2This was after King Jehoiachin,* the queen mother, the court officials, the other officials of Judah, and all the craftsmen and artisans had been deported from Jerusalem. 3He sent the letter with Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah when they went to Babylon as King Zedekiah’s ambassadors to Nebuchadnezzar. This is what Jeremiah’s letter said:

4This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: 5“Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. 6Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! 7And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.”

8This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let your prophets and fortune-tellers who are with you in

the land of Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams,
9because they are telling you lies in my name. I have not sent
them," says the LORD.

10This is what the LORD says: "You will be in Babylon for seventy
years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have
promised, and I will bring you home again. 11For I know the plans I
have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for
disaster, to give you a future and a hope. 12In those days when you
pray, I will listen. 13If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find
me. 14I will be found by you," says the LORD. "I will end your
captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the
nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your
own land."

15You claim that the LORD has raised up prophets for you in
Babylon. 16But this is what the LORD says about the king who sits
on David's throne and all those still living here in Jerusalem—your
relatives who were not exiled to Babylon. 17This is what the LORD
of Heaven's Armies says: "I will send war, famine, and disease upon
them and make them like bad figs, too rotten to eat. 18Yes, I will
pursue them with war, famine, and disease, and I will scatter them
around the world. In every nation where I send them, I will make
them an object of damnation, horror, contempt, and mockery. 19For
they refuse to listen to me, though I have spoken to them repeatedly
through the prophets I sent. And you who are in exile have not
listened either," says the LORD.

20Therefore, listen to this message from the LORD, all you captives
there in Babylon. 21This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the
God of Israel, says about your prophets—Ahab son of Kolaiah and
Zedekiah son of Maaseiah—who are telling you lies in my name: "I
will turn them over to Nebuchadnezzar* for execution before your
eyes. 22Their terrible fate will become proverbial, so that the Judean
exiles will curse someone by saying, 'May the LORD make you like
Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon burned alive!' 23For
these men have done terrible things among my people. They have
committed adultery with their neighbors' wives and have lied in my
name, saying things I did not command. I am a witness to this. I,
the LORD, have spoken."

A MESSAGE FOR SHEMAIAH

24The LORD sent this message to Shemaiah the Nehelamite in
Babylon: 25"This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of
Israel, says: You wrote a letter on your own authority to Zephaniah
son of Maaseiah, the priest, and you sent copies to the other priests
and people in Jerusalem. You wrote to Zephaniah,

26"The LORD has appointed you to replace Jehoiada as the priest in
charge of the house of the LORD. You are responsible to put into
stocks and neck irons any crazy man who claims to be a prophet.
27So why have you done nothing to stop Jeremiah from Anathoth,
who pretends to be a prophet among you? 28Jeremiah sent a letter
here to Babylon, predicting that our captivity will be a long one. He
said, 'Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food
they produce.'"

29But when Zephaniah the priest received Shemaiah's letter, he took
it to Jeremiah and read it to him. 30Then the LORD gave this
message to Jeremiah: 31"Send an open letter to all the exiles in
Babylon. Tell them, 'This is what the LORD says concerning
Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Since he has prophesied to you when I
did not send him and has tricked you into believing his lies, 32I will
punish him and his family. None of his descendants will see the
good things I will do for my people, for he has incited you to rebel
against me. I, the LORD, have spoken!'"

Jeremiah 30

PROMISES OF DELIVERANCE

1The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, 2"This is
what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Write down for the record
everything I have said to you, Jeremiah. 3For the time is coming
when I will restore the fortunes of my people of Israel and Judah. I
will bring them home to this land that I gave to their ancestors, and
they will possess it again. I, the LORD, have spoken!"

4This is the message the LORD gave concerning Israel and Judah.
5This is what the LORD says: “I hear cries of fear; there is terror and
no peace.

6Now let me ask you a question: Do men give birth to babies?
Then why do they stand there, ashen-faced, hands pressed against
their sides like a woman in labor?

7In all history there has never been such a time of terror.
It will be a time of trouble for my people Israel.*
Yet in the end they will be saved!

8For in that day,”
says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, “I will break the yoke from their
necks and snap their chains.
Foreigners will no longer be their masters.

9For my people will serve the LORD their God and their king
descended from David— the king I will raise up for them.

10“So do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant; do not be dismayed,
Israel,”
says the LORD.
“For I will bring you home again from distant lands, and your
children will return from their exile.
Israel will return to a life of peace and quiet, and no one will
terrorize them.

11For I am with you and will save you,”
says the LORD.
“I will completely destroy the nations where I have scattered you,
but I will not completely destroy you.
I will discipline you, but with justice; I cannot let you go
unpunished.”

12This is what the LORD says: “Your injury is incurable— a terrible
wound.

13There is no one to help you or to bind up your injury.

No medicine can heal you.

14All your lovers—your allies—have left you and do not care about you anymore.
I have wounded you cruelly, as though I were your enemy.
For your sins are many, and your guilt is great.

15Why do you protest your punishment— this wound that has no cure?
I have had to punish you because your sins are many and your guilt is great.

16“But all who devour you will be devoured, and all your enemies will be sent into exile.
All who plunder you will be plundered, and all who attack you will be attacked.

17I will give you back your health and heal your wounds,” says the LORD.
“For you are called an outcast— ‘Jerusalem* for whom no one cares.’”

18This is what the LORD says: “When I bring Israel home again from captivity and restore their fortunes, Jerusalem will be rebuilt on its ruins, and the palace reconstructed as before.

19There will be joy and songs of thanksgiving, and I will multiply my people, not diminish them; I will honor them, not despise them.

20Their children will prosper as they did long ago.
I will establish them as a nation before me, and I will punish anyone who hurts them.

21They will have their own ruler again, and he will come from their own people.
I will invite him to approach me,” says the LORD, “for who would dare to come unless invited?

22You will be my people, and I will be your God.”

23Look! The LORD’s anger bursts out like a storm, a driving wind

that swirls down on the heads of the wicked.

24The fierce anger of the LORD will not diminish until it has
finished all he has planned.
In the days to come you will understand all this.

Jeremiah 31

HOPE FOR RESTORATION

1"In that day," says the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families
of Israel, and they will be my people. 2This is what the LORD says:
"Those who survive the coming destruction will find blessings even
in the barren land, for I will give rest to the people of Israel."

3Long ago the LORD said to Israel: "I have loved you, my people,
with an everlasting love.
With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself.

4I will rebuild you, my virgin Israel.
You will again be happy and dance merrily with your tambourines.

5Again you will plant your vineyards on the mountains of Samaria

and eat from your own gardens there.

6The day will come when watchmen will shout from the hill
country of Ephraim, ‘Come, let us go up to Jerusalem*
to worship the LORD our God.’”

7Now this is what the LORD says: “Sing with joy for Israel.*
Shout for the greatest of nations!
Shout out with praise and joy: ‘Save your people, O LORD, the
remnant of Israel!’

8For I will bring them from the north and from the distant corners
of the earth.
I will not forget the blind and lame, the expectant mothers and
women in labor.
A great company will return!

9Tears of joy will stream down their faces, and I will lead them
home with great care.
They will walk beside quiet streams and on smooth paths where
they will not stumble.
For I am Israel’s father, and Ephraim is my oldest child.

10“Listen to this message from the LORD, you nations of the world;
proclaim it in distant coastlands: The LORD, who scattered his
people, will gather them and watch over them as a shepherd does
his flock.

11For the LORD has redeemed Israel from those too strong for them.

12They will come home and sing songs of joy on the heights of
Jerusalem.
They will be radiant because of the LORD’s good gifts— the
abundant crops of grain, new wine, and olive oil, and the healthy
flocks and herds.
Their life will be like a watered garden, and all their sorrows will be
gone.

13The young women will dance for joy, and the men—old and

young—will join in the celebration.
I will turn their mourning into joy.
I will comfort them and exchange their sorrow for rejoicing.

14The priests will enjoy abundance, and my people will feast on my good gifts.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

RACHEL’S SADNESS TURNS TO JOY

15This is what the LORD says: “A cry is heard in Ramah— deep anguish and bitter weeping.

Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted— for her children are gone.”

16But now this is what the LORD says: “Do not weep any longer, for I will reward you,” says the LORD.
“Your children will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy.

17There is hope for your future,” says the LORD.
“Your children will come again to their own land.

18I have heard Israel* saying, ‘You disciplined me severely, like a calf that needs training for the yoke.
Turn me again to you and restore me, for you alone are the LORD my God.

19I turned away from God, but then I was sorry.
I kicked myself for my stupidity!
I was thoroughly ashamed of all I did in my younger days.’

20“Is not Israel still my son, my darling child?” says the LORD.
“I often have to punish him, but I still love him.
That’s why I long for him and surely will have mercy on him.

21Set up road signs; put up guideposts.
Mark well the path by which you came.

Come back again, my virgin Israel; return to your towns here.

22How long will you wander, my wayward daughter?
For the LORD will cause something new to happen— Israel will embrace her God.*”

23This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: “When I bring them back from captivity, the people of Judah and its towns will again say, ‘The LORD bless you, O righteous home, O holy mountain!’ 24Townspeople and farmers and shepherds alike will live together in peace and happiness. 25For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing.”

26At this, I woke up and looked around. My sleep had been very sweet.

27“The day is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will greatly increase the human population and the number of animals here in Israel and Judah. 28In the past I deliberately uprooted and tore down this nation. I overthrew it, destroyed it, and brought disaster upon it. But in the future I will just as deliberately plant it and build it up. I, the LORD, have spoken!

29“The people will no longer quote this proverb: ‘The parents have eaten sour grapes, but their children’s mouths pucker at the taste.’

30All people will die for their own sins—those who eat the sour grapes will be the ones whose mouths will pucker.

31“The day is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. 32This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the LORD.

33“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel
after those days,” says the LORD. “I will put my instructions deep
within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their
God, and they will be my people. 34And they will not need to teach
their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying,
‘You should know the LORD.’ For everyone, from the least to the
greatest, will know me already,” says the LORD. “And I will forgive
their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”

35It is the LORD who provides the sun to light the day and the moon
and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea into roaring
waves.
His name is the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, and this is what he says:

36“I am as likely to reject my people Israel as I am to abolish the
laws of nature!”

37This is what the LORD says: “Just as the heavens cannot be
measured and the foundations of the earth cannot be explored, so I
will not consider casting them away for the evil they have done.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

JERUSALEM’S SURROUNDINGS

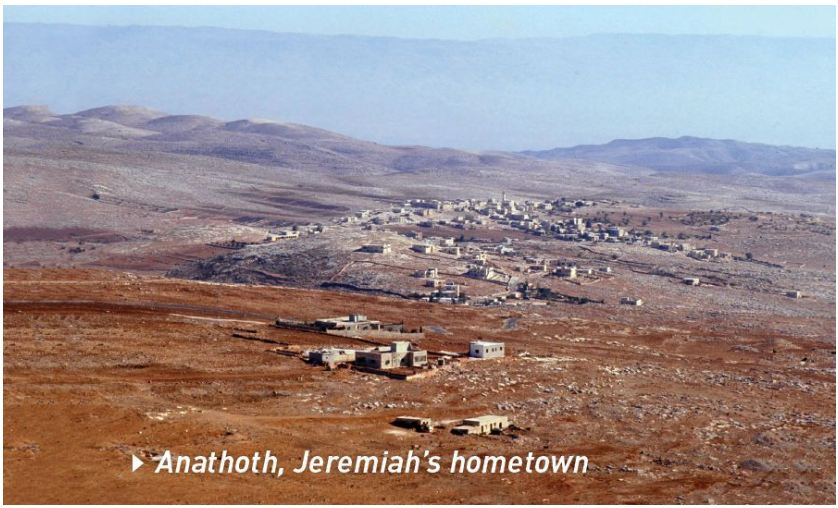
38“The day is coming,” says the LORD, “when all Jerusalem will be
rebuilt for me, from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39A
measuring line will be stretched out over the hill of Gareb and
across to Goah. 40And the entire area—including the graveyard and
ash dump in the valley, and all the fields out to the Kidron Valley
on the east as far as the Horse Gate—will be holy to the LORD. The
city will never again be captured or destroyed.”

Jeremiah 32

JEREMIAH'S LAND PURCHASE

1The following message came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the
tenth year of the reign of Zedekiah,* king of Judah. This was also
the eighteenth year of the reign of King
Nebuchadnezzar.*2Jerusalem was then under siege from the
Babylonian army, and Jeremiah was imprisoned in the courtyard of
the guard in the royal palace. 3King Zedekiah had put him there,
asking why he kept giving this prophecy: "This is what the LORD
says: 'I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and
he will take it. 4King Zedekiah will be captured by the Babylonians*
and taken to meet the king of Babylon face to face. 5He will take
Zedekiah to Babylon, and I will deal with him there,' says the

LORD. ‘If you fight against the Babylonians, you will never succeed.’”



ANATHOTH

6At that time the LORD sent me a message. He said, 7“Your cousin Hanamel son of Shallum will come and say to you, ‘Buy my field at Anathoth. By law you have the right to buy it before it is offered to anyone else.’”

8Then, just as the LORD had said he would, my cousin Hanamel came and visited me in the prison. He said, “Please buy my field at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin. By law you have the right to buy it before it is offered to anyone else, so buy it for yourself.” Then I knew that the message I had heard was from the LORD.

9So I bought the field at Anathoth, paying Hanamel seventeen pieces* of silver for it. 10I signed and sealed the deed of purchase

before witnesses, weighed out the silver, and paid him. 11Then I took the sealed deed and an unsealed copy of the deed, which contained the terms and conditions of the purchase, 12and I handed them to Baruch son of Neriah and grandson of Mahseiah. I did all this in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, the witnesses who had signed the deed, and all the men of Judah who were there in the courtyard of the guardhouse.

13Then I said to Baruch as they all listened, 14"This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'Take both this sealed deed and the unsealed copy, and put them into a pottery jar to preserve them for a long time.' 15For this is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'Someday people will again own property here in this land and will buy and sell houses and vineyards and fields.'"

JEREMIAH'S PRAYER

16Then after I had given the papers to Baruch, I prayed to the LORD:

17"O Sovereign LORD! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you! 18You show unfailing love to thousands, but you also bring the consequences of one generation's sin upon the next. You are the great and powerful God, the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 19You have all wisdom and do great and mighty miracles. You see the conduct of all people, and you give them what they deserve. 20You performed miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt—things still remembered to this day! And you have continued to do great miracles in Israel and all around the world. You have made your name famous to this day.

21"You brought Israel out of Egypt with mighty signs and wonders, with a strong hand and powerful arm, and with overwhelming terror. 22You gave the people of Israel this land that you had promised their ancestors long before—a land flowing with milk and honey. 23Our ancestors came and conquered it and lived in it, but

they refused to obey you or follow your word. They have not done anything you commanded. That is why you have sent this terrible disaster upon them.

24"See how the siege ramps have been built against the city walls! Through war, famine, and disease, the city will be handed over to the Babylonians, who will conquer it. Everything has happened just as you said. 25And yet, O Sovereign LORD, you have told me to buy the field—paying good money for it before these witnesses—even though the city will soon be handed over to the Babylonians."

A PREDICTION OF JERUSALEM'S FALL

26Then this message came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 27"I am the LORD, the God of all the peoples of the world. Is anything too hard for me? 28Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I will hand this city over to the Babylonians and to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and he will capture it. 29The Babylonians outside the walls will come in and set fire to the city. They will burn down all these houses where the people provoked my anger by burning incense to Baal on the rooftops and by pouring out liquid offerings to other gods. 30Israel and Judah have done nothing but wrong since their earliest days. They have infuriated me with all their evil deeds," says the LORD. 31"From the time this city was built until now, it has done nothing but anger me, so I am determined to get rid of it.

THE PAGAN SHRINES AT TOPHETH

32"The sins of Israel and Judah—the sins of the people of Jerusalem,

the kings, the officials, the priests, and the prophets—have stirred
up my anger. 33My people have turned their backs on me and have
refused to return. Even though I diligently taught them, they would
not receive instruction or obey. 34They have set up their abominable
idols right in my own Temple, defiling it. 35They have built pagan
shrines to Baal in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, and there they sacrifice
their sons and daughters to Molech. I have never commanded such
a horrible deed; it never even crossed my mind to command such a
thing. What an incredible evil, causing Judah to sin so greatly!

A PROMISE OF RESTORATION

36"Now I want to say something more about this city. You have
been saying, 'It will fall to the king of Babylon through war, famine,
and disease.' But this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 37I
will certainly bring my people back again from all the countries
where I will scatter them in my fury. I will bring them back to this
very city and let them live in peace and safety. 38They will be my
people, and I will be their God. 39And I will give them one heart and
one purpose: to worship me forever, for their own good and for the
good of all their descendants. 40And I will make an everlasting
covenant with them: I will never stop doing good for them. I will
put a desire in their hearts to worship me, and they will never leave
me. 41I will find joy doing good for them and will faithfully and
wholeheartedly replant them in this land.

42"This is what the LORD says: Just as I have brought all these
calamities on them, so I will do all the good I have promised them.
43Fields will again be bought and sold in this land about which you
now say, 'It has been ravaged by the Babylonians, a desolate land
where people and animals have all disappeared.' 44Yes, fields will
once again be bought and sold—deeds signed and sealed and
witnessed—in the land of Benjamin and here in Jerusalem, in the
towns of Judah and in the hill country, in the foothills of Judah*
and in the Negev, too. For someday I will restore prosperity to
them. I, the LORD, have spoken!"

ISRAEL'S PROPHETS

Jeremiah 33

PROMISES OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY

1While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard,
the LORD gave him this second message: 2"This is what the LORD
says—the LORD who made the earth, who formed and established
it, whose name is the LORD: 3Ask me and I will tell you remarkable
secrets you do not know about things to come. 4For this is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says: You have torn down the houses of
this city and even the king's palace to get materials to strengthen
the walls against the siege ramps and swords of the enemy. 5You
expect to fight the Babylonians,* but the men of this city are already
as good as dead, for I have determined to destroy them in my
terrible anger. I have abandoned them because of all their
wickedness.

6"Nevertheless, the time will come when I will heal Jerusalem's

wounds and give it prosperity and true peace. 7I will restore the
fortunes of Judah and Israel and rebuild their towns. 8I will cleanse
them of their sins against me and forgive all their sins of rebellion.
9Then this city will bring me joy, glory, and honor before all the
nations of the earth! The people of the world will see all the good I
do for my people, and they will tremble with awe at the peace and
prosperity I provide for them.

10"This is what the LORD says: You have said, 'This is a desolate
land where people and animals have all disappeared.' Yet in the
empty streets of Jerusalem and Judah's other towns, there will be
heard once more 11the sounds of joy and laughter. The joyful voices
of bridegrooms and brides will be heard again, along with the
joyous songs of people bringing thanksgiving offerings to the LORD.
They will sing, 'Give thanks to the LORD of Heaven's Armies, for
the LORD is good.

His faithful love endures forever!'

For I will restore the prosperity of this land to what it was in the
past, says the LORD.

12"This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: This land—
though it is now desolate and has no people and animals—will once
more have pastures where shepherds can lead their flocks. 13Once
again shepherds will count their flocks in the towns of the hill
country, the foothills of Judah,* the Negev, the land of Benjamin,
the vicinity of Jerusalem, and all the towns of Judah. I, the LORD,
have spoken!

THE MESSIAH JEREMIAH 33:14-18

14“The day will come, says the LORD, when I will do for Israel and
Judah all the good things I have promised them.

15“In those days and at that time I will raise up a righteous
descendant* from King David’s line.
He will do what is just and right throughout the land.

16In that day Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety.
And this will be its name: ‘The LORD Is Our Righteousness.’*

17For this is what the LORD says: David will have a descendant
sitting on the throne of Israel forever. 18And there will always be
Levitical priests to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings and
sacrifices to me.”

19Then this message came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 20“This is
what the LORD says: If you can break my covenant with the day
and the night so that one does not follow the other, 21only then will
my covenant with my servant David be broken. Only then will he
no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne. The same is
true for my covenant with the Levitical priests who minister before
me. 22And as the stars of the sky cannot be counted and the sand on
the seashore cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants
of my servant David and the Levites who minister before me.”

23The LORD gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, 24“Have

you noticed what people are saying?—‘The LORD chose Judah and Israel and then abandoned them!’ They are sneering and saying that Israel is not worthy to be counted as a nation. 25But this is what the LORD says: I would no more reject my people than I would change my laws that govern night and day, earth and sky. 26I will never abandon the descendants of Jacob or David, my servant, or change the plan that David’s descendants will rule the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Instead, I will restore them to their land and have mercy on them.”

Jeremiah 34

A WARNING FOR ZEDEKIAH

1King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon came with all the armies from the kingdoms he ruled, and he fought against Jerusalem and the towns of Judah. At that time this message came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2“Go to King Zedekiah of Judah, and tell him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. 3You will not escape his grasp but will be captured and taken to meet the king of Babylon face to face. Then you will be exiled to Babylon.

4"'But listen to this promise from the LORD, O Zedekiah, king of
Judah. This is what the LORD says: You will not be killed in war
5but will die peacefully. People will burn incense in your memory,
just as they did for your ancestors, the kings who preceded you.
They will mourn for you, crying, "Alas, our master is dead!" This I
have decreed, says the LORD.'"

6So Jeremiah the prophet delivered the message to King Zedekiah of
Judah. 7At this time the Babylonian army was besieging Jerusalem,
Lachish, and Azekah—the only fortified cities of Judah not yet
captured.

FREEDOM FOR HEBREW SLAVES

8This message came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King
Zedekiah made a covenant with the people, proclaiming freedom
for the slaves. 9He had ordered all the people to free their Hebrew
slaves—both men and women. No one was to keep a fellow Judean
in bondage. 10The officials and all the people had obeyed the king's
command, 11but later they changed their minds. They took back the
men and women they had freed, forcing them to be slaves again.

12So the LORD gave them this message through Jeremiah: 13"This is
what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with
your ancestors long ago when I rescued them from their slavery in
Egypt. 14I told them that every Hebrew slave must be freed after
serving six years. But your ancestors paid no attention to me.
15Recently you repented and did what was right, following my
command. You freed your slaves and made a solemn covenant with
me in the Temple that bears my name. 16But now you have
shrugged off your oath and defiled my name by taking back the
men and women you had freed, forcing them to be slaves once
again.

17"Therefore, this is what the LORD says: Since you have not
obeyed me by setting your countrymen free, I will set you free to be
destroyed by war, disease, and famine. You will be an object of

horror to all the nations of the earth. 18Because you have broken the terms of our covenant, I will cut you apart just as you cut apart the calf when you walked between its halves to solemnize your vows. 19Yes, I will cut you apart, whether you are officials of Judah or Jerusalem, court officials, priests, or common people—for you have broken your oath. 20I will give you to your enemies, and they will kill you. Your bodies will be food for the vultures and wild animals.

21"I will hand over King Zedekiah of Judah and his officials to the army of the king of Babylon. And although they have left Jerusalem for a while, 22I will call the Babylonian armies back again. They will fight against this city and will capture it and burn it down. I will see to it that all the towns of Judah are destroyed, with no one living there."

Jeremiah 35

THE FAITHFUL RECABITES

1This is the message the LORD gave Jeremiah when Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king of Judah: 2"Go to the settlement where the families of the Recabites live, and invite them to the LORD's Temple. Take them into one of the inner rooms, and offer them some wine."

3So I went to see Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah and grandson of Habazziniah and all his brothers and sons—representing all the Recabite families. 4I took them to the Temple, and we went into the room assigned to the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, a man of God. This room was located next to the one used by the Temple officials,

directly above the room of Maaseiah son of Shallum, the Temple gatekeeper.

5I set cups and jugs of wine before them and invited them to have a drink, 6but they refused. “No,” they said, “we don’t drink wine, because our ancestor Jehonadab* son of Recab gave us this command: ‘You and your descendants must never drink wine. 7And do not build houses or plant crops or vineyards, but always live in tents. If you follow these commands, you will live long, good lives in the land.’ 8So we have obeyed him in all these things. We have never had a drink of wine to this day, nor have our wives, our sons, or our daughters. 9We haven’t built houses or owned vineyards or farms or planted crops. 10We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed all the commands of Jehonadab, our ancestor. 11But when King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon attacked this country, we were afraid of the Babylonian and Syrian* armies. So we decided to move to Jerusalem. That is why we are here.”

12Then the LORD gave this message to Jeremiah: 13“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: Go and say to the people in Judah and Jerusalem, ‘Come and learn a lesson about how to obey me. 14The Recabites do not drink wine to this day because their ancestor Jehonadab told them not to. But I have spoken to you again and again, and you refuse to obey me. 15Time after time I sent you prophets, who told you, “Turn from your wicked ways, and start doing things right. Stop worshiping other gods so that you might live in peace here in the land I have given to you and your ancestors.” But you would not listen to me or obey me. 16The descendants of Jehonadab son of Recab have obeyed their ancestor completely, but you have refused to listen to me.’

17“Therefore, this is what the LORD God of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘Because you refuse to listen or answer when I call, I will send upon Judah and Jerusalem all the disasters I have threatened.’”

18Then Jeremiah turned to the Recabites and said, “This is what the

LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'You have obeyed your ancestor Jehonadab in every respect, following all his instructions.' 19Therefore, this is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'Jehonadab son of Recab will always have descendants who serve me.'"

Jeremiah 36

BARUCH READS THE LORD'S MESSAGES

1During the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was king in
Judah,* the LORD gave this message to Jeremiah: 2“Get a scroll, and
write down all my messages against Israel, Judah, and the other
nations. Begin with the first message back in the days of Josiah, and
write down every message, right up to the present time. 3Perhaps
the people of Judah will repent when they hear again all the
terrible things I have planned for them. Then I will be able to
forgive their sins and wrongdoings.”

4So Jeremiah sent for Baruch son of Neriah, and as Jeremiah
dictated all the prophecies that the LORD had given him, Baruch
wrote them on a scroll. 5Then Jeremiah said to Baruch, “I am a
prisoner here and unable to go to the Temple. 6So you go to the
Temple on the next day of fasting, and read the messages from the
LORD that I have had you write on this scroll. Read them so the
people who are there from all over Judah will hear them. 7Perhaps
even yet they will turn from their evil ways and ask the LORD’s
forgiveness before it is too late. For the LORD has threatened them
with his terrible anger.”

8Baruch did as Jeremiah told him and read these messages from the
LORD to the people at the Temple. 9He did this on a day of sacred
fasting held in late autumn,* during the fifth year of the reign of
Jehoiakim son of Josiah. People from all over Judah had come to
Jerusalem to attend the services at the Temple on that day. 10Baruch
read Jeremiah’s words on the scroll to all the people. He stood in
front of the Temple room of Gemariah, son of Shaphan the
secretary. This room was just off the upper courtyard of the Temple,
near the New Gate entrance.

11When Micaiah son of Gemariah and grandson of Shaphan heard
the messages from the LORD, 12he went down to the secretary’s
room in the palace where the administrative officials were meeting.
Elishama the secretary was there, along with Delaiah son of
Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Acbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan,
Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials. 13When
Micaiah told them about the messages Baruch was reading to the
people, 14the officials sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah, grandson of

Shelemiah and great-grandson of Cushi, to ask Baruch to come and read the messages to them, too. So Baruch took the scroll and went to them. 15"Sit down and read the scroll to us," the officials said, and Baruch did as they requested.

16When they heard all the messages, they looked at one another in alarm. "We must tell the king what we have heard," they said to Baruch. 17"But first, tell us how you got these messages. Did they come directly from Jeremiah?"

18So Baruch explained, "Jeremiah dictated them, and I wrote them down in ink, word for word, on this scroll."

19"You and Jeremiah should both hide," the officials told Baruch. "Don't tell anyone where you are!" 20Then the officials left the scroll for safekeeping in the room of Elishama the secretary and went to tell the king what had happened.

KING JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE SCROLL

21The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought it from Elishama's room and read it to the king as all his officials stood by. 22It was late autumn, and the king was in a winterized part of the palace, sitting in front of a fire to keep warm. 23Each time Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king took a knife and cut off that section of the scroll. He then threw it into the fire, section by section, until the whole scroll was burned up. 24Neither the king nor his attendants showed any signs of fear or repentance at what they heard. 25Even when Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah begged the king not to burn the scroll, he wouldn't listen.

26Then the king commanded his son Jerahmeel, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch and Jeremiah. But the LORD had hidden them.

JEREMIAH REWRITES THE SCROLL

27After the king had burned the scroll on which Baruch had written
Jeremiah's words, the LORD gave Jeremiah another message. He
said, 28"Get another scroll, and write everything again just as you
did on the scroll King Jehoiakim burned. 29Then say to the king,
'This is what the LORD says: You burned the scroll because it said
the king of Babylon would destroy this land and empty it of people
and animals. 30Now this is what the LORD says about King
Jehoiakim of Judah: He will have no heirs to sit on the throne of
David. His dead body will be thrown out to lie unburied—exposed
to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. 31I will punish him
and his family and his attendants for their sins. I will pour out on
them and on all the people of Jerusalem and Judah all the disasters
I promised, for they would not listen to my warnings.'"

32So Jeremiah took another scroll and dictated again to his
secretary, Baruch. He wrote everything that had been on the scroll
King Jehoiakim had burned in the fire. Only this time he added
much more!

Jeremiah 37

ZEDEKIAH CALLS FOR JEREMIAH

1Zedekiah son of Josiah succeeded Jehoiachin* son of Jehoiakim as
the king of Judah. He was appointed by King Nebuchadnezzar* of
Babylon. 2But neither King Zedekiah nor his attendants nor the
people who were left in the land listened to what the LORD said
through Jeremiah.

3Nevertheless, King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and
Zephaniah the priest, son of Maaseiah, to ask Jeremiah, “Please
pray to the LORD our God for us.” 4Jeremiah had not yet been
imprisoned, so he could come and go among the people as he
pleased.

5At this time the army of Pharaoh Hophra* of Egypt appeared at the
southern border of Judah. When the Babylonian* army heard about
it, they withdrew from their siege of Jerusalem.

6Then the LORD gave this message to Jeremiah: 7"This is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says: The king of Judah sent you to ask me
what is going to happen. Tell him, 'Pharaoh's army is about to
return to Egypt, though he came here to help you. 8Then the
Babylonians* will come back and capture this city and burn it to the
ground.'

9"This is what the LORD says: Do not fool yourselves into thinking
that the Babylonians are gone for good. They aren't! 10Even if you
were to destroy the entire Babylonian army, leaving only a handful
of wounded survivors, they would still stagger from their tents and
burn this city to the ground!"

JEREMIAH IS IMPRISONED

11When the Babylonian army left Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's
approaching army, 12Jeremiah started to leave the city on his way
to the territory of Benjamin, to claim his share of the property
among his relatives there.*13But as he was walking through the
Benjamin Gate, a sentry arrested him and said, "You are defecting
to the Babylonians!" The sentry making the arrest was Irijah son of
Shelemiah, grandson of Hananiah.

14“That’s not true!” Jeremiah protested. “I had no intention of doing
any such thing.” But Irijah wouldn’t listen, and he took Jeremiah
before the officials. 15They were furious with Jeremiah and had him
flogged and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary.
Jonathan’s house had been converted into a prison. 16Jeremiah was
put into a dungeon cell, where he remained for many days.

17Later King Zedekiah secretly requested that Jeremiah come to the
palace, where the king asked him, “Do you have any messages from
the LORD?”

“Yes, I do!” said Jeremiah. “You will be defeated by the king of
Babylon.”

18Then Jeremiah asked the king, “What crime have I committed?
What have I done against you, your attendants, or the people that I
should be imprisoned like this? 19Where are your prophets now who
told you the king of Babylon would not attack you or this land?
20Listen, my lord the king, I beg you. Don’t send me back to the
dungeon in the house of Jonathan the secretary, for I will die
there.”

21So King Zedekiah commanded that Jeremiah not be returned to
the dungeon. Instead, he was imprisoned in the courtyard of the
guard in the royal palace. The king also commanded that Jeremiah
be given a loaf of fresh bread every day as long as there was any
left in the city. So Jeremiah was put in the palace prison.

Jeremiah 38

JEREMIAH IN A CISTERN

1Now Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal*
son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard what
Jeremiah had been telling the people. He had been saying, 2“This is
what the LORD says: ‘Everyone who stays in Jerusalem will die
from war, famine, or disease, but those who surrender to the

Babylonians* will live. Their reward will be life. They will live!’
3The LORD also says: ‘The city of Jerusalem will certainly be
handed over to the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture
it.’”

4So these officials went to the king and said, “Sir, this man must
die! That kind of talk will undermine the morale of the few fighting
men we have left, as well as that of all the people. This man is a
traitor!”

5King Zedekiah agreed. “All right,” he said. “Do as you like. I can’t
stop you.”

6So the officials took Jeremiah from his cell and lowered him by
ropes into an empty cistern in the prison yard. It belonged to
Malkijah, a member of the royal family. There was no water in the
cistern, but there was a thick layer of mud at the bottom, and
Jeremiah sank down into it.

7But Ebed-melech the Ethiopian,* an important court official, heard
that Jeremiah was in the cistern. At that time the king was holding
court at the Benjamin Gate, 8so Ebed-melech rushed from the palace
to speak with him. 9“My lord the king,” he said, “these men have
done a very evil thing in putting Jeremiah the prophet into the
cistern. He will soon die of hunger, for almost all the bread in the
city is gone.”

10So the king told Ebed-melech, “Take thirty of my men with you,
and pull Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies.”

11So Ebed-melech took the men with him and went to a room in the
palace beneath the treasury, where he found some old rags and
discarded clothing. He carried these to the cistern and lowered
them to Jeremiah on a rope. 12Ebed-melech called down to
Jeremiah, “Put these rags under your armpits to protect you from

the ropes." Then when Jeremiah was ready, 13they pulled him out. So Jeremiah was returned to the courtyard of the guard—the palace prison—where he remained.

ZEDEKIAH QUESTIONS JEREMIAH

14One day King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and had him brought to the third entrance of the LORD's Temple. "I want to ask you something," the king said. "And don't try to hide the truth."

15Jeremiah said, "If I tell you the truth, you will kill me. And if I give you advice, you won't listen to me anyway."

16So King Zedekiah secretly promised him, "As surely as the LORD our Creator lives, I will not kill you or hand you over to the men who want you dead."

17Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "This is what the LORD God of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'If you surrender to the Babylonian officers, you and your family will live, and the city will not be burned down. 18But if you refuse to surrender, you will not escape! This city will be handed over to the Babylonians, and they will burn it to the ground.'"

19"But I am afraid to surrender," the king said, "for the Babylonians may hand me over to the Judeans who have defected to them. And who knows what they will do to me!"

20Jeremiah replied, "You won't be handed over to them if you

choose to obey the LORD. Your life will be spared, and all will go well for you. 21But if you refuse to surrender, this is what the LORD has revealed to me: 22All the women left in your palace will be brought out and given to the officers of the Babylonian army. Then the women will taunt you, saying, ‘What fine friends you have!

They have betrayed and misled you.
When your feet sank in the mud, they left you to your fate!’

23All your wives and children will be led out to the Babylonians, and you will not escape. You will be seized by the king of Babylon, and this city will be burned down.”

24Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, “Don’t tell anyone you told me this, or you will die! 25My officials may hear that I spoke to you, and they may say, ‘Tell us what you and the king were talking about. If you don’t tell us, we will kill you.’ 26If this happens, just tell them you begged me not to send you back to Jonathan’s dungeon, for fear you would die there.”

27Sure enough, it wasn’t long before the king’s officials came to Jeremiah and asked him why the king had called for him. But Jeremiah followed the king’s instructions, and they left without finding out the truth. No one had overheard the conversation between Jeremiah and the king. 28And Jeremiah remained a prisoner in the courtyard of the guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

Jeremiah 39

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

1In January* of the ninth year of King Zedekiah's reign, King
Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon came with his entire army to besiege
Jerusalem. 2Two and a half years later, on July 18* in the eleventh
year of Zedekiah's reign, a section of the city wall was broken
down. 3All the officers of the Babylonian army came in and sat in
triumph at the Middle Gate: Nergal-sharezer of Samgar, and Nebo-
sarsekim,* a chief officer, and Nergal-sharezer, the king's adviser,
and all the other officers of the king of Babylon.

4When King Zedekiah of Judah and all the soldiers saw that the
Babylonians had broken into the city, they fled. They waited for
nightfall and then slipped through the gate between the two walls
behind the king's garden and headed toward the Jordan Valley.*

5But the Babylonian* troops chased them and overtook Zedekiah on
the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who was at Riblah in the land of
Hamath. There the king of Babylon pronounced judgment upon
Zedekiah. 6The king of Babylon made Zedekiah watch as he
slaughtered his sons at Riblah. The king of Babylon also slaughtered
all the nobles of Judah. 7Then he gouged out Zedekiah's eyes and
bound him in bronze chains to lead him away to Babylon.

8Meanwhile, the Babylonians burned Jerusalem, including the royal
palace and the houses of the people, and they tore down the walls
of the city. 9Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took as
exiles to Babylon the rest of the people who remained in the city,
those who had defected to him, and everyone else who remained.
10But Nebuzaradan allowed some of the poorest people to stay
behind in the land of Judah, and he assigned them to care for the
vineyards and fields.

JEREMIAH REMAINS IN JUDAH

11King Nebuchadnezzar had told Nebuzaradan, the captain of the
guard, to find Jeremiah. 12"See that he isn't hurt," he said. "Look
after him well, and give him anything he wants." 13So Nebuzaradan,
the captain of the guard; Nebushazban, a chief officer; Nergal-
sharezer, the king's adviser; and the other officers of Babylon's king
14sent messengers to bring Jeremiah out of the prison. They put him
under the care of Gedaliah son of Ahikam and grandson of
Shaphan, who took him back to his home. So Jeremiah stayed in
Judah among his own people.

15The LORD had given the following message to Jeremiah while he
was still in prison: 16"Say to Ebed-melech the Ethiopian,* 'This is
what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: I will do
to this city everything I have threatened. I will send disaster, not
prosperity. You will see its destruction, 17but I will rescue you from
those you fear so much. 18Because you trusted me, I will give you
your life as a reward. I will rescue you and keep you safe. I, the
LORD, have spoken!'"

Jeremiah 40

1The LORD gave a message to Jeremiah after Nebuzaradan, the
captain of the guard, had released him at Ramah. He had found
Jeremiah bound in chains among all the other captives of Jerusalem
and Judah who were being sent to exile in Babylon.

2The captain of the guard called for Jeremiah and said, "The LORD
your God has brought this disaster on this land, 3just as he said he
would. For these people have sinned against the LORD and
disobeyed him. That is why it happened. 4But I am going to take off
your chains and let you go. If you want to come with me to
Babylon, you are welcome. I will see that you are well cared for.
But if you don't want to come, you may stay here. The whole land
is before you—go wherever you like. 5If you decide to stay, then
return to Gedaliah son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan. He has
been appointed governor of Judah by the king of Babylon. Stay
there with the people he rules. But it's up to you; go wherever you

like.”

Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, gave Jeremiah some food and money and let him go. 6So Jeremiah returned to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah, and he lived in Judah with the few who were still left in the land.

GEDALIAH GOVERNS IN JUDAH

7The leaders of the Judean guerrilla bands in the countryside heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam as governor over the poor people who were left behind in Judah—the men, women, and children who hadn’t been exiled to Babylon. 8So they went to see Gedaliah at Mizpah. These included: Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, Jezaniah son of the Maacathite, and all their men.

9Gedaliah vowed to them that the Babylonians* meant them no harm. “Don’t be afraid to serve them. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and all will go well for you,” he promised. 10“As for me, I will stay at Mizpah to represent you before the Babylonians who come to meet with us. Settle in the towns you have taken, and live off the land. Harvest the grapes and summer fruits and olives, and store them away.”

11When the Judeans in Moab, Ammon, Edom, and the other nearby countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a few people in Judah and that Gedaliah was the governor, 12they began to return to Judah from the places to which they had fled. They stopped at Mizpah to meet with Gedaliah and then went into the Judean countryside to gather a great harvest of grapes and other crops.

A PLOT AGAINST GEDALIAH

13Soon after this, Johanan son of Kareah and the other guerrilla leaders came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. 14They said to him, “Did you

know that Baalis, king of Ammon, has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to assassinate you?" But Gedaliah refused to believe them.

15Later Johanan had a private conference with Gedaliah and volunteered to kill Ishmael secretly. "Why should we let him come and murder you?" Johanan asked. "What will happen then to the Judeans who have returned? Why should the few of us who are still left be scattered and lost?"

16But Gedaliah said to Johanan, "I forbid you to do any such thing, for you are lying about Ishmael."

Jeremiah 41

THE MURDER OF GEDALIAH

1But in midautumn of that year,* Ishmael son of Nethaniah and grandson of Elishama, who was a member of the royal family and had been one of the king's high officials, went to Mizpah with ten men to meet Gedaliah. While they were eating together, 2Ishmael and his ten men suddenly jumped up, drew their swords, and killed Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had appointed governor. 3Ishmael also killed all the Judeans and the Babylonian* soldiers who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah.

4The next day, before anyone had heard about Gedaliah's murder, 5eighty men arrived from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria to worship at the Temple of the LORD. They had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes, and cut themselves, and had brought along grain offerings and frankincense. 6Ishmael left Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he reached them, he said, "Oh, come and see what has happened to Gedaliah!"

7But as soon as they were all inside the town, Ishmael and his men killed all but ten of them and threw their bodies into a cistern. 8The

other ten had talked Ishmael into letting them go by promising to bring him their stores of wheat, barley, olive oil, and honey that they had hidden away. 9The cistern where Ishmael dumped the bodies of the men he murdered was the large one* dug by King Asa when he fortified Mizpah to protect himself against King Baasha of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with corpses.

10Then Ishmael made captives of the king's daughters and the other people who had been left under Gedaliah's care in Mizpah by Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard. Taking them with him, he started back toward the land of Ammon.

11But when Johanan son of Kareah and the other guerrilla leaders heard about Ishmael's crimes, 12they took all their men and set out to stop him. They caught up with him at the large pool near Gibeon. 13The people Ishmael had captured shouted for joy when they saw Johanan and the other guerrilla leaders. 14And all the captives from Mizpah escaped and began to help Johanan. 15Meanwhile, Ishmael and eight of his men escaped from Johanan into the land of Ammon.

16Then Johanan son of Kareah and the other guerrilla leaders took all the people they had rescued in Gibeon—the soldiers, women, children, and court officials* whom Ishmael had captured after he killed Gedaliah. 17They took them all to the village of Geruth-kimham near Bethlehem, where they prepared to leave for Egypt. 18They were afraid of what the Babylonians* would do when they heard that Ishmael had killed Gedaliah, the governor appointed by the Babylonian king.

Jeremiah 42

WARNING TO STAY IN JUDAH

1Then all the guerrilla leaders, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah* son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from the least to the greatest, approached 2Jeremiah the prophet. They said, "Please pray

to the LORD your God for us. As you can see, we are only a tiny
remnant compared to what we were before. 3Pray that the LORD
your God will show us what to do and where to go."

4"All right," Jeremiah replied. "I will pray to the LORD your God, as
you have asked, and I will tell you everything he says. I will hide
nothing from you."

5Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the LORD your God be a faithful
witness against us if we refuse to obey whatever he tells us to do!
6Whether we like it or not, we will obey the LORD our God to
whom we are sending you with our plea. For if we obey him,
everything will turn out well for us."

7Ten days later the LORD gave his reply to Jeremiah. 8So he called
for Johanan son of Kareah and the other guerrilla leaders, and for
all the people, from the least to the greatest. 9He said to them, "You
sent me to the LORD, the God of Israel, with your request, and this
is his reply: 10'Stay here in this land. If you do, I will build you up
and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you. For I
am sorry about all the punishment I have had to bring upon you.
11Do not fear the king of Babylon anymore,' says the LORD. 'For I
am with you and will save you and rescue you from his power. 12I
will be merciful to you by making him kind, so he will let you stay
here in your land.'

13"But if you refuse to obey the LORD your God, and if you say, 'We
will not stay here; 14instead, we will go to Egypt where we will be
free from war, the call to arms, and hunger,' 15then hear the LORD's
message to the remnant of Judah. This is what the LORD of
Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'If you are determined to
go to Egypt and live there, 16the very war and famine you fear will
catch up to you, and you will die there. 17That is the fate awaiting
every one of you who insists on going to live in Egypt. Yes, you will
die from war, famine, and disease. None of you will escape the
disaster I will bring upon you there.'

18“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel,
says: ‘Just as my anger and fury have been poured out on the
people of Jerusalem, so they will be poured out on you when you
enter Egypt. You will be an object of damnation, horror, cursing,
and mockery. And you will never see your homeland again.’

19“Listen, you remnant of Judah. The LORD has told you: ‘Do not go
to Egypt!’ Don’t forget this warning I have given you today. 20For
you were not being honest when you sent me to pray to the LORD
your God for you. You said, ‘Just tell us what the LORD our God
says, and we will do it!’ 21And today I have told you exactly what he
said, but you will not obey the LORD your God any better now than
you have in the past. 22So you can be sure that you will die from
war, famine, and disease in Egypt, where you insist on going.”

Jeremiah 43

JEREMIAH TAKEN TO EGYPT

1When Jeremiah had finished giving this message from the LORD
their God to all the people, 2Azariah son of Hoshaiah and Johanan
son of Kareah and all the other proud men said to Jeremiah, “You
lie! The LORD our God hasn’t forbidden us to go to Egypt! 3Baruch
son of Neriah has convinced you to say this, because he wants us to
stay here and be killed by the Babylonians* or be carried off into
exile.”

4So Johanan and the other guerrilla leaders and all the people
refused to obey the LORD’s command to stay in Judah. 5Johanan
and the other leaders took with them all the people who had
returned from the nearby countries to which they had fled. 6In the
crowd were men, women, and children, the king’s daughters, and
all those whom Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, had left
with Gedaliah. The prophet Jeremiah and Baruch were also
included. 7The people refused to obey the voice of the LORD and
went to Egypt, going as far as the city of Tahpanhes.

8Then at Tahpanhes, the LORD gave another message to Jeremiah.
He said, 9“While the people of Judah are watching, take some large
rocks and bury them under the pavement stones at the entrance of
Pharaoh’s palace here in Tahpanhes. 10Then say to the people of
Judah, ‘This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of
Israel, says: I will certainly bring my servant Nebuchadnezzar,* king
of Babylon, here to Egypt. I will set his throne over these stones
that I have hidden. He will spread his royal canopy over them.
11And when he comes, he will destroy the land of Egypt. He will
bring death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined
for captivity, and war to those destined for war. 12He will set fire to
the temples of Egypt’s gods; he will burn the temples and carry the
idols away as plunder. He will pick clean the land of Egypt as a
shepherd picks fleas from his cloak. And he himself will leave
unharmed. 13He will break down the sacred pillars standing in the
temple of the sun* in Egypt, and he will burn down the temples of
Egypt’s gods.’”

Jeremiah 44

JUDGMENT FOR IDOLATRY

1This is the message Jeremiah received concerning the Judeans
living in northern Egypt in the cities of Migdol, Tahpanhes, and
Memphis,* and in southern Egypt* as well: 2“This is what the LORD
of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: You saw the calamity I
brought on Jerusalem and all the towns of Judah. They now lie
deserted and in ruins. 3They provoked my anger with all their
wickedness. They burned incense and worshiped other gods—gods
that neither they nor you nor any of your ancestors had ever even
known.

4“Again and again I sent my servants, the prophets, to plead with
them, ‘Don’t do these horrible things that I hate so much.’ 5But my
people would not listen or turn back from their wicked ways. They
kept on burning incense to these gods. 6And so my fury boiled over
and fell like fire on the towns of Judah and into the streets of
Jerusalem, and they are still a desolate ruin today.

7“And now the LORD God of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel,
asks you: Why are you destroying yourselves? For not one of you
will survive—not a man, woman, or child among you who has come
here from Judah, not even the babies in your arms. 8Why provoke
my anger by burning incense to the idols you have made here in
Egypt? You will only destroy yourselves and make yourselves an
object of cursing and mockery for all the nations of the earth. 9Have
you forgotten the sins of your ancestors, the sins of the kings and
queens of Judah, and the sins you and your wives committed in
Judah and Jerusalem? 10To this very hour you have shown no
remorse or reverence. No one has chosen to follow my word and the
decrees I gave to you and your ancestors before you.

11“Therefore, this is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of
Israel, says: I am determined to destroy every one of you! 12I will
take this remnant of Judah—those who were determined to come
here and live in Egypt—and I will consume them. They will fall
here in Egypt, killed by war and famine. All will die, from the least
to the greatest. They will be an object of damnation, horror,
cursing, and mockery. 13I will punish them in Egypt just as I
punished them in Jerusalem, by war, famine, and disease. 14Of that
remnant who fled to Egypt, hoping someday to return to Judah,
there will be no survivors. Even though they long to return home,
only a handful will do so.”

15Then all the women present and all the men who knew that their
wives had burned incense to idols—a great crowd of all the Judeans
living in northern Egypt and southern Egypt*—answered Jeremiah,
16“We will not listen to your messages from the LORD! 17We will do
whatever we want. We will burn incense and pour out liquid
offerings to the Queen of Heaven just as much as we like—just as
we, and our ancestors, and our kings and officials have always done
in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For in those
days we had plenty to eat, and we were well off and had no
troubles! 18But ever since we quit burning incense to the Queen of
Heaven and stopped worshiping her with liquid offerings, we have
been in great trouble and have been dying from war and famine.”

19“Besides,” the women added, “do you suppose that we were
burning incense and pouring out liquid offerings to the Queen of
Heaven, and making cakes marked with her image, without our
husbands knowing it and helping us? Of course not!”

20Then Jeremiah said to all of them, men and women alike, who
had given him that answer, 21“Do you think the LORD did not know
that you and your ancestors, your kings and officials, and all the
people were burning incense to idols in the towns of Judah and in
the streets of Jerusalem? 22It was because the LORD could no longer
bear all the disgusting things you were doing that he made your
land an object of cursing—a desolate ruin without inhabitants—as it
is today. 23All these terrible things happened to you because you
have burned incense to idols and sinned against the LORD. You
have refused to obey him and have not followed his instructions, his
decrees, and his laws.”

24Then Jeremiah said to them all, including the women, “Listen to
this message from the LORD, all you citizens of Judah who live in
Egypt. 25This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of
Israel, says: ‘You and your wives have said, “We will keep our
promises to burn incense and pour out liquid offerings to the Queen
of Heaven,” and you have proved by your actions that you meant it.
So go ahead and carry out your promises and vows to her!’

26“But listen to this message from the LORD, all you Judeans now
living in Egypt: ‘I have sworn by my great name,’ says the LORD,
‘that my name will no longer be spoken by any of the Judeans in
the land of Egypt. None of you may invoke my name or use this
oath: “As surely as the Sovereign LORD lives.” 27For I will watch
over you to bring you disaster and not good. Everyone from Judah
who is now living in Egypt will suffer war and famine until all of
you are dead. 28Only a small number will escape death and return
to Judah from Egypt. Then all those who came to Egypt will find
out whose words are true—mine or theirs!

29"'And this is the proof I give you,' says the LORD, 'that all I have
threatened will happen to you and that I will punish you here.'
30This is what the LORD says: 'I will turn Pharaoh Hophra, king of
Egypt, over to his enemies who want to kill him, just as I turned
King Zedekiah of Judah over to King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon.'"

Jeremiah 45

A MESSAGE FOR BARUCH

1The prophet Jeremiah gave a message to Baruch son of Neriah in
the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah,* after
Baruch had written down everything Jeremiah had dictated to him.
He said, 2"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you,
Baruch: 3You have said, 'I am overwhelmed with trouble! Haven't I
had enough pain already? And now the LORD has added more! I am
worn out from sighing and can find no rest.'

4"Baruch, this is what the LORD says: 'I will destroy this nation that
I built. I will uproot what I planted. 5Are you seeking great things
for yourself? Don't do it! I will bring great disaster upon all these
people; but I will give you your life as a reward wherever you go. I,
the LORD, have spoken!'"

Jeremiah 46

MESSAGES FOR THE NATIONS

1The following messages were given to Jeremiah the prophet from
the LORD concerning foreign nations.

MESSAGES ABOUT EGYPT

2This message concerning Egypt was given in the fourth year of the
reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, the king of Judah, on the occasion

of the battle of Carchemish* when Pharaoh Neco, king of Egypt, and his army were defeated beside the Euphrates River by King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon.

3“Prepare your shields, and advance into battle!

4Harness the horses, and mount the stallions.
Take your positions.
Put on your helmets.
Sharpen your spears, and prepare your armor.

5But what do I see?
The Egyptian army flees in terror.
The bravest of its fighting men run without a backward glance.
They are terrorized at every turn,”
says the LORD.

6“The swiftest runners cannot flee; the mightiest warriors cannot escape.
By the Euphrates River to the north, they stumble and fall.

7“Who is this, rising like the Nile at floodtime, overflowing all the land?

8It is the Egyptian army, overflowing all the land, boasting that it will cover the earth like a flood, destroying cities and their people.

9Charge, you horses and chariots; attack, you mighty warriors of Egypt!
Come, all you allies from Ethiopia, Libya, and Lydia*
who are skilled with the shield and bow!

10For this is the day of the Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, a day of vengeance on his enemies.
The sword will devour until it is satisfied, yes, until it is drunk with your blood!
The Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, will receive a sacrifice today in the north country beside the Euphrates River.

11“Go up to Gilead to get medicine, O virgin daughter of Egypt!

But your many treatments will bring you no healing.

12The nations have heard of your shame.
The earth is filled with your cries of despair.
Your mightiest warriors will run into each other and fall down
together."

13Then the LORD gave the prophet Jeremiah this message about
King Nebuchadnezzar's plans to attack Egypt.

14"Shout it out in Egypt!
Publish it in the cities of Migdol, Memphis,* and Tahpanhes!
Mobilize for battle, for the sword will devour everyone around you.

15Why have your warriors fallen?
They cannot stand, for the LORD has knocked them down.

16They stumble and fall over each other and say among themselves,
'Come, let's go back to our people, to the land of our birth.
Let's get away from the sword of the enemy!'

17There they will say, 'Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, is a loudmouth
who missed his opportunity!'

18"As surely as I live," says the King, whose name is the LORD of
Heaven's Armies, "one is coming against Egypt who is as tall as
Mount Tabor, or as Mount Carmel by the sea!

19Pack up! Get ready to leave for exile, you citizens of Egypt!
The city of Memphis will be destroyed, without a single inhabitant.

20Egypt is as sleek as a beautiful heifer, but a horsefly from the
north is on its way!

21Egypt's mercenaries have become like fattened calves.
They, too, will turn and run, for it is a day of great disaster for
Egypt, a time of great punishment.

22Egypt flees, silent as a serpent gliding away.
The invading army marches in; they come against her with axes like

woodsmen.

23They will cut down her people like trees," says the LORD, "for
they are more numerous than locusts.

24Egypt will be humiliated; she will be handed over to people from
the north."

25The LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "I will
punish Amon, the god of Thebes,* and all the other gods of Egypt. I
will punish its rulers and Pharaoh, too, and all who trust in him. 26I
will hand them over to those who want them killed—to King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his army. But afterward the land
will recover from the ravages of war. I, the LORD, have spoken!

27"But do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant; do not be dismayed,
Israel.
For I will bring you home again from distant lands, and your
children will return from their exile.
Israel* will return to a life of peace and quiet, and no one will
terrorize them.

28Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant, for I am with you," says the
LORD.
"I will completely destroy the nations to which I have exiled you,
but I will not completely destroy you.
I will discipline you, but with justice; I cannot let you go
unpunished."

Jeremiah 47

A MESSAGE ABOUT PHILISTIA

1This is the LORD's message to the prophet Jeremiah concerning the
Philistines of Gaza, before it was captured by the Egyptian army.
2This is what the LORD says: "A flood is coming from the north to
overflow the land.

It will destroy the land and everything in it— cities and people alike.
People will scream in terror, and everyone in the land will wail.

3Hear the clatter of stallions' hooves and the rumble of wheels as the chariots rush by.
Terrified fathers run madly, without a backward glance at their helpless children.

4"The time has come for the Philistines to be destroyed, along with their allies from Tyre and Sidon.
Yes, the LORD is destroying the remnant of the Philistines, those colonists from the island of Crete.*

5Gaza will be humiliated, its head shaved bald; Ashkelon will lie silent.
You remnant from the Mediterranean coast,*
how long will you cut yourselves in mourning?

6"Now, O sword of the LORD, when will you be at rest again?
Go back into your sheath; rest and be still.

7"But how can it be still when the LORD has sent it on a mission?
For the city of Ashkelon and the people living along the sea must be destroyed."

Jeremiah 48

A MESSAGE ABOUT MOAB

1This message was given concerning Moab. This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "What sorrow awaits the city of Nebo; it will soon lie in ruins.

The city of Kiriathaim will be humiliated and captured; the fortress will be humiliated and broken down.

2No one will ever brag about Moab again, for in Heshbon there is a

plot to destroy her.
‘Come,’ they say, ‘we will cut her off from being a nation.’
The town of Madmen,* too, will be silenced; the sword will follow you there.

3Listen to the cries from Horonaim, cries of devastation and great destruction.

4All Moab is destroyed.
Her little ones will cry out.*

5Her refugees weep bitterly, climbing the slope to Luhith.
They cry out in terror, descending the slope to Horonaim.

6Flee for your lives!
Hide* in the wilderness!

7Because you have trusted in your wealth and skill, you will be taken captive.
Your god Chemosh, with his priests and officials, will be hauled off to distant lands!

8“All the towns will be destroyed, and no one will escape— either on the plateaus or in the valleys, for the LORD has spoken.

9Oh, that Moab had wings so she could fly away,*
for her towns will be left empty, with no one living in them.

10Cursed are those who refuse to do the LORD’s work, who hold back their swords from shedding blood!

11“From his earliest history, Moab has lived in peace, never going into exile.
He is like wine that has been allowed to settle.
He has not been poured from flask to flask, and he is now fragrant and smooth.

12But the time is coming soon,” says the LORD, “when I will send men to pour him from his jar.

They will pour him out, then shatter the jar!

13At last Moab will be ashamed of his idol Chemosh, as the people
of Israel were ashamed of their gold calf at Bethel.*

14“You used to boast, ‘We are heroes, mighty men of war.’

15But now Moab and his towns will be destroyed.
His most promising youth are doomed to slaughter,”
says the King, whose name is the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

16“Destruction is coming fast for Moab; calamity threatens
ominously.

17You friends of Moab, weep for him and cry!
See how the strong scepter is broken, how the beautiful staff is
shattered!

18“Come down from your glory and sit in the dust, you people of
Dibon, for those who destroy Moab will shatter Dibon, too.
They will tear down all your towers.

19You people of Aroer, stand beside the road and watch.
Shout to those who flee from Moab, ‘What has happened there?’

20“And the reply comes back, ‘Moab lies in ruins, disgraced; weep
and wail!
Tell it by the banks of the Arnon River: Moab has been destroyed!’

21Judgment has been poured out on the towns of the plateau— on
Holon and Jahaz* and Mephaath,

22on Dibon and Nebo and Beth-diblathaim,

23on Kiriathaim and Beth-gamul and Beth-meon,

24on Kerioth and Bozrah— all the towns of Moab, far and near.

25“The strength of Moab has ended.
His arm has been broken,” says the LORD.

26“Let him stagger and fall like a drunkard, for he has rebelled against the LORD.
Moab will wallow in his own vomit, ridiculed by all.

27Did you not ridicule the people of Israel?
Were they caught in the company of thieves that you should despise them as you do?

28“You people of Moab, flee from your towns and live in the caves.
Hide like doves that nest in the clefts of the rocks.

29We have all heard of the pride of Moab, for his pride is very great.
We know of his lofty pride, his arrogance, and his haughty heart.

30I know about his insolence,”
says the LORD, “but his boasts are empty— as empty as his deeds.

31So now I wail for Moab; yes, I will mourn for Moab.
My heart is broken for the men of Kir-hareseth.*

32“You people of Sibmah, rich in vineyards, I will weep for you even more than I did for Jazer.
Your spreading vines once reached as far as the Dead Sea,*
but the destroyer has stripped you bare!
He has harvested your grapes and summer fruits.

33Joy and gladness are gone from fruitful Moab.
The presses yield no wine.
No one treads the grapes with shouts of joy.
There is shouting, yes, but not of joy.

34“Instead, their awful cries of terror can be heard from Heshbon clear across to Elealeh and Jahaz; from Zoar all the way to Horonaim and Eglath-shelishiyah. Even the waters of Nimrim are dried up now.

35“I will put an end to Moab,” says the LORD, “for the people offer sacrifices at the pagan shrines and burn incense to their false gods.
36My heart moans like a flute for Moab and Kir-hareseth, for all

their wealth has disappeared. 37The people shave their heads and
beards in mourning. They slash their hands and put on clothes
made of burlap. 38There is crying and sorrow in every Moabite
home and on every street. For I have smashed Moab like an old,
unwanted jar. 39How it is shattered! Hear the wailing! See the
shame of Moab! It has become an object of ridicule, an example of
ruin to all its neighbors."

40This is what the LORD says: "Look! The enemy swoops down like
an eagle, spreading his wings over Moab.

41Its cities will fall, and its strongholds will be seized.
Even the mightiest warriors will be in anguish like a woman in
labor.

42Moab will no longer be a nation, for it has boasted against the
LORD.

43"Terror and traps and snares will be your lot, O Moab," says the
LORD.

44"Those who flee in terror will fall into a trap, and those who
escape the trap will step into a snare.
I will see to it that you do not get away, for the time of your
judgment has come,"
says the LORD.

45"The people flee as far as Heshbon but are unable to go on.
For a fire comes from Heshbon, King Sihon's ancient home, to
devour the entire land with all its rebellious people.

46"What sorrow awaits you, O people of Moab!
The people of the god Chemosh are destroyed!
Your sons and your daughters have been taken away as captives.

47But I will restore the fortunes of Moab in days to come.
I, the LORD, have spoken!"

This is the end of Jeremiah's prophecy concerning Moab.

Jeremiah 49

A MESSAGE ABOUT AMMON

1This message was given concerning the Ammonites. This is what
the LORD says: “Are there no descendants of Israel to inherit the
land of Gad?

Why are you, who worship Molech,*
living in its towns?

2In the days to come,” says the LORD, “I will sound the battle cry
against your city of Rabbah.
It will become a desolate heap of ruins, and the neighboring towns
will be burned.
Then Israel will take back the land you took from her,” says the
LORD.

3“Cry out, O Heshbon, for the town of Ai is destroyed.
Weep, O people of Rabbah!
Put on your clothes of mourning.
Weep and wail, hiding in the hedges, for your god Molech, with his
priests and officials, will be hauled off to distant lands.

4You are proud of your fertile valleys, but they will soon be ruined.
You trusted in your wealth, you rebellious daughter, and thought
no one could ever harm you.

5But look! I will bring terror upon you,”
says the Lord, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.
“Your neighbors will chase you from your land, and no one will
help your exiles as they flee.

6But I will restore the fortunes of the Ammonites in days to come.
I, the LORD, have spoken.”

MESSAGES ABOUT EDOM

7This message was given concerning Edom. This is what the LORD
of Heaven’s Armies says: “Is there no wisdom in Teman?

Is no one left to give wise counsel?

8Turn and flee!
Hide in deep caves, you people of Dedan!
For when I bring disaster on Edom,*
I will punish you, too!

9Those who harvest grapes always leave a few for the poor.
If thieves came at night, they would not take everything.

10But I will strip bare the land of Edom, and there will be no place left to hide.
Its children, its brothers, and its neighbors will all be destroyed, and Edom itself will be no more.

11But I will protect the orphans who remain among you.
Your widows, too, can depend on me for help."

12And this is what the LORD says: "If the innocent must suffer, how much more must you! You will not go unpunished! You must drink this cup of judgment! 13For I have sworn by my own name," says the LORD, "that Bozrah will become an object of horror and a heap of ruins; it will be mocked and cursed. All its towns and villages will be desolate forever."

14I have heard a message from the LORD
that an ambassador was sent to the nations to say, "Form a coalition against Edom, and prepare for battle!"

15The LORD says to Edom, "I will cut you down to size among the nations.
You will be despised by all.

16You have been deceived by the fear you inspire in others and by your own pride.
You live in a rock fortress and control the mountain heights.
But even if you make your nest among the peaks with the eagles, I will bring you crashing down,"

says the LORD.

17“Edom will be an object of horror.
All who pass by will be appalled and will gasp at the destruction they see there.

18It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns,” says the LORD.
“No one will live there; no one will inhabit it.

19I will come like a lion from the thickets of the Jordan, leaping on the sheep in the pasture.
I will chase Edom from its land, and I will appoint the leader of my choice.
For who is like me, and who can challenge me?
What ruler can oppose my will?”

20Listen to the LORD’s plans against Edom and the people of Teman.
Even the little children will be dragged off like sheep, and their homes will be destroyed.

21The earth will shake with the noise of Edom’s fall, and its cry of despair will be heard all the way to the Red Sea.*

22Look! The enemy swoops down like an eagle, spreading his wings over Bozrah.
Even the mightiest warriors will be in anguish like a woman in labor.

A MESSAGE ABOUT DAMASCUS

23This message was given concerning Damascus. This is what the LORD says: “The towns of Hamath and Arpad are struck with fear, for they have heard the news of their destruction.

Their hearts are troubled like a wild sea in a raging storm.

24Damascus has become feeble, and all her people turn to flee.
Fear, anguish, and pain have gripped her as they grip a woman in labor.

25That famous city, a city of joy, will be forsaken!

26Her young men will fall in the streets and die.
Her soldiers will all be killed,”
says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

27“And I will set fire to the walls of Damascus that will burn up the palaces of Ben-hadad.”

A MESSAGE ABOUT KEDAR AND HAZOR

28This message was given concerning Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, which were attacked by King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon.
This is what the LORD says: “Advance against Kedar!

Destroy the warriors from the East!

29Their flocks and tents will be captured, and their household goods and camels will be taken away.
Everywhere shouts of panic will be heard: ‘We are terrorized at every turn!’

30Run for your lives,” says the LORD.
“Hide yourselves in deep caves, you people of Hazor, for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has plotted against you and is preparing to destroy you.

31“Go up and attack that complacent nation,”
says the LORD.
“Its people live alone in the desert without walls or gates.

32Their camels and other livestock will all be yours.
I will scatter to the winds these people who live in remote places.*
I will bring calamity upon them from every direction,” says the LORD.

33“Hazor will be inhabited by jackals, and it will be desolate forever.
No one will live there; no one will inhabit it.”

A MESSAGE ABOUT ELAM

34This message concerning Elam came to the prophet Jeremiah from
the LORD at the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah.
35This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: "I will destroy the
archers of Elam— the best of their forces.

36I will bring enemies from all directions, and I will scatter the
people of Elam to the four winds.
They will be exiled to countries around the world.

37I myself will go with Elam's enemies to shatter it.
In my fierce anger, I will bring great disaster upon the people of
Elam," says the LORD.
"Their enemies will chase them with the sword until I have
destroyed them completely.

38I will set my throne in Elam," says the LORD, "and I will destroy
its king and officials.

39But I will restore the fortunes of Elam in days to come.
I, the LORD, have spoken!"

FORGIVENESS JEREMIAH 50:1-20

Jeremiah 50

A MESSAGE ABOUT BABYLON

1The LORD gave Jeremiah the prophet this message concerning
Babylon and the land of the Babylonians.*2This is what the LORD
says: “Tell the whole world, and keep nothing back.

Raise a signal flag to tell everyone that Babylon will fall!
Her images and idols* will be shattered.
Her gods Bel and Marduk will be utterly disgraced.

3For a nation will attack her from the north and bring such
destruction that no one will live there again.
Everything will be gone; both people and animals will flee.

HOPE FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH

4“In those coming days,”

says the LORD, “the people of Israel will return home together with
the people of Judah.
They will come weeping and seeking the LORD their God.

5They will ask the way to Jerusalem*
and will start back home again.
They will bind themselves to the LORD
with an eternal covenant that will never be forgotten.

6“My people have been lost sheep.
Their shepherds have led them astray and turned them loose in the
mountains.
They have lost their way and can’t remember how to get back to
the sheepfold.

7All who found them devoured them.
Their enemies said, ‘We did nothing wrong in attacking them, for
they sinned against the LORD, their true place of rest, and the hope
of their ancestors.’

8“But now, flee from Babylon!
Leave the land of the Babylonians.
Like male goats at the head of the flock, lead my people home

again.

9For I am raising up an army of great nations from the north.
They will join forces to attack Babylon, and she will be captured.
The enemies' arrows will go straight to the mark; they will not
miss!

10Babylonia* will be looted until the attackers are glutted with loot.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

BABYLON'S SURE FALL

11"You rejoice and are glad, you who plundered my chosen people.

You frisk about like a calf in a meadow and neigh like a stallion.

12But your homeland* will be overwhelmed with shame and
disgrace.
You will become the least of nations— a wilderness, a dry and
desolate land.

13Because of the LORD's anger, Babylon will become a deserted
wasteland.
All who pass by will be horrified and will gasp at the destruction
they see there.

14"Yes, prepare to attack Babylon, all you surrounding nations.
Let your archers shoot at her; spare no arrows.
For she has sinned against the LORD.

15Shout war cries against her from every side.
Look! She surrenders!
Her walls have fallen.
It is the LORD's vengeance, so take vengeance on her.
Do to her as she has done to others!

16Take from Babylon all those who plant crops; send all the
harvesters away.
Because of the sword of the enemy, everyone will run away and
rush back to their own lands.

HOPE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

17"The Israelites are like sheep that have been scattered by lions.

First the king of Assyria ate them up.
Then King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon cracked their bones."

18Therefore, this is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "Now I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, just as I punished the king of Assyria.

19And I will bring Israel home again to its own land, to feed in the fields of Carmel and Bashan, and to be satisfied once more in the hill country of Ephraim and Gilead.

20In those days," says the LORD, "no sin will be found in Israel or in Judah, for I will forgive the remnant I preserve.

THE LORD'S JUDGMENT ON BABYLON

21"Go up, my warriors, against the land of Merathaim and against the people of Pekod.

Pursue, kill, and completely destroy* them, as I have commanded you," says the LORD.

22"Let the battle cry be heard in the land, a shout of great destruction.

23Babylon, the mightiest hammer in all the earth, lies broken and shattered.
Babylon is desolate among the nations!

24Listen, Babylon, for I have set a trap for you.
You are caught, for you have fought against the LORD.

25The LORD has opened his armory and brought out weapons to vent his fury.
The terror that falls upon the Babylonians will be the work of the

Sovereign LORD of Heaven's Armies.

26Yes, come against her from distant lands.
Break open her granaries.
Crush her walls and houses into heaps of rubble.
Destroy her completely, and leave nothing!

27Destroy even her young bulls— it will be terrible for them, too!
Slaughter them all!
For Babylon's day of reckoning has come.

28Listen to the people who have escaped from Babylon, as they tell in Jerusalem how the LORD our God has taken vengeance against those who destroyed his Temple.

29"Send out a call for archers to come to Babylon.
Surround the city so none can escape.
Do to her as she has done to others, for she has defied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

30Her young men will fall in the streets and die.
Her soldiers will all be killed,"
says the LORD.

31"See, I am your enemy, you arrogant people,"
says the Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies.
"Your day of reckoning has arrived— the day when I will punish you.

32O land of arrogance, you will stumble and fall, and no one will raise you up.
For I will light a fire in the cities of Babylon that will burn up everything around them."

33This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: "The people of Israel and Judah have been wronged.
Their captors hold them and refuse to let them go.

34But the one who redeems them is strong.
His name is the LORD of Heaven's Armies.
He will defend them and give them rest again in Israel.

But for the people of Babylon there will be no rest!

35“The sword of destruction will strike the Babylonians,”
says the LORD.
“It will strike the people of Babylon— her officials and wise men,
too.

36The sword will strike her wise counselors, and they will become
fools.
The sword will strike her mightiest warriors, and panic will seize
them.

37The sword will strike her horses and chariots and her allies from
other lands, and they will all become like women.
The sword will strike her treasures, and they all will be plundered.

38A drought* will strike her water supply, causing it to dry up.
And why? Because the whole land is filled with idols, and the
people are madly in love with them.

39“Soon Babylon will be inhabited by desert animals and hyenas.
It will be a home for owls.
Never again will people live there; it will lie desolate forever.

40I will destroy it as I* destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and their
neighboring towns,” says the LORD.
“No one will live there; no one will inhabit it.

41“Look! A great army is coming from the north.
A great nation and many kings are rising against you from far-off
lands.

42They are armed with bows and spears.
They are cruel and show no mercy.
As they ride forward on horses, they sound like a roaring sea.
They are coming in battle formation, planning to destroy you,
Babylon.

43The king of Babylon has heard reports about the enemy, and he is

weak with fright.
Pangs of anguish have gripped him, like those of a woman in labor.

44“I will come like a lion from the thickets of the Jordan, leaping on the sheep in the pasture.
I will chase Babylon from its land, and I will appoint the leader of my choice.
For who is like me, and who can challenge me?
What ruler can oppose my will?”

45Listen to the LORD’s plans against Babylon and the land of the Babylonians.
Even the little children will be dragged off like sheep, and their homes will be destroyed.

46The earth will shake with the shout, “Babylon has been taken!”
and its cry of despair will be heard around the world.

Jeremiah 51

1This is what the LORD says: “I will stir up a destroyer against Babylon and the people of Babylonia.*

2Foreigners will come and winnow her, blowing her away as chaff.
They will come from every side to rise against her in her day of trouble.

3Don’t let the archers put on their armor or draw their bows.
Don’t spare even her best soldiers!
Let her army be completely destroyed.*

4They will fall dead in the land of the Babylonians,*
slashed to death in her streets.

5For the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has not abandoned Israel and Judah.
He is still their God, even though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.”

6Flee from Babylon! Save yourselves!
Don't get trapped in her punishment!
It is the LORD's time for vengeance; he will repay her in full.

7Babylon has been a gold cup in the LORD's hands, a cup that made the whole earth drunk.
The nations drank Babylon's wine, and it drove them all mad.

8But suddenly Babylon, too, has fallen.
Weep for her.
Give her medicine.
Perhaps she can yet be healed.

9We would have helped her if we could, but nothing can save her now.
Let her go; abandon her.
Return now to your own land.
For her punishment reaches to the heavens; it is so great it cannot be measured.

10The LORD has vindicated us.
Come, let us announce in Jerusalem*
everything the LORD our God has done.

11Sharpen the arrows!
Lift up the shields!*
For the LORD has inspired the kings of the Medes to march against Babylon and destroy her.
This is his vengeance against those who desecrated his Temple.

12Raise the battle flag against Babylon!
Reinforce the guard and station the watchmen.
Prepare an ambush, for the LORD will fulfill all his plans against Babylon.

13You are a city by a great river, a great center of commerce, but your end has come.
The thread of your life is cut.

14The LORD of Heaven's Armies has taken this vow and has sworn
to it by his own name: "Your cities will be filled with enemies, like
fields swarming with locusts, and they will shout in triumph over
you."

A HYMN OF PRAISE TO THE LORD

15The LORD made the earth by his power, and he preserves it by his
wisdom.

With his own understanding he stretched out the heavens.

16When he speaks in the thunder, the heavens roar with rain.
He causes the clouds to rise over the earth.
He sends the lightning with the rain and releases the wind from his
storehouses.

17The whole human race is foolish and has no knowledge!
The craftsmen are disgraced by the idols they make, for their
carefully shaped works are a fraud.
These idols have no breath or power.

18Idols are worthless; they are ridiculous lies!
On the day of reckoning they will all be destroyed.

19But the God of Israel* is no idol!
He is the Creator of everything that exists, including his people, his
own special possession.
The LORD of Heaven's Armies is his name!

BABYLON'S GREAT PUNISHMENT

20"You* are my battle-ax and sword,"

says the LORD.
"With you I will shatter nations and destroy many kingdoms.

21With you I will shatter armies— destroying the horse and rider,
the chariot and charioteer.

22With you I will shatter men and women, old people and children,
young men and young women.

23With you I will shatter shepherds and flocks, farmers and oxen,
captains and officers.

24“I will repay Babylon and the people of Babylonia*
for all the wrong they have done to my people in Jerusalem,” says
the LORD.

25“Look, O mighty mountain, destroyer of the earth!
I am your enemy,” says the LORD.
“I will raise my fist against you, to knock you down from the
heights.
When I am finished, you will be nothing but a heap of burnt rubble.

26You will be desolate forever.
Even your stones will never again be used for building.
You will be completely wiped out,”
says the LORD.

27Raise a signal flag to the nations.
Sound the battle cry!
Mobilize them all against Babylon.
Prepare them to fight against her!
Bring out the armies of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a commander, and bring a multitude of horses like
swarming locusts!

28Bring against her the armies of the nations— led by the kings of
the Medes and all their captains and officers.

29The earth trembles and writhes in pain, for everything the LORD
has planned against Babylon stands unchanged.
Babylon will be left desolate without a single inhabitant.

30Her mightiest warriors no longer fight.
They stay in their barracks, their courage gone.
They have become like women.
The invaders have burned the houses and broken down the city

gates.

31The news is passed from one runner to the next as the messengers
hurry to tell the king that his city has been captured.

32All the escape routes are blocked.
The marshes have been set aflame, and the army is in a panic.

33This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says:
"Babylon is like wheat on a threshing floor, about to be trampled.
In just a little while her harvest will begin."

34"King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon has eaten and crushed us and
drained us of strength.
He has swallowed us like a great monster and filled his belly with
our riches.
He has thrown us out of our own country.

35Make Babylon suffer as she made us suffer,"
say the people of Zion.
"Make the people of Babylonia pay for spilling our blood,"
says Jerusalem.

THE LORD'S VENGEANCE ON BABYLON

36This is what the LORD says to Jerusalem: "I will be your lawyer to
plead your case, and I will avenge you.

I will dry up her river, as well as her springs,

37and Babylon will become a heap of ruins, haunted by jackals.
She will be an object of horror and contempt, a place where no one
lives.

38Her people will roar together like strong lions.
They will growl like lion cubs.

39And while they lie inflamed with all their wine, I will prepare a
different kind of feast for them.
I will make them drink until they fall asleep, and they will never
wake up again,"

says the LORD.

40“I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams and goats to be sacrificed.

41“How Babylon* is fallen— great Babylon, praised throughout the earth!
Now she has become an object of horror among the nations.

42The sea has risen over Babylon; she is covered by its crashing waves.

43Her cities now lie in ruins; she is a dry wasteland where no one lives or even passes by.

44And I will punish Bel, the god of Babylon, and make him vomit up all he has eaten.
The nations will no longer come and worship him.
The wall of Babylon has fallen!

A MESSAGE FOR THE EXILES

45“Come out, my people, flee from Babylon.

Save yourselves! Run from the LORD’s fierce anger.

46But do not panic; don’t be afraid when you hear the first rumor of approaching forces.
For rumors will keep coming year by year.
Violence will erupt in the land as the leaders fight against each other.

47For the time is surely coming when I will punish this great city and all her idols.
Her whole land will be disgraced, and her dead will lie in the streets.

48Then the heavens and earth will rejoice, for out of the north will come destroying armies against Babylon,” says the LORD.

49“Just as Babylon killed the people of Israel and others throughout

the world, so must her people be killed.

50Get out, all you who have escaped the sword!
Do not stand and watch—flee while you can!
Remember the LORD, though you are in a far-off land, and think about your home in Jerusalem."

51"We are ashamed," the people say.
"We are insulted and disgraced because the LORD's Temple has been defiled by foreigners."

52"Yes," says the LORD, "but the time is coming when I will destroy Babylon's idols.
The groans of her wounded people will be heard throughout the land.

53Though Babylon reaches as high as the heavens and makes her fortifications incredibly strong, I will still send enemies to plunder her.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

BABYLON'S COMPLETE DESTRUCTION

54"Listen! Hear the cry of Babylon, the sound of great destruction from the land of the Babylonians.

55For the LORD is destroying Babylon.
He will silence her loud voice.
Waves of enemies pound against her; the noise of battle rings through the city.

56Destroying armies come against Babylon.
Her mighty men are captured, and their weapons break in their hands.
For the LORD is a God who gives just punishment; he always repays in full.

57I will make her officials and wise men drunk, along with her captains, officers, and warriors.
They will fall asleep and never wake up again!"
says the King, whose name is the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

58This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: "The thick walls
of Babylon will be leveled to the ground, and her massive gates will
be burned.
The builders from many lands have worked in vain, for their work
will be destroyed by fire!"

JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE SENT TO BABYLON

59The prophet Jeremiah gave this message to Seraiah son of Neriah
and grandson of Mahseiah, a staff officer, when Seraiah went to
Babylon with King Zedekiah of Judah. This was during the fourth
year of Zedekiah's reign.*60Jeremiah had recorded on a scroll all the
terrible disasters that would soon come upon Babylon—all the
words written here. 61He said to Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon,
read aloud everything on this scroll. 62Then say, 'LORD, you have
said that you will destroy Babylon so that neither people nor
animals will remain here. She will lie empty and abandoned
forever.' 63When you have finished reading the scroll, tie it to a
stone and throw it into the Euphrates River. 64Then say, 'In this
same way Babylon and her people will sink, never again to rise,
because of the disasters I will bring upon her.'"

This is the end of Jeremiah's messages.

Jeremiah 52

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

1Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he
reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother was Hamutal, the
daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. 2But Zedekiah did what was evil
in the LORD's sight, just as Jehoiakim had done. 3These things
happened because of the LORD's anger against the people of

Jerusalem and Judah, until he finally banished them from his presence and sent them into exile.

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. 4So on January 15,* during the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon led his entire army against Jerusalem. They surrounded the city and built siege ramps against its walls. 5Jerusalem was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah's reign.

6By July 18 in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign,* the famine in the city had become very severe, and the last of the food was entirely gone. 7Then a section of the city wall was broken down, and all the soldiers fled. Since the city was surrounded by the Babylonians,* they waited for nightfall. Then they slipped through the gate between the two walls behind the king's garden and headed toward the Jordan Valley.*

8But the Babylonian troops chased King Zedekiah and overtook him on the plains of Jericho, for his men had all deserted him and scattered. 9They captured the king and took him to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath. There the king of Babylon pronounced judgment upon Zedekiah. 10The king of Babylon made Zedekiah watch as he slaughtered his sons. He also slaughtered all the officials of Judah at Riblah. 11Then he gouged out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him in bronze chains, and the king of Babylon led him away to Babylon. Zedekiah remained there in prison until the day of his death.

THE TEMPLE DESTROYED

12On August 17 of that year,* which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard and an official of the Babylonian king, arrived in Jerusalem. 13He burned down the Temple of the LORD, the royal palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem. He destroyed all the important buildings* in the city. 14Then he supervised the entire Babylonian* army as they

tore down the walls of Jerusalem on every side. 15Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took as exiles some of the poorest of the people, the rest of the people who remained in the city, the defectors who had declared their allegiance to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen. 16But Nebuzaradan allowed some of the poorest people to stay behind to care for the vineyards and fields.

17The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars in front of the LORD's Temple, the bronze water carts, and the great bronze basin called the Sea, and they carried all the bronze away to Babylon. 18They also took all the ash buckets, shovels, lamp snuffers, basins, dishes, and all the other bronze articles used for making sacrifices at the Temple. 19The captain of the guard also took the small bowls, incense burners, basins, pots, lampstands, ladles, bowls used for liquid offerings, and all the other articles made of pure gold or silver.

20The weight of the bronze from the two pillars, the Sea with the twelve bronze oxen beneath it, and the water carts was too great to be measured. These things had been made for the LORD's Temple in the days of King Solomon. 21Each of the pillars was 27 feet tall and 18 feet in circumference.* They were hollow, with walls 3 inches thick.*22The bronze capital on top of each pillar was 7*1/2* feet* high and was decorated with a network of bronze pomegranates all the way around. 23There were 96 pomegranates on the sides, and a total of 100 pomegranates on the network around the top.

24Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took with him as prisoners Seraiah the high priest, Zephaniah the priest of the second rank, and the three chief gatekeepers. 25And from among the people still hiding in the city, he took an officer who had been in charge of the Judean army; seven of the king's personal advisers; the army commander's chief secretary, who was in charge of recruitment; and sixty other citizens. 26Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, took them all to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 27And there at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king of Babylon had them all put to death. So the people of Judah were sent into exile from their land.

28The number of captives taken to Babylon in the seventh year of
Nebuchadnezzar's reign* was 3,023. 29Then in Nebuchadnezzar's
eighteenth year* he took 832 more. 30In Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-
third year* he sent Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, who took
745 more—a total of 4,600 captives in all.

HOPE FOR ISRAEL'S ROYAL LINE

31In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah,
Evil-merodach ascended to the Babylonian throne. He was kind to*
Jehoiachin and released him from prison on March 31 of that
year.*32He spoke kindly to Jehoiachin and gave him a higher place
than all the other exiled kings in Babylon. 33He supplied Jehoiachin
with new clothes to replace his prison garb and allowed him to dine
in the king's presence for the rest of his life. 34So the Babylonian
king gave him a regular food allowance as long as he lived. This
continued until the day of his death.

WELCOME TO

LAMENTATIONS

Lamentations is a series of poems that reveals the deep sorrow Jeremiah feels over Jerusalem's destruction and the exile of God's people. The loss is acute, not just because the city was home but because Jerusalem represented the kingdom of God's chosen people. It was the center of worship, a sacred place that housed not only the royal family but the Temple—the very house of God. The destruction of Jerusalem is the destruction of a heritage, a tradition, God's own people—all appear to be lost forever.

Jeremiah spares little detail in this grim picture of the devastating consequences of sin and rebellion against God. But he does not leave his readers without hope. Jeremiah gives the mourning Israelites—and us—a reassuring message (3:19-23): In our greatest sorrow and grief, in the depths of despair, we find hope if we look to God. He is our Savior and our hope for now and the future.

0 STOPS

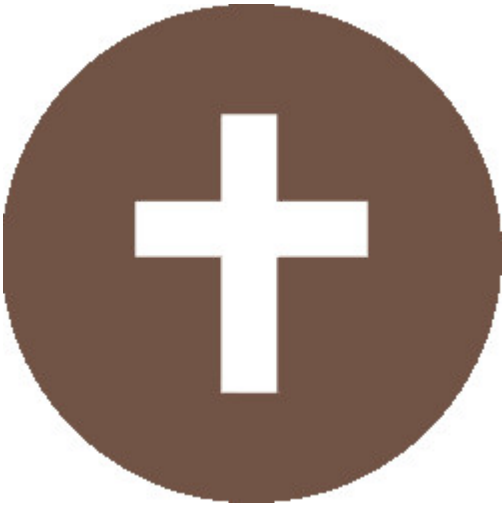
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You will fly right over Lamentations without stopping. You might want to return later to read this heart-wrenching song of the sorrow felt by God's people. Your next stop is at Ezekiel 37:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your one reading in this book will help you understand the great loss the people suffer in seeing their beloved city destroyed. Your next stop is at Lamentations 1:1.

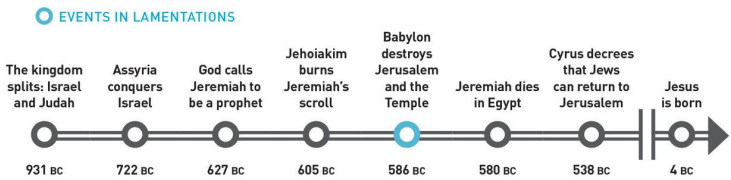
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The reading stops on your route will show you both the intensity of the Israelites' bereavement and the fervor of their prayers to God for healing and restoration. Your next stop is at Lamentations 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN LAMENTATIONS

Jeremiah's tears over the destruction of Jerusalem foreshadowed Jesus' own sorrow for the city. Jesus loved Jerusalem, and he longed to see its people made holy and righteous. Lamentations also gives us glimpses of hope in the midst of despair. Jesus is our source of hope, and his great love and compassion for us will never fail. He has saved us from the final consequences of our sin, and he will not let grief consume us; rather, he provides us with salvation.



Lamentations 1 *

SORROW IN JERUSALEM

1Jerusalem, once so full of people, is now deserted.
She who was once great among the nations
now sits alone like a widow.
Once the queen of all the earth,
she is now a slave.

2She sobs through the night; tears stream down her cheeks.
Among all her lovers,
there is no one left to comfort her.
All her friends have betrayed her
and become her enemies.

3Judah has been led away into captivity, oppressed with cruel slavery.
She lives among foreign nations
and has no place of rest.
Her enemies have chased her down,
and she has nowhere to turn.

4The roads to Jerusalem* are in mourning, for crowds no longer come to celebrate the festivals.
The city gates are silent,
her priests groan,
her young women are crying—
how bitter is her fate!

5Her oppressors have become her masters, and her enemies prosper,
for the LORD has punished Jerusalem
for her many sins.
Her children have been captured
and taken away to distant lands.

6All the majesty of beautiful Jerusalem*
has been stripped away.
Her princes are like starving deer
searching for pasture.
They are too weak to run

from the pursuing enemy.

7In the midst of her sadness and wandering, Jerusalem remembers
her ancient splendor.
But now she has fallen to her enemy,
and there is no one to help her.
Her enemy struck her down
and laughed as she fell.

8Jerusalem has sinned greatly, so she has been tossed away like a
filthy rag.
All who once honored her now despise her,
for they have seen her stripped naked and humiliated.
All she can do is groan
and hide her face.

9She defiled herself with immorality and gave no thought to her
future.
Now she lies in the gutter
with no one to lift her out.
“LORD, see my misery,” she cries.
“The enemy has triumphed.”

10The enemy has plundered her completely, taking every precious
thing she owns.
She has seen foreigners violate her sacred Temple,
the place the LORD had forbidden them to enter.

11Her people groan as they search for bread.
They have sold their treasures for food to stay alive.
“O LORD, look,” she mourns,
“and see how I am despised.

12“Does it mean nothing to you, all you who pass by?
Look around and see if there is any suffering like mine,
which the LORD brought on me
when he erupted in fierce anger.

13“He has sent fire from heaven that burns in my bones.
He has placed a trap in my path and turned me back.
He has left me devastated,

racked with sickness all day long.

14“He wove my sins into ropes to hitch me to a yoke of captivity.
The Lord sapped my strength and turned me over to my enemies; I
am helpless in their hands.

15“The Lord has treated my mighty men with contempt.
At his command a great army has come
to crush my young warriors.
The Lord has trampled his beloved city*
like grapes are trampled in a winepress.

16“For all these things I weep; tears flow down my cheeks.
No one is here to comfort me;
any who might encourage me are far away.
My children have no future,
for the enemy has conquered us.”

17Jerusalem reaches out for help, but no one comforts her.
Regarding his people Israel,*
the LORD has said,
“Let their neighbors be their enemies!
Let them be thrown away like a filthy rag!”

18“The LORD is right,” Jerusalem says, “for I rebelled against him.
Listen, people everywhere;
look upon my anguish and despair,
for my sons and daughters
have been taken captive to distant lands.

19“I begged my allies for help, but they betrayed me.
My priests and leaders

starved to death in the city,
even as they searched for food
to save their lives.

20“LORD, see my anguish!
My heart is broken
and my soul despairs,
for I have rebelled against you.
In the streets the sword kills,
and at home there is only death.

21“Others heard my groans, but no one turned to comfort me.
When my enemies heard about my troubles,
they were happy to see what you had done.
Oh, bring the day you promised,
when they will suffer as I have suffered.

22“Look at all their evil deeds, LORD.
Punish them,
as you have punished me
for all my sins.
My groans are many,
and I am sick at heart.”

JERUSALEM

Lamentations 2

GOD'S ANGER AT SIN

1The Lord in his anger has cast a dark shadow over beautiful Jerusalem.*
The fairest of Israel's cities lies in the dust,
thrown down from the heights of heaven.
In his day of great anger,
the Lord has shown no mercy even to his Temple.*

2Without mercy the Lord has destroyed every home in Israel.*
In his anger he has broken down
the fortress walls of beautiful Jerusalem.*
He has brought them to the ground,
dishonoring the kingdom and its rulers.

3All the strength of Israel vanishes beneath his fierce anger.
The Lord has withdrawn his protection
as the enemy attacks.
He consumes the whole land of Israel
like a raging fire.

4He bends his bow against his people, as though he were their enemy.
His strength is used against them
to kill their finest youth.
His fury is poured out like fire

on beautiful Jerusalem.*

5Yes, the Lord has vanquished Israel like an enemy.
He has destroyed her palaces
and demolished her fortresses.
He has brought unending sorrow and tears
upon beautiful Jerusalem.

6He has broken down his Temple as though it were merely a garden shelter.
The LORD has blotted out all memory
of the holy festivals and Sabbath days.
Kings and priests fall together
before his fierce anger.

7The Lord has rejected his own altar; he despises his own sanctuary.
He has given Jerusalem's palaces
to her enemies.
They shout in the LORD's Temple
as though it were a day of celebration.

8The LORD was determined to destroy the walls of beautiful Jerusalem.
He made careful plans for their destruction,
then did what he had planned.
Therefore, the ramparts and walls
have fallen down before him.

9Jerusalem's gates have sunk into the ground.
He has smashed their locks and bars.
Her kings and princes have been exiled to distant lands;
her law has ceased to exist.
Her prophets receive
no more visions from the LORD.

10The leaders of beautiful Jerusalem sit on the ground in silence.
They are clothed in burlap
and throw dust on their heads.
The young women of Jerusalem
hang their heads in shame.

11I have cried until the tears no longer come; my heart is broken.
My spirit is poured out in agony
as I see the desperate plight of my people.
Little children and tiny babies
are fainting and dying in the streets.

12They cry out to their mothers, “We need food and drink!”
Their lives ebb away in the streets
like the life of a warrior wounded in battle.
They gasp for life
as they collapse in their mothers’ arms.

13What can I say about you?
Who has ever seen such sorrow?
O daughter of Jerusalem,
to what can I compare your anguish?
O virgin daughter of Zion,
how can I comfort you?
For your wound is as deep as the sea.
Who can heal you?

14Your prophets have said so many foolish things, false to the core.
They did not save you from exile
by pointing out your sins.
Instead, they painted false pictures,
filling you with false hope.

15All who pass by jeer at you.
They scoff and insult beautiful Jerusalem,* saying, “Is this the city
called ‘Most Beautiful in All the World’
and ‘Joy of All the Earth’?”

16All your enemies mock you.
They scoff and snarl and say,
“We have destroyed her at last!
We have long waited for this day,
and it is finally here!”

17But it is the LORD who did just as he planned.
He has fulfilled the promises of disaster

he made long ago.
He has destroyed Jerusalem without mercy.
He has caused her enemies to gloat over her
and has given them power over her.

18Cry aloud* before the Lord, O walls of beautiful Jerusalem!
Let your tears flow like a river
day and night.
Give yourselves no rest;
give your eyes no relief.

19Rise during the night and cry out.
Pour out your hearts like water to the Lord.
Lift up your hands to him in prayer,
pleading for your children,
for in every street
they are faint with hunger.

20"O LORD, think about this!
Should you treat your own people this way?
Should mothers eat their own children,
those they once bounced on their knees?
Should priests and prophets be killed
within the Lord's Temple?

21"See them lying in the streets— young and old,
boys and girls,
killed by the swords of the enemy.
You have killed them in your anger,
slaughtering them without mercy.

22"You have invited terrors from all around, as though you were
calling them to a day of feasting.
In the day of the LORD's anger,
no one has escaped or survived.
The enemy has killed all the children
whom I carried and raised."

Lamentations 3

HOPE IN THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS

1I am the one who has seen the afflictions that come from the rod of
the LORD's anger.

2He has led me into darkness, shutting out all light.

3He has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long.

4He has made my skin and flesh grow old.
He has broken my bones.

5He has besieged and surrounded me with anguish and distress.

6He has buried me in a dark place, like those long dead.

7He has walled me in, and I cannot escape.
He has bound me in heavy chains.

8And though I cry and shout, he has shut out my prayers.

9He has blocked my way with a high stone wall; he has made my
road crooked.

10He has hidden like a bear or a lion, waiting to attack me.

11He has dragged me off the path and torn me in pieces, leaving me
helpless and devastated.

12He has drawn his bow and made me the target for his arrows.

13He shot his arrows deep into my heart.

14My own people laugh at me.
All day long they sing their mocking songs.

15He has filled me with bitterness and given me a bitter cup of
sorrow to drink.

16He has made me chew on gravel.
He has rolled me in the dust.

17Peace has been stripped away, and I have forgotten what

prosperity is.

18I cry out, “My splendor is gone!
Everything I had hoped for from the LORD is lost!”

19The thought of my suffering and homelessness is bitter beyond words.*

20I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss.

21Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this:

22The faithful love of the LORD never ends!*
His mercies never cease.

23Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

24I say to myself, “The LORD is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!”

25The LORD is good to those who depend on him, to those who search for him.

26So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the LORD.

27And it is good for people to submit at an early age to the yoke of his discipline:

28Let them sit alone in silence beneath the LORD’s demands.

29Let them lie face down in the dust, for there may be hope at last.

30Let them turn the other cheek to those who strike them and accept the insults of their enemies.

31For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever.

32Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love.

33For he does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow.

34If people crush underfoot all the prisoners of the land,

35if they deprive others of their rights in defiance of the Most High,

36if they twist justice in the courts— doesn't the Lord see all these things?

37Who can command things to happen without the Lord's permission?

38Does not the Most High send both calamity and good?

39Then why should we, mere humans, complain when we are punished for our sins?

40Instead, let us test and examine our ways.
Let us turn back to the LORD.

41Let us lift our hearts and hands to God in heaven and say,

42"We have sinned and rebelled, and you have not forgiven us.

43"You have engulfed us with your anger, chased us down, and slaughtered us without mercy.

44You have hidden yourself in a cloud so our prayers cannot reach you.

45You have discarded us as refuse and garbage among the nations.

46"All our enemies have spoken out against us.

47We are filled with fear, for we are trapped, devastated, and ruined."

48Tears stream from my eyes because of the destruction of my people!

49My tears flow endlessly; they will not stop

50until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees.

51My heart is breaking over the fate of all the women of Jerusalem.

52My enemies, whom I have never harmed, hunted me down like a bird.

53They threw me into a pit and dropped stones on me.

54The water rose over my head, and I cried out, “This is the end!”

55But I called on your name, LORD, from deep within the pit.

56You heard me when I cried, “Listen to my pleading!
Hear my cry for help!”

57Yes, you came when I called; you told me, “Do not fear.”

58Lord, you are my lawyer! Plead my case!
For you have redeemed my life.

59You have seen the wrong they have done to me, LORD.
Be my judge, and prove me right.

60You have seen the vengeful plots my enemies have laid against me.

61LORD, you have heard the vile names they call me.
You know all about the plans they have made.

62My enemies whisper and mutter as they plot against me all day long.

63Look at them! Whether they sit or stand, I am the object of their mocking songs.

64Pay them back, LORD, for all the evil they have done.

65Give them hard and stubborn hearts, and then let your curse fall on them!

66Chase them down in your anger, destroying them beneath the LORD’s heavens.

Lamentations 4

GOD'S ANGER SATISFIED

1How the gold has lost its luster!
Even the finest gold has become dull.
The sacred gemstones
lie scattered in the streets!

2See how the precious children of Jerusalem,*
worth their weight in fine gold,
are now treated like pots of clay
made by a common potter.

3Even the jackals feed their young, but not my people Israel.
They ignore their children's cries,
like ostriches in the desert.

4The parched tongues of their little ones stick to the roofs of their mouths in thirst.
The children cry for bread,
but no one has any to give them.

5The people who once ate the richest foods now beg in the streets for anything they can get.
Those who once wore the finest clothes
now search the garbage dumps for food.

THE CITY OF SODOM

6The guilt* of my people is greater than that of Sodom,
where utter disaster struck in a moment
and no hand offered help.

7Our princes once glowed with health— brighter than snow, whiter than milk.

Their faces were as ruddy as rubies,
their appearance like fine jewels.*

8But now their faces are blacker than soot.
No one recognizes them in the streets.
Their skin sticks to their bones;
it is as dry and hard as wood.

9Those killed by the sword are better off than those who die of hunger.
Starving, they waste away
for lack of food from the fields.

10Tenderhearted women have cooked their own children.
They have eaten them
to survive the siege.

11But now the anger of the LORD is satisfied.
His fierce anger has been poured out.
He started a fire in Jerusalem*
that burned the city to its foundations.

12Not a king in all the earth— no one in all the world—
would have believed that an enemy
could march through the gates of Jerusalem.

13Yet it happened because of the sins of her prophets and the sins of her priests,
who defiled the city
by shedding innocent blood.

14They wandered blindly through the streets,
so defiled by blood
that no one dared touch them.

15“Get away!” the people shouted at them.
“You’re defiled! Don’t touch us!”
So they fled to distant lands
and wandered among foreign nations,
but none would let them stay.

16The LORD himself has scattered them, and he no longer helps them.
People show no respect for the priests
and no longer honor the leaders.

17We looked in vain for our allies to come and save us,
but we were looking to nations
that could not help us.

18We couldn't go into the streets without danger to our lives.
Our end was near; our days were numbered.
We were doomed!

19Our enemies were swifter than eagles in flight.
If we fled to the mountains, they found us.
If we hid in the wilderness,
they were waiting for us there.

20Our king—the LORD's anointed, the very life of our nation— was caught in their snares.
We had thought that his shadow
would protect us against any nation on earth!

EDOM

21Are you rejoicing in the land of Uz, O people of Edom?
But you, too, must drink from the cup of the LORD's anger.
You, too, will be stripped naked in your drunkenness.

22O beautiful Jerusalem,* your punishment will end; you will soon return from exile.
But Edom, your punishment is just beginning;
soon your many sins will be exposed.

Lamentations 5

PRAYER FOR RESTORATION

1 LORD, remember what has happened to us.
See how we have been disgraced!

2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners.

3 We are orphaned and fatherless.
Our mothers are widowed.

4 We have to pay for water to drink, and even firewood is expensive.

5 Those who pursue us are at our heels; we are exhausted but are given no rest.

6 We submitted to Egypt and Assyria to get enough food to survive.

7 Our ancestors sinned, but they have died— and we are suffering the punishment they deserved!

8 Slaves have now become our masters; there is no one left to rescue us.

9We hunt for food at the risk of our lives, for violence rules the countryside.

10The famine has blackened our skin as though baked in an oven.

11Our enemies rape the women in Jerusalem*
and the young girls in all the towns of Judah.

12Our princes are being hanged by their thumbs, and our elders are treated with contempt.

13Young men are led away to work at millstones, and boys stagger under heavy loads of wood.

14The elders no longer sit in the city gates; the young men no longer dance and sing.

15Joy has left our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning.

16The garlands have* fallen from our heads.
Weep for us because we have sinned.

17Our hearts are sick and weary, and our eyes grow dim with tears.

18For Jerusalem* is empty and desolate, a place haunted by jackals.

19But LORD, you remain the same forever!
Your throne continues from generation to generation.

20Why do you continue to forget us?
Why have you abandoned us for so long?

21Restore us, O LORD, and bring us back to you again!
Give us back the joys we once had!

22Or have you utterly rejected us?
Are you angry with us still?

Ezekiel

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

WELCOME TO

EZEKIEL

Ezekiel is a young priest who is deported to Babylon after the second Babylonian invasion of Judah. While living in exile with the other Jewish captives, Ezekiel is called by God to be a prophet to God's people in exile. He sees visions and receives messages from God, announcing the coming judgment on the remaining people in Jerusalem. The exiled Jews, however, didn't want to hear his doomsday messages; they wanted to hear that things would get better.

After Jerusalem is destroyed, as God warned, Ezekiel changes his message to one of comfort and hope for the future. In his visions, Ezekiel sees strange and wonderful things that give the Jews the hope of returning home to their land and having God's glory return to a restored Temple.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Your reading in Ezekiel is the famous vision of a valley of dry bones coming to life. Your next stop will be at Ezekiel 37:1.

2 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The stops on your route through Ezekiel

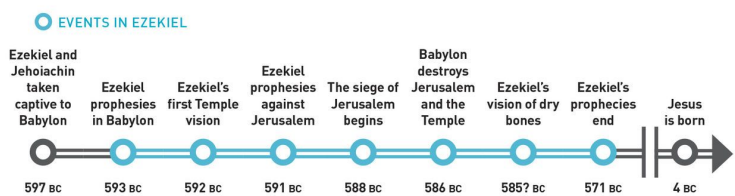
will include two of the prophet's great visions, which reveal God's glory and give hope to the exiled Jews in Babylon. Your next stop will be at Ezekiel 1:1.

7 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Although you will cover only a portion of all that this prophet has to say, your route through this book will give you a good overview of the striking visions Ezekiel shares with the Jewish exiles. Your next stop will be at Ezekiel 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN EZEKIEL

Jesus can be seen in several prophetic images concerning the future restoration of God's people. Ezekiel's picture of David as the coming shepherd who will care for the people of God (34:23-24) is a clear reference to Jesus, the Good Shepherd. The power of Jesus' resurrection is evident in Ezekiel's prophetic vision of the valley of dry bones that come back to life (37:1-14). Ezekiel also speaks of two pieces of wood that represent Israel and Judah, God's splintered people (37:15-28). God promised to put these "splinters" back together as a unified nation. This nation would be ruled by David, would obey God fully, and would live in peace with God forever. These prophecies all find their fulfillment in Jesus and the salvation he brings.



THE JEWS IN EXILE

Ezekiel 1

A VISION OF LIVING BEINGS

1On July 31* of my thirtieth year,* while I was with the Judean
exiles beside the Kebar River in Babylon, the heavens were opened
and I saw visions of God. 2This happened during the fifth year of
King Jehoiachin's captivity. 3(The LORD gave this message to
Ezekiel son of Buzi, a priest, beside the Kebar River in the land of
the Babylonians,* and he felt the hand of the LORD take hold of
him.)

4As I looked, I saw a great storm coming from the north, driving
before it a huge cloud that flashed with lightning and shone with
brilliant light. There was fire inside the cloud, and in the middle of
the fire glowed something like gleaming amber.*5From the center of
the cloud came four living beings that looked human, 6except that
each had four faces and four wings. 7Their legs were straight, and
their feet had hooves like those of a calf and shone like burnished
bronze. 8Under each of their four wings I could see human hands.
So each of the four beings had four faces and four wings. 9The
wings of each living being touched the wings of the beings beside it.
Each one moved straight forward in any direction without turning
around.

10Each had a human face in the front, the face of a lion on the right
side, the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle at
the back. 11Each had two pairs of outstretched wings—one pair
stretched out to touch the wings of the living beings on either side
of it, and the other pair covered its body. 12They went in whatever
direction the spirit chose, and they moved straight forward in any
direction without turning around.

13The living beings looked like bright coals of fire or brilliant
torches, and lightning seemed to flash back and forth among them.
14And the living beings darted to and fro like flashes of lightning.

15As I looked at these beings, I saw four wheels touching the ground
beside them, one wheel belonging to each. 16The wheels sparkled as
if made of beryl. All four wheels looked alike and were made the

same; each wheel had a second wheel turning crosswise within it.
17The beings could move in any of the four directions they faced,
without turning as they moved. 18The rims of the four wheels were
tall and frightening, and they were covered with eyes all around.

19When the living beings moved, the wheels moved with them.
When they flew upward, the wheels went up, too. 20The spirit of the
living beings was in the wheels. So wherever the spirit went, the
wheels and the living beings also went. 21When the beings moved,
the wheels moved. When the beings stopped, the wheels stopped.
When the beings flew upward, the wheels rose up, for the spirit of
the living beings was in the wheels.

22Spread out above them was a surface like the sky, glittering like
crystal. 23Beneath this surface the wings of each living being
stretched out to touch the others' wings, and each had two wings
covering its body. 24As they flew, their wings sounded to me like
waves crashing against the shore or like the voice of the Almighty*
or like the shouting of a mighty army. When they stopped, they let
down their wings. 25As they stood with wings lowered, a voice
spoke from beyond the crystal surface above them.

26Above this surface was something that looked like a throne made
of blue lapis lazuli. And on this throne high above was a figure
whose appearance resembled a man. 27From what appeared to be
his waist up, he looked like gleaming amber, flickering like a fire.
And from his waist down, he looked like a burning flame, shining
with splendor. 28All around him was a glowing halo, like a rainbow
shining in the clouds on a rainy day. This is what the glory of the
LORD looked like to me. When I saw it, I fell face down on the
ground, and I heard someone's voice speaking to me.

HOLY SPIRIT EZEKIEL 2–3

Ezekiel 2

EZEKIEL'S CALL AND COMMISSION

1"Stand up, son of man," said the voice. "I want to speak with you."
2The Spirit came into me as he spoke, and he set me on my feet. I
listened carefully to his words. 3"Son of man," he said, "I am
sending you to the nation of Israel, a rebellious nation that has
rebelled against me. They and their ancestors have been rebelling
against me to this very day. 4They are a stubborn and hard-hearted
people. But I am sending you to say to them, 'This is what the
Sovereign LORD says!' 5And whether they listen or refuse to listen—
for remember, they are rebels—at least they will know they have
had a prophet among them.

6"Son of man, do not fear them or their words. Don't be afraid even
though their threats surround you like nettles and briers and

stinging scorpions. Do not be dismayed by their dark scowls, even
though they are rebels. 7You must give them my messages whether
they listen or not. But they won't listen, for they are completely
rebellious! 8Son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not join
them in their rebellion. Open your mouth, and eat what I give you."

9Then I looked and saw a hand reaching out to me. It held a scroll,
10which he unrolled. And I saw that both sides were covered with
funeral songs, words of sorrow, and pronouncements of doom.

Ezekiel 3

1The voice said to me, "Son of man, eat what I am giving you—eat
this scroll! Then go and give its message to the people of Israel." 2So
I opened my mouth, and he fed me the scroll. 3"Fill your stomach
with this," he said. And when I ate it, it tasted as sweet as honey in
my mouth.

4Then he said, "Son of man, go to the people of Israel and give them
my messages. 5I am not sending you to a foreign people whose
language you cannot understand. 6No, I am not sending you to
people with strange and difficult speech. If I did, they would listen!
7But the people of Israel won't listen to you any more than they
listen to me! For the whole lot of them are hard-hearted and
stubborn. 8But look, I have made you as obstinate and hard-hearted
as they are. 9I have made your forehead as hard as the hardest rock!
So don't be afraid of them or fear their angry looks, even though
they are rebels."

10Then he added, “Son of man, let all my words sink deep into your
own heart first. Listen to them carefully for yourself. 11Then go to
your people in exile and say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign
LORD says!’ Do this whether they listen to you or not.”

12Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard a loud rumbling sound
behind me. (May the glory of the LORD be praised in his place!)*13It
was the sound of the wings of the living beings as they brushed
against each other and the rumbling of their wheels beneath them.

14The Spirit lifted me up and took me away. I went in bitterness and
turmoil, but the LORD’s hold on me was strong. 15Then I came to
the colony of Judean exiles in Tel-abib, beside the Kebar River. I
was overwhelmed and sat among them for seven days.

A WATCHMAN FOR ISRAEL

16After seven days the LORD gave me a message. He said, 17“Son of
man, I have appointed you as a watchman for Israel. Whenever you
receive a message from me, warn people immediately. 18If I warn
the wicked, saying, ‘You are under the penalty of death,’ but you
fail to deliver the warning, they will die in their sins. And I will
hold you responsible for their deaths. 19If you warn them and they
refuse to repent and keep on sinning, they will die in their sins. But
you will have saved yourself because you obeyed me.

20“If righteous people turn away from their righteous behavior and
ignore the obstacles I put in their way, they will die. And if you do
not warn them, they will die in their sins. None of their righteous
acts will be remembered, and I will hold you responsible for their
deaths. 21But if you warn righteous people not to sin and they listen
to you and do not sin, they will live, and you will have saved
yourself, too.”

22Then the LORD took hold of me and said, “Get up and go out into
the valley, and I will speak to you there.” 23So I got up and went,

and there I saw the glory of the LORD, just as I had seen in my first vision by the Kebar River. And I fell face down on the ground.

24Then the Spirit came into me and set me on my feet. He spoke to me and said, “Go to your house and shut yourself in. 25There, son of man, you will be tied with ropes so you cannot go out among the people. 26And I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be speechless and unable to rebuke them, for they are rebels. 27But when I give you a message, I will loosen your tongue and let you speak. Then you will say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says!’ Those who choose to listen will listen, but those who refuse will refuse, for they are rebels.

Ezekiel 4

A SIGN OF THE COMING SIEGE

1“And now, son of man, take a large clay brick and set it down in front of you. Then draw a map of the city of Jerusalem on it. 2Show the city under siege. Build a wall around it so no one can escape. Set up the enemy camp, and surround the city with siege ramps and battering rams. 3Then take an iron griddle and place it between you and the city. Turn toward the city and demonstrate how harsh the

siege will be against Jerusalem. This will be a warning to the people of Israel.

4“Now lie on your left side and place the sins of Israel on yourself. You are to bear their sins for the number of days you lie there on your side. 5I am requiring you to bear Israel’s sins for 390 days—one day for each year of their sin. 6After that, turn over and lie on your right side for 40 days—one day for each year of Judah’s sin.

7“Meanwhile, keep staring at the siege of Jerusalem. Lie there with your arm bared and prophesy her destruction. 8I will tie you up with ropes so you won’t be able to turn from side to side until the days of your siege have been completed.

9“Now go and get some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and emmer wheat, and mix them together in a storage jar. Use them to make bread for yourself during the 390 days you will be lying on your side. 10Ration this out to yourself, eight ounces* of food for each day, and eat it at set times. 11Then measure out a jar* of water for each day, and drink it at set times. 12Prepare and eat this food as you would barley cakes. While all the people are watching, bake it over a fire using dried human dung as fuel and then eat the bread.” 13Then the LORD said, “This is how Israel will eat defiled bread in the Gentile lands to which I will banish them!”

14Then I said, “O Sovereign LORD, must I be defiled by using human dung? For I have never been defiled before. From the time I was a child until now I have never eaten any animal that died of sickness or was killed by other animals. I have never eaten any meat forbidden by the law.”

15“All right,” the LORD said. “You may bake your bread with cow dung instead of human dung.” 16Then he told me, “Son of man, I will make food very scarce in Jerusalem. It will be weighed out with great care and eaten fearfully. The water will be rationed out drop by drop, and the people will drink it with dismay. 17Lacking food and water, people will look at one another in terror, and they

will waste away under their punishment.

Ezekiel 5

A SIGN OF THE COMING JUDGMENT

1“Son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a razor to shave your
head and beard. Use a scale to weigh the hair into three equal parts.
2Place a third of it at the center of your map of Jerusalem. After
acting out the siege, burn it there. Scatter another third across your
map and chop it with a sword. Scatter the last third to the wind, for
I will scatter my people with the sword. 3Keep just a bit of the hair
and tie it up in your robe. 4Then take some of these hairs out and
throw them into the fire, burning them up. A fire will then spread
from this remnant and destroy all of Israel.

5“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: This is an illustration of
what will happen to Jerusalem. I placed her at the center of the
nations, 6but she has rebelled against my regulations and decrees
and has been even more wicked than the surrounding nations. She
has refused to obey the regulations and decrees I gave her to follow.

7“Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: You people have
behaved worse than your neighbors and have refused to obey my
decrees and regulations. You have not even lived up to the
standards of the nations around you. 8Therefore, I myself, the
Sovereign LORD, am now your enemy. I will punish you publicly
while all the nations watch. 9Because of your detestable idols, I will
punish you like I have never punished anyone before or ever will
again. 10Parents will eat their own children, and children will eat
their parents. I will punish you and scatter to the winds the few
who survive.

11“As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I will cut you off
completely. I will show you no pity at all because you have defiled
my Temple with your vile images and detestable sins. 12A third of
your people will die in the city from disease and famine. A third of

them will be slaughtered by the enemy outside the city walls. And I will scatter a third to the winds, chasing them with my sword.
13Then at last my anger will be spent, and I will be satisfied. And when my fury against them has subsided, all Israel will know that I, the LORD, have spoken to them in my jealous anger.

14“So I will turn you into a ruin, a mockery in the eyes of the surrounding nations and to all who pass by. 15You will become an object of mockery and taunting and horror. You will be a warning to all the nations around you. They will see what happens when the LORD punishes a nation in anger and rebukes it, says the LORD.

16“I will shower you with the deadly arrows of famine to destroy you. The famine will become more and more severe until every crumb of food is gone. 17And along with the famine, wild animals will attack you and rob you of your children. Disease and war will stalk your land, and I will bring the sword of the enemy against you. I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 6

JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL’S MOUNTAINS

1Again a message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, turn and face the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them.
3Proclaim this message from the Sovereign LORD against the mountains of Israel. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills and to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring war upon you, and I will smash your pagan shrines. 4All your altars will be demolished, and your places of worship will be

destroyed. I will kill your people in front of your idols.*5I will lay
your corpses in front of your idols and scatter your bones around
your altars. 6Wherever you live there will be desolation, and I will
destroy your pagan shrines. Your altars will be demolished, your
idols will be smashed, your places of worship will be torn down,
and all the religious objects you have made will be destroyed. 7The
place will be littered with corpses, and you will know that I alone
am the LORD.

8"But I will let a few of my people escape destruction, and they will
be scattered among the nations of the world. 9Then when they are
exiled among the nations, they will remember me. They will
recognize how hurt I am by their unfaithful hearts and lustful eyes
that long for their idols. Then at last they will hate themselves for
all their detestable sins. 10They will know that I alone am the LORD
and that I was serious when I said I would bring this calamity on
them.

11"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Clap your hands in horror,
and stamp your feet. Cry out because of all the detestable sins the
people of Israel have committed. Now they are going to die from
war and famine and disease. 12Disease will strike down those who
are far away in exile. War will destroy those who are nearby. And
anyone who survives will be killed by famine. So at last I will spend
my fury on them. 13They will know that I am the LORD when their
dead lie scattered among their idols and altars on every hill and
mountain and under every green tree and every great shade tree—
the places where they offered sacrifices to their idols. 14I will crush
them and make their cities desolate from the wilderness in the
south to Riblah* in the north. Then they will know that I am the
LORD."

Ezekiel 7

THE COMING OF THE END

1Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2"Son of man, this

is what the Sovereign LORD says to Israel: “The end is here!

Wherever you look— east, west, north, or south— your land is finished.

3No hope remains, for I will unleash my anger against you.
I will call you to account for all your detestable sins.

4I will turn my eyes away and show no pity.
I will repay you for all your detestable sins.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.

5“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Disaster after disaster is coming your way!

6The end has come.
It has finally arrived.
Your final doom is waiting!

7O people of Israel, the day of your destruction is dawning.
The time has come; the day of trouble is near.
Shouts of anguish will be heard on the mountains, not shouts of joy.

8Soon I will pour out my fury on you and unleash my anger against you.
I will call you to account for all your detestable sins.

9I will turn my eyes away and show no pity.
I will repay you for all your detestable sins.
Then you will know that it is I, the LORD, who is striking the blow.

10“The day of judgment is here; your destruction awaits!
The people’s wickedness and pride have blossomed to full flower.

11Their violence has grown into a rod that will beat them for their wickedness.
None of these proud and wicked people will survive.
All their wealth and prestige will be swept away.

12Yes, the time has come; the day is here!
Buyers should not rejoice over bargains, nor sellers grieve over losses, for all of them will fall under my terrible anger.

13Even if the merchants survive, they will never return to their business.
For what God has said applies to everyone— it will not be changed!
Not one person whose life is twisted by sin will ever recover.

THE DESOLATION OF ISRAEL

14"The trumpet calls Israel's army to mobilize, but no one listens,
for my fury is against them all.

15There is war outside the city and disease and famine within.
Those outside the city walls will be killed by enemy swords.
Those inside the city will die of famine and disease.

16The survivors who escape to the mountains will moan like doves,
weeping for their sins.

17Their hands will hang limp, their knees will be weak as water.

18They will dress themselves in burlap; horror and shame will cover them.
They will shave their heads in sorrow and remorse.

19"They will throw their money in the streets, tossing it out like worthless trash.
Their silver and gold won't save them on that day of the LORD's anger.
It will neither satisfy nor feed them, for their greed can only trip them up.

20They were proud of their beautiful jewelry and used it to make detestable idols and vile images.
Therefore, I will make all their wealth disgusting to them.

21I will give it as plunder to foreigners, to the most wicked of nations, and they will defile it.

22I will turn my eyes from them as these robbers invade and defile my treasured land.

23"Prepare chains for my people, for the land is bloodied by terrible

crimes.
Jerusalem is filled with violence.

24I will bring the most ruthless of nations to occupy their homes.
I will break down their proud fortresses and defile their sanctuaries.

25Terror and trembling will overcome my people.
They will look for peace but not find it.

26Calamity will follow calamity; rumor will follow rumor.
They will look in vain for a vision from the prophets.
They will receive no teaching from the priests and no counsel from the leaders.

27The king and the prince will stand helpless, weeping in despair,
and the people's hands will tremble with fear.
I will bring on them the evil they have done to others, and they will receive the punishment they so richly deserve.
Then they will know that I am the LORD."

VISIONS EZEKIEL 8–9

Ezekiel 8

IDOLATRY IN THE TEMPLE

1Then on September 17,* during the sixth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, while the leaders of Judah were in my home, the Sovereign LORD took hold of me. 2I saw a figure that appeared to

be a man.* From what appeared to be his waist down, he looked like a burning flame. From the waist up he looked like gleaming amber.*3He reached out what seemed to be a hand and took me by the hair. Then the Spirit lifted me up into the sky and transported me to Jerusalem in a vision from God. I was taken to the north gate of the inner courtyard of the Temple, where there is a large idol that has made the LORD very jealous. 4Suddenly, the glory of the God of Israel was there, just as I had seen it before in the valley.

5Then the LORD said to me, “Son of man, look toward the north.” So I looked, and there to the north, beside the entrance to the gate near the altar, stood the idol that had made the LORD so jealous.

6“Son of man,” he said, “do you see what they are doing? Do you see the detestable sins the people of Israel are committing to drive me from my Temple? But come, and you will see even more detestable sins than these!” 7Then he brought me to the door of the Temple courtyard, where I could see a hole in the wall. 8He said to me, “Now, son of man, dig into the wall.” So I dug into the wall and found a hidden doorway.

9“Go in,” he said, “and see the wicked and detestable sins they are committing in there!” 10So I went in and saw the walls covered with engravings of all kinds of crawling animals and detestable creatures. I also saw the various idols* worshiped by the people of Israel. 11Seventy leaders of Israel were standing there with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan in the center. Each of them held an incense burner, from which a cloud of incense rose above their heads.

12Then the LORD said to me, “Son of man, have you seen what the leaders of Israel are doing with their idols in dark rooms? They are saying, ‘The LORD doesn’t see us; he has deserted our land!’” 13Then the LORD added, “Come, and I will show you even more detestable sins than these!”

14He brought me to the north gate of the LORD’s Temple, and some women were sitting there, weeping for the god Tammuz. 15“Have

you seen this?" he asked. "But I will show you even more detestable sins than these!"

16Then he brought me into the inner courtyard of the LORD's Temple. At the entrance to the sanctuary, between the entry room and the bronze altar, there were about twenty-five men with their backs to the sanctuary of the LORD. They were facing east, bowing low to the ground, worshiping the sun!

17"Have you seen this, son of man?" he asked. "Is it nothing to the people of Judah that they commit these detestable sins, leading the whole nation into violence, thumbing their noses at me, and provoking my anger? 18Therefore, I will respond in fury. I will neither pity nor spare them. And though they cry for mercy, I will not listen."

Ezekiel 9

THE SLAUGHTER OF IDOLATERS

1Then the LORD thundered, "Bring on the men appointed to punish the city! Tell them to bring their weapons with them!" 2Six men soon appeared from the upper gate that faces north, each carrying a deadly weapon in his hand. With them was a man dressed in linen, who carried a writer's case at his side. They all went into the Temple courtyard and stood beside the bronze altar.

3Then the glory of the God of Israel rose up from between the cherubim, where it had rested, and moved to the entrance of the Temple. And the LORD called to the man dressed in linen who was carrying the writer's case. 4He said to him, "Walk through the streets of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of all who weep and sigh because of the detestable sins being committed in their city."

5Then I heard the LORD say to the other men, "Follow him through

the city and kill everyone whose forehead is not marked. Show no mercy; have no pity! 6Kill them all—old and young, girls and women and little children. But do not touch anyone with the mark. Begin right here at the Temple." So they began by killing the seventy leaders.

7"Defile the Temple!" the LORD commanded. "Fill its courtyards with corpses. Go!" So they went and began killing throughout the city.

8While they were out killing, I was all alone. I fell face down on the ground and cried out, "O Sovereign LORD! Will your fury against Jerusalem wipe out everyone left in Israel?"

9Then he said to me, "The sins of the people of Israel and Judah are very, very great. The entire land is full of murder; the city is filled with injustice. They are saying, 'The LORD doesn't see it! The LORD has abandoned the land!' 10So I will not spare them or have any pity on them. I will fully repay them for all they have done."

11Then the man in linen clothing, who carried the writer's case, reported back and said, "I have done as you commanded."

Ezekiel 10

THE LORD'S GLORY LEAVES THE TEMPLE

1In my vision I saw what appeared to be a throne of blue lapis lazuli
above the crystal surface over the heads of the cherubim. 2Then the
LORD spoke to the man in linen clothing and said, "Go between the
whirling wheels beneath the cherubim, and take a handful of
burning coals and scatter them over the city." He did this as I
watched.

3The cherubim were standing at the south end of the Temple when
the man went in, and the cloud of glory filled the inner courtyard.
4Then the glory of the LORD rose up from above the cherubim and
went over to the entrance of the Temple. The Temple was filled
with this cloud of glory, and the courtyard glowed brightly with the
glory of the LORD. 5The moving wings of the cherubim sounded like
the voice of God Almighty* and could be heard even in the outer
courtyard.

6The LORD said to the man in linen clothing, "Go between the
cherubim and take some burning coals from between the wheels."
So the man went in and stood beside one of the wheels. 7Then one
of the cherubim reached out his hand and took some live coals from
the fire burning among them. He put the coals into the hands of the
man in linen clothing, and the man took them and went out. 8(All
the cherubim had what looked like human hands under their
wings.)

9I looked, and each of the four cherubim had a wheel beside him,
and the wheels sparkled like beryl. 10All four wheels looked alike
and were made the same; each wheel had a second wheel turning
crosswise within it. 11The cherubim could move in any of the four
directions they faced, without turning as they moved. They went
straight in the direction they faced, never turning aside. 12Both the
cherubim and the wheels were covered with eyes. The cherubim

had eyes all over their bodies, including their hands, their backs, and their wings. 13I heard someone refer to the wheels as “the whirling wheels.” 14Each of the four cherubim had four faces: the first was the face of an ox,* the second was a human face, the third was the face of a lion, and the fourth was the face of an eagle.

15Then the cherubim rose upward. These were the same living beings I had seen beside the Kebar River. 16When the cherubim moved, the wheels moved with them. When they lifted their wings to fly, the wheels stayed beside them. 17When the cherubim stopped, the wheels stopped. When they flew upward, the wheels rose up, for the spirit of the living beings was in the wheels.

18Then the glory of the LORD moved out from the entrance of the Temple and hovered above the cherubim. 19And as I watched, the cherubim flew with their wheels to the east gate of the LORD’s Temple. And the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them.

20These were the same living beings I had seen beneath the God of Israel when I was by the Kebar River. I knew they were cherubim, 21for each had four faces and four wings and what looked like human hands under their wings. 22And their faces were just like the faces of the beings I had seen at the Kebar, and they traveled straight ahead, just as the others had.

Ezekiel 11

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL’S LEADERS

1Then the Spirit lifted me and brought me to the east gateway of
the LORD's Temple, where I saw twenty-five prominent men of the
city. Among them were Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of
Benaiah, who were leaders among the people.

2The Spirit said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who are
planning evil and giving wicked counsel in this city. 3They say to
the people, 'Is it not a good time to build houses? This city is like an
iron pot. We are safe inside it like meat in a pot.*' 4Therefore, son of
man, prophesy against them loudly and clearly."

5Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon me, and he told me to say,
"This is what the LORD says to the people of Israel: I know what
you are saying, for I know every thought that comes into your
minds. 6You have murdered many in this city and filled its streets
with the dead.

7"Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: This city is an
iron pot all right, but the pieces of meat are the victims of your
injustice. As for you, I will soon drag you from this pot. 8I will bring
on you the sword of war you so greatly fear, says the Sovereign
LORD. 9I will drive you out of Jerusalem and hand you over to
foreigners, who will carry out my judgments against you. 10You will
be slaughtered all the way to the borders of Israel. I will execute
judgment on you, and you will know that I am the LORD. 11No, this
city will not be an iron pot for you, and you will not be like meat
safe inside it. I will judge you even to the borders of Israel, 12and
you will know that I am the LORD. For you have refused to obey
my decrees and regulations; instead, you have copied the standards
of the nations around you."

13While I was still prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah suddenly
died. Then I fell face down on the ground and cried out, "O
Sovereign LORD, are you going to kill everyone in Israel?"

HOPE FOR EXILED ISRAEL

14Then this message came to me from the LORD: 15“Son of man, the people still left in Jerusalem are talking about you and your relatives and all the people of Israel who are in exile. They are saying, ‘Those people are far away from the LORD, so now he has given their land to us!’

16“Therefore, tell the exiles, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Although I have scattered you in the countries of the world, I will be a sanctuary to you during your time in exile. 17I, the Sovereign LORD, will gather you back from the nations where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel once again.’

18“When the people return to their homeland, they will remove every trace of their vile images and detestable idols. 19And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart,*20so they will obey my decrees and regulations. Then they will truly be my people, and I will be their God. 21But as for those who long for vile images and detestable idols, I will repay them fully for their sins. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

THE LORD’S GLORY LEAVES JERUSALEM

22Then the cherubim lifted their wings and rose into the air with their wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered above them. 23Then the glory of the LORD went up from the city and stopped above the mountain to the east.

24Afterward the Spirit of God carried me back again to Babylonia,* to the people in exile there. And so ended the vision of my visit to Jerusalem. 25And I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me.

Ezekiel 12

SIGNS OF THE COMING EXILE

1Again a message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, you
live among rebels who have eyes but refuse to see. They have ears
but refuse to hear. For they are a rebellious people.

3“So now, son of man, pretend you are being sent into exile. Pack
the few items an exile could carry, and leave your home to go
somewhere else. Do this right in front of the people so they can see
you. For perhaps they will pay attention to this, even though they
are such rebels. 4Bring your baggage outside during the day so they
can watch you. Then in the evening, as they are watching, leave
your house as captives do when they begin a long march to distant
lands. 5Dig a hole through the wall while they are watching and go
out through it. 6As they watch, lift your pack to your shoulders and
walk away into the night. Cover your face so you cannot see the
land you are leaving. For I have made you a sign for the people of
Israel.”

7So I did as I was told. In broad daylight I brought my pack outside,

filled with the things I might carry into exile. Then in the evening while the people looked on, I dug through the wall with my hands and went out into the night with my pack on my shoulder.

8The next morning this message came to me from the LORD: 9"Son of man, these rebels, the people of Israel, have asked you what all this means. 10Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: These actions contain a message for King Zedekiah in Jerusalem* and for all the people of Israel.' 11Explain that your actions are a sign to show what will soon happen to them, for they will be driven into exile as captives.

12"Even Zedekiah will leave Jerusalem at night through a hole in the wall, taking only what he can carry with him. He will cover his face, and his eyes will not see the land he is leaving. 13Then I will throw my net over him and capture him in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Babylonians,* though he will never see it, and he will die there. 14I will scatter his servants and warriors to the four winds and send the sword after them. 15And when I scatter them among the nations, they will know that I am the LORD. 16But I will spare a few of them from death by war, famine, or disease, so they can confess all their detestable sins to their captors. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

17Then this message came to me from the LORD: 18"Son of man, tremble as you eat your food. Shake with fear as you drink your water. 19Tell the people, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says concerning those living in Israel and Jerusalem: They will eat their food with trembling and sip their water in despair, for their land will be stripped bare because of their violence. 20The cities will be destroyed and the farmland made desolate. Then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

A NEW PROVERB FOR ISRAEL

21Again a message came to me from the LORD: 22"Son of man, you've heard that proverb they quote in Israel: 'Time passes, and

prophecies come to nothing.’ 23Tell the people, ‘This is what the
Sovereign LORD says: I will put an end to this proverb, and you will
soon stop quoting it.’ Now give them this new proverb to replace
the old one: ‘The time has come for every prophecy to be fulfilled!’

24“There will be no more false visions and flattering predictions in
Israel. 25For I am the LORD! If I say it, it will happen. There will be
no more delays, you rebels of Israel. I will fulfill my threat of
destruction in your own lifetime. I, the Sovereign LORD, have
spoken!”

26Then this message came to me from the LORD: 27“Son of man, the
people of Israel are saying, ‘He’s talking about the distant future.
His visions won’t come true for a long, long time.’ 28Therefore, tell
them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: No more delay! I will
now do everything I have threatened. I, the Sovereign LORD, have
spoken!’”

Ezekiel 13

JUDGMENT AGAINST FALSE PROPHETS

1Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man,
prophesy against the false prophets of Israel who are inventing their
own prophecies. Say to them, ‘Listen to the word of the LORD. 3This
is what the Sovereign LORD says: What sorrow awaits the false
prophets who are following their own imaginations and have seen
nothing at all!’

4“O people of Israel, these prophets of yours are like jackals digging
in the ruins. 5They have done nothing to repair the breaks in the
walls around the nation. They have not helped it to stand firm in
battle on the day of the LORD. 6Instead, they have told lies and
made false predictions. They say, ‘This message is from the LORD,’
even though the LORD never sent them. And yet they expect him to
fulfill their prophecies! 7Can your visions be anything but false if
you claim, ‘This message is from the LORD,’ when I have not even
spoken to you?

8“Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because what
you say is false and your visions are a lie, I will stand against you,
says the Sovereign LORD. 9I will raise my fist against all the
prophets who see false visions and make lying predictions, and they
will be banished from the community of Israel. I will blot their
names from Israel’s record books, and they will never again set foot
in their own land. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign
LORD.

10“This will happen because these evil prophets deceive my people
by saying, ‘All is peaceful’ when there is no peace at all! It’s as if the
people have built a flimsy wall, and these prophets are trying to
reinforce it by covering it with whitewash! 11Tell these
whitewashers that their wall will soon fall down. A heavy rainstorm
will undermine it; great hailstones and mighty winds will knock it
down. 12And when the wall falls, the people will cry out, ‘What
happened to your whitewash?’

13“Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will sweep
away your whitewashed wall with a storm of indignation, with a
great flood of anger, and with hailstones of fury. 14I will break down
your wall right to its foundation, and when it falls, it will crush you.
Then you will know that I am the LORD. 15At last my anger against
the wall and those who covered it with whitewash will be satisfied.
Then I will say to you: ‘The wall and those who whitewashed it are
both gone. 16They were lying prophets who claimed peace would
come to Jerusalem when there was no peace. I, the Sovereign
LORD, have spoken!’

JUDGMENT AGAINST FALSE WOMEN PROPHETS

17"Now, son of man, speak out against the women who prophesy
from their own imaginations. 18This is what the Sovereign LORD
says: What sorrow awaits you women who are ensnaring the souls
of my people, young and old alike. You tie magic charms on their
wrists and furnish them with magic veils. Do you think you can trap
others without bringing destruction on yourselves? 19You bring
shame on me among my people for a few handfuls of barley or a
piece of bread. By lying to my people who love to listen to lies, you
kill those who should not die, and you promise life to those who
should not live.

20"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against all your
magic charms, which you use to ensnare my people like birds. I will
tear them from your arms, setting my people free like birds set free
from a cage. 21I will tear off the magic veils and save my people
from your grasp. They will no longer be your victims. Then you will
know that I am the LORD. 22You have discouraged the righteous
with your lies, but I didn't want them to be sad. And you have
encouraged the wicked by promising them life, even though they
continue in their sins. 23Because of all this, you will no longer talk
of seeing visions that you never saw, nor will you make predictions.
For I will rescue my people from your grasp. Then you will know
that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 14

THE IDOLATRY OF ISRAEL'S LEADERS

1Then some of the leaders of Israel visited me, and while they were
sitting with me, 2this message came to me from the LORD: 3"Son of
man, these leaders have set up idols* in their hearts. They have
embraced things that will make them fall into sin. Why should I
listen to their requests? 4Tell them, 'This is what the Sovereign
LORD says: The people of Israel have set up idols in their hearts and
fallen into sin, and then they go to a prophet asking for a message.

So I, the LORD, will give them the kind of answer their great
idolatry deserves. 5I will do this to capture the minds and hearts of
all my people who have turned from me to worship their detestable
idols.'

6"Therefore, tell the people of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign
LORD says: Repent and turn away from your idols, and stop all your
detestable sins. 7I, the LORD, will answer all those, both Israelites
and foreigners, who reject me and set up idols in their hearts and so
fall into sin, and who then come to a prophet asking for my advice.
8I will turn against such people and make a terrible example of
them, eliminating them from among my people. Then you will
know that I am the LORD.

9"'And if a prophet is deceived into giving a message, it is because I,
the LORD, have deceived that prophet. I will lift my fist against
such prophets and cut them off from the community of Israel.
10False prophets and those who seek their guidance will all be
punished for their sins. 11In this way, the people of Israel will learn
not to stray from me, polluting themselves with sin. They will be
my people, and I will be their God. I, the Sovereign LORD, have
spoken!'"

THE CERTAINTY OF THE LORD'S JUDGMENT

12Then this message came to me from the LORD: 13"Son of man,
suppose the people of a country were to sin against me, and I lifted
my fist to crush them, cutting off their food supply and sending a
famine to destroy both people and animals. 14Even if Noah, Daniel,
and Job were there, their righteousness would save no one but
themselves, says the Sovereign LORD.

15"Or suppose I were to send wild animals to invade the country,
kill the people, and make the land too desolate and dangerous to
pass through. 16As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, even if
those three men were there, they wouldn't be able to save their own
sons or daughters. They alone would be saved, but the land would

be made desolate.

17“Or suppose I were to bring war against the land, and I sent
enemy armies to destroy both people and animals. 18As surely as I
live, says the Sovereign LORD, even if those three men were there,
they wouldn’t be able to save their own sons or daughters. They
alone would be saved.

19“Or suppose I were to pour out my fury by sending an epidemic
into the land, and the disease killed people and animals alike. 20As
surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, even if Noah, Daniel, and
Job were there, they wouldn’t be able to save their own sons or
daughters. They alone would be saved by their righteousness.

21“Now this is what the Sovereign LORD says: How terrible it will
be when all four of these dreadful punishments fall upon Jerusalem
—war, famine, wild animals, and disease—destroying all her people
and animals. 22Yet there will be survivors, and they will come here
to join you as exiles in Babylon. You will see with your own eyes
how wicked they are, and then you will feel better about what I
have done to Jerusalem. 23When you meet them and see their
behavior, you will understand that these things are not being done
to Israel without cause. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 15

JERUSALEM—A USELESS VINE

1Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, how
does a grapevine compare to a tree? Is a vine’s wood as useful as
the wood of a tree? 3Can its wood be used for making things, like
pegs to hang up pots and pans? 4No, it can only be used for fuel,
and even as fuel, it burns too quickly. 5Vines are useless both before
and after being put into the fire!

6“And this is what the Sovereign LORD says: The people of

Jerusalem are like grapevines growing among the trees of the forest. Since they are useless, I have thrown them on the fire to be burned. 7And I will see to it that if they escape from one fire, they will fall into another. When I turn against them, you will know that I am the LORD. 8And I will make the land desolate because my people have been unfaithful to me. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 16

JERUSALEM—AN UNFAITHFUL WIFE

1Then another message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her detestable sins. 3Give her this message from the Sovereign LORD: You are nothing but a Canaanite! Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4On the day you were born, no one cared about you. Your umbilical cord was not cut, and you were never washed, rubbed with salt, and wrapped in cloth. 5No one had the slightest interest in you; no one pitied you or cared for you. On the day you were born, you were unwanted, dumped in a field and left to die.

6“But I came by and saw you there, helplessly kicking about in your own blood. As you lay there, I said, ‘Live!’ 7And I helped you to thrive like a plant in the field. You grew up and became a beautiful jewel. Your breasts became full, and your body hair grew, but you were still naked. 8And when I passed by again, I saw that you were old enough for love. So I wrapped my cloak around you to cover your nakedness and declared my marriage vows. I made a covenant with you, says the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.

9“Then I bathed you and washed off your blood, and I rubbed fragrant oils into your skin. 10I gave you expensive clothing of fine linen and silk, beautifully embroidered, and sandals made of fine goatskin leather. 11I gave you lovely jewelry, bracelets, beautiful necklaces, 12a ring for your nose, earrings for your ears, and a lovely crown for your head. 13And so you were adorned with gold and

silver. Your clothes were made of fine linen and costly fabric and were beautifully embroidered. You ate the finest foods—choice flour, honey, and olive oil—and became more beautiful than ever. You looked like a queen, and so you were! 14Your fame soon spread throughout the world because of your beauty. I dressed you in my splendor and perfected your beauty, says the Sovereign LORD.

15"But you thought your fame and beauty were your own. So you gave yourself as a prostitute to every man who came along. Your beauty was theirs for the asking. 16You used the lovely things I gave you to make shrines for idols, where you played the prostitute. Unbelievable! How could such a thing ever happen? 17You took the very jewels and gold and silver ornaments I had given you and made statues of men and worshiped them. This is adultery against me! 18You used the beautifully embroidered clothes I gave you to dress your idols. Then you used my special oil and my incense to worship them. 19Imagine it! You set before them as a sacrifice the choice flour, olive oil, and honey I had given you, says the Sovereign LORD.

20"Then you took your sons and daughters—the children you had borne to me—and sacrificed them to your gods. Was your prostitution not enough? 21Must you also slaughter my children by sacrificing them to idols? 22In all your years of adultery and detestable sin, you have not once remembered the days long ago when you lay naked in a field, kicking about in your own blood.

23"What sorrow awaits you, says the Sovereign LORD. In addition to all your other wickedness, 24you built a pagan shrine and put altars to idols in every town square. 25On every street corner you defiled your beauty, offering your body to every passerby in an endless stream of prostitution. 26Then you added lustful Egypt to your lovers, provoking my anger with your increasing promiscuity. 27That is why I struck you with my fist and reduced your boundaries. I handed you over to your enemies, the Philistines, and even they were shocked by your lewd conduct. 28You have prostituted yourself with the Assyrians, too. It seems you can never find enough new lovers! And after your prostitution there, you still

were not satisfied. 29You added to your lovers by embracing Babylonia,* the land of merchants, but you still weren't satisfied.

30"What a sick heart you have, says the Sovereign LORD, to do such things as these, acting like a shameless prostitute. 31You build your pagan shrines on every street corner and your altars to idols in every square. In fact, you have been worse than a prostitute, so eager for sin that you have not even demanded payment. 32Yes, you are an adulterous wife who takes in strangers instead of her own husband. 33Prostitutes charge for their services—but not you! You give gifts to your lovers, bribing them to come and have sex with you. 34So you are the opposite of other prostitutes. You pay your lovers instead of their paying you!

JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM'S PROSTITUTION

35"Therefore, you prostitute, listen to this message from the LORD! 36This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you have poured out your lust and exposed yourself in prostitution to all your lovers, and because you have worshiped detestable idols,* and because you have slaughtered your children as sacrifices to your gods, 37this is what I am going to do. I will gather together all your allies—the lovers with whom you have sinned, both those you loved and those you hated—and I will strip you naked in front of them so they can stare at you. 38I will punish you for your murder and adultery. I will cover you with blood in my jealous fury. 39Then I will give you to these many nations who are your lovers, and they will destroy you. They will knock down your pagan shrines and the altars to your idols. They will strip you and take your beautiful jewels, leaving you stark naked. 40They will band together in a mob to stone you and cut you up with swords. 41They will burn your homes and punish you in front of many women. I will stop your prostitution and end your payments to your many lovers.

42"Then at last my fury against you will be spent, and my jealous anger will subside. I will be calm and will not be angry with you anymore. 43But first, because you have not remembered your youth but have angered me by doing all these evil things, I will fully repay

you for all of your sins, says the Sovereign LORD. For you have added lewd acts to all your detestable sins. 44Everyone who makes up proverbs will say of you, ‘Like mother, like daughter.’ 45For your mother loathed her husband and her children, and so do you. And you are exactly like your sisters, for they despised their husbands and their children. Truly your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

46“Your older sister was Samaria, who lived with her daughters in the north. Your younger sister was Sodom, who lived with her daughters in the south. 47But you have not merely sinned as they did. You quickly surpassed them in corruption. 48As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, Sodom and her daughters were never as wicked as you and your daughters. 49Sodom’s sins were pride, gluttony, and laziness, while the poor and needy suffered outside her door. 50She was proud and committed detestable sins, so I wiped her out, as you have seen.*

51“Even Samaria did not commit half your sins. You have done far more detestable things than your sisters ever did. They seem righteous compared to you. 52Shame on you! Your sins are so terrible that you make your sisters seem righteous, even virtuous.

53“But someday I will restore the fortunes of Sodom and Samaria, and I will restore you, too. 54Then you will be truly ashamed of everything you have done, for your sins make them feel good in comparison. 55Yes, your sisters, Sodom and Samaria, and all their people will be restored, and at that time you also will be restored. 56In your proud days you held Sodom in contempt. 57But now your greater wickedness has been exposed to all the world, and you are the one who is scorned—by Edom* and all her neighbors and by Philistia. 58This is your punishment for all your lewdness and detestable sins, says the LORD.

59“Now this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will give you what you deserve, for you have taken your solemn vows lightly by breaking your covenant. 60Yet I will remember the covenant I made

with you when you were young, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. 61Then you will remember with shame all the evil you have done. I will make your sisters, Samaria and Sodom, to be your daughters, even though they are not part of our covenant. 62And I will reaffirm my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the LORD. 63You will remember your sins and cover your mouth in silent shame when I forgive you of all that you have done. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 17

A STORY OF TWO EAGLES

1Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, give this riddle, and tell this story to the people of Israel. 3Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: “A great eagle with broad wings and long feathers, covered with many-colored plumage, came to Lebanon.

He seized the top of a cedar tree

4and plucked off its highest branch.
He carried it away to a city filled with merchants.
He planted it in a city of traders.

5He also took a seedling from the land and planted it in fertile soil.
He placed it beside a broad river, where it could grow like a willow tree.

6It took root there and grew into a low, spreading vine.
Its branches turned up toward the eagle, and its roots grew down into the ground.
It produced strong branches and put out shoots.

7But then another great eagle came with broad wings and full plumage.
So the vine now sent its roots and branches toward him for water,

8even though it was already planted in good soil and had plenty of water so it could grow into a splendid vine and produce rich leaves

and luscious fruit.

9“So now the Sovereign LORD asks: Will this vine grow and prosper?
No! I will pull it up, roots and all!
I will cut off its fruit and let its leaves wither and die.
I will pull it up easily without a strong arm or a large army.

10But when the vine is transplanted, will it thrive?
No, it will wither away when the east wind blows against it.
It will die in the same good soil where it had grown so well.”

THE RIDDLE EXPLAINED

11Then this message came to me from the LORD: 12“Say to these rebels of Israel: Don’t you understand the meaning of this riddle of the eagles? The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, took away her king and princes, and brought them to Babylon. 13He made a treaty with a member of the royal family and forced him to take an oath of loyalty. He also exiled Israel’s most influential leaders, 14so Israel would not become strong again and revolt. Only by keeping her treaty with Babylon could Israel survive.

15“Nevertheless, this man of Israel’s royal family rebelled against Babylon, sending ambassadors to Egypt to request a great army and many horses. Can Israel break her sworn treaties like that and get away with it? 16No! For as surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, the king of Israel will die in Babylon, the land of the king who put him in power and whose treaty he disregarded and broke.
17Pharaoh and all his mighty army will fail to help Israel when the king of Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem again and destroys many lives. 18For the king of Israel disregarded his treaty and broke it after swearing to obey; therefore, he will not escape.

19“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: As surely as I live, I will punish him for breaking my covenant and disregarding the solemn oath he made in my name. 20I will throw my net over him and capture him in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and put him on trial for this treason against me. 21And all his best warriors* will

be killed in battle, and those who survive will be scattered to the four winds. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken.

22“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take a branch from the top of a tall cedar, and I will plant it on the top of Israel’s highest mountain. 23It will become a majestic cedar, sending forth its branches and producing seed. Birds of every sort will nest in it, finding shelter in the shade of its branches. 24And all the trees will know that it is I, the LORD, who cuts the tall tree down and makes the short tree grow tall. It is I who makes the green tree wither and gives the dead tree new life. I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do what I said!”

Ezekiel 18

THE JUSTICE OF A RIGHTEOUS GOD

1Then another message came to me from the LORD: 2“Why do you quote this proverb concerning the land of Israel: ‘The parents have eaten sour grapes, but their children’s mouths pucker at the taste’? 3As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, you will not quote this proverb anymore in Israel. 4For all people are mine to judge—both parents and children alike. And this is my rule: The person who sins is the one who will die.

5“Suppose a certain man is righteous and does what is just and right. 6He does not feast in the mountains before Israel’s idols* or worship them. He does not commit adultery or have intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period. 7He is a merciful creditor, not keeping the items given as security by poor debtors. He does not rob the poor but instead gives food to the hungry and provides clothes for the needy. 8He grants loans without interest, stays away from injustice, is honest and fair when judging others, 9and faithfully obeys my decrees and regulations. Anyone who does these things is just and will surely live, says the Sovereign LORD.

10“But suppose that man has a son who grows up to be a robber or

murderer and refuses to do what is right. 11And that son does all the
evil things his father would never do—he worships idols on the
mountains, commits adultery, 12oppresses the poor and helpless,
steals from debtors by refusing to let them redeem their security,
worships idols, commits detestable sins, 13and lends money at
excessive interest. Should such a sinful person live? No! He must die
and must take full blame.

14"But suppose that sinful son, in turn, has a son who sees his
father's wickedness and decides against that kind of life. 15This son
refuses to worship idols on the mountains and does not commit
adultery. 16He does not exploit the poor, but instead is fair to
debtors and does not rob them. He gives food to the hungry and
provides clothes for the needy. 17He helps the poor,* does not lend
money at interest, and obeys all my regulations and decrees. Such a
person will not die because of his father's sins; he will surely live.
18But the father will die for his many sins—for being cruel, robbing
people, and doing what was clearly wrong among his people.

19"'What?' you ask. 'Doesn't the child pay for the parent's sins?' No!
For if the child does what is just and right and keeps my decrees,
that child will surely live. 20The person who sins is the one who will
die. The child will not be punished for the parent's sins, and the
parent will not be punished for the child's sins. Righteous people
will be rewarded for their own righteous behavior, and wicked
people will be punished for their own wickedness. 21But if wicked
people turn away from all their sins and begin to obey my decrees
and do what is just and right, they will surely live and not die. 22All
their past sins will be forgotten, and they will live because of the
righteous things they have done.

23"Do you think that I like to see wicked people die? says the
Sovereign LORD. Of course not! I want them to turn from their
wicked ways and live. 24However, if righteous people turn from
their righteous behavior and start doing sinful things and act like
other sinners, should they be allowed to live? No, of course not! All
their righteous acts will be forgotten, and they will die for their
sins.

25“Yet you say, ‘The Lord isn’t doing what’s right!’ Listen to me, O
people of Israel. Am I the one not doing what’s right, or is it you?
26When righteous people turn from their righteous behavior and
start doing sinful things, they will die for it. Yes, they will die
because of their sinful deeds. 27And if wicked people turn from their
wickedness, obey the law, and do what is just and right, they will
save their lives. 28They will live because they thought it over and
decided to turn from their sins. Such people will not die. 29And yet
the people of Israel keep saying, ‘The Lord isn’t doing what’s right!’
O people of Israel, it is you who are not doing what’s right, not I.

30“Therefore, I will judge each of you, O people of Israel, according
to your actions, says the Sovereign LORD. Repent, and turn from
your sins. Don’t let them destroy you! 31Put all your rebellion
behind you, and find yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For
why should you die, O people of Israel? 32I don’t want you to die,
says the Sovereign LORD. Turn back and live!

Ezekiel 19

A FUNERAL SONG FOR ISRAEL’S KINGS

1“Sing this funeral song for the princes of Israel:

2“What is your mother?
A lioness among lions!
She lay down among the young lions and reared her cubs.

3She raised one of her cubs to become a strong young lion.
He learned to hunt and devour prey, and he became a man-eater.

4Then the nations heard about him, and he was trapped in their pit.
They led him away with hooks to the land of Egypt.

5“When the lioness saw that her hopes for him were gone, she took
another of her cubs and taught him to be a strong young lion.

6He prowled among the other lions and stood out among them in his strength.
He learned to hunt and devour prey, and he, too, became a man-eater.

7He demolished fortresses*
and destroyed their towns and cities.
Their farms were desolated, and their crops were destroyed.
The land and its people trembled in fear when they heard him roar.

8Then the armies of the nations attacked him, surrounding him from every direction.
They threw a net over him and captured him in their pit.

9With hooks, they dragged him into a cage and brought him before the king of Babylon.
They held him in captivity, so his voice could never again be heard on the mountains of Israel.

10"Your mother was like a vine planted by the water's edge.
It had lush, green foliage because of the abundant water.

11Its branches became strong— strong enough to be a ruler's scepter.
It grew very tall, towering above all others.
It stood out because of its height and its many lush branches.

12But the vine was uprooted in fury and thrown down to the ground.
The desert wind dried up its fruit and tore off its strong branches, so that it withered and was destroyed by fire.

13Now the vine is transplanted to the wilderness, where the ground is hard and dry.

14A fire has burst out from its branches and devoured its fruit.
Its remaining limbs are not strong enough to be a ruler's scepter.

"This is a funeral song, and it will be used in a funeral."

Ezekiel 20

THE REBELLION OF ISRAEL

1On August 14,* during the seventh year of King Jehoiachin's
captivity, some of the leaders of Israel came to request a message
from the LORD. They sat down in front of me to wait for his reply.
2Then this message came to me from the LORD: 3"Son of man, tell
the leaders of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: How
dare you come to ask me for a message? As surely as I live, says the
Sovereign LORD, I will tell you nothing!'

4"Son of man, bring charges against them and condemn them. Make
them realize how detestable the sins of their ancestors really were.
5Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: When I chose
Israel—when I revealed myself to the descendants of Jacob in Egypt
—I took a solemn oath that I, the LORD, would be their God. 6I took
a solemn oath that day that I would bring them out of Egypt to a
land I had discovered and explored for them—a good land, a land
flowing with milk and honey, the best of all lands anywhere. 7Then
I said to them, 'Each of you, get rid of the vile images you are so
obsessed with. Do not defile yourselves with the idols* of Egypt, for
I am the LORD your God.'

8"But they rebelled against me and would not listen. They did not
get rid of the vile images they were obsessed with, or forsake the
idols of Egypt. Then I threatened to pour out my fury on them to
satisfy my anger while they were still in Egypt. 9But I didn't do it,
for I acted to protect the honor of my name. I would not allow
shame to be brought on my name among the surrounding nations
who saw me reveal myself by bringing the Israelites out of Egypt.
10So I brought them out of Egypt and led them into the wilderness.
11There I gave them my decrees and regulations so they could find
life by keeping them. 12And I gave them my Sabbath days of rest as
a sign between them and me. It was to remind them that I am the
LORD, who had set them apart to be holy.

13“But the people of Israel rebelled against me, and they refused to
obey my decrees there in the wilderness. They wouldn’t obey my
regulations even though obedience would have given them life.
They also violated my Sabbath days. So I threatened to pour out my
fury on them, and I made plans to utterly consume them in the
wilderness. 14But again I held back in order to protect the honor of
my name before the nations who had seen my power in bringing
Israel out of Egypt. 15But I took a solemn oath against them in the
wilderness. I swore I would not bring them into the land I had given
them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful place
on earth. 16For they had rejected my regulations, refused to follow
my decrees, and violated my Sabbath days. Their hearts were given
to their idols. 17Nevertheless, I took pity on them and held back
from destroying them in the wilderness.

18“Then I warned their children not to follow in their parents’
footsteps, defiling themselves with their idols. 19‘I am the LORD
your God,’ I told them. ‘Follow my decrees, pay attention to my
regulations, 20and keep my Sabbath days holy, for they are a sign to
remind you that I am the LORD your God.’

21“But their children, too, rebelled against me. They refused to keep
my decrees and follow my regulations, even though obedience
would have given them life. And they also violated my Sabbath
days. So again I threatened to pour out my fury on them in the
wilderness. 22Nevertheless, I withdrew my judgment against them to
protect the honor of my name before the nations that had seen my
power in bringing them out of Egypt. 23But I took a solemn oath
against them in the wilderness. I swore I would scatter them among
all the nations 24because they did not obey my regulations. They
scorned my decrees by violating my Sabbath days and longing for
the idols of their ancestors. 25I gave them over to worthless decrees
and regulations that would not lead to life. 26I let them pollute
themselves* with the very gifts I had given them, and I allowed
them to give their firstborn children as offerings to their gods—so I
might devastate them and remind them that I alone am the LORD.

JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION

27“Therefore, son of man, give the people of Israel this message
from the Sovereign LORD: Your ancestors continued to blaspheme
and betray me, 28for when I brought them into the land I had
promised them, they offered sacrifices on every high hill and under
every green tree they saw! They roused my fury as they offered up
sacrifices to their gods. They brought their perfumes and incense
and poured out their liquid offerings to them. 29I said to them,
‘What is this high place where you are going?’ (This kind of pagan
shrine has been called Bamah—‘high place’—ever since.)

FACING GOD EZEKIEL 20:30-44

30“Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the
Sovereign LORD: Do you plan to pollute yourselves just as your
ancestors did? Do you intend to keep prostituting yourselves by
worshiping vile images? 31For when you offer gifts to them and give
your little children to be burned as sacrifices,* you continue to
pollute yourselves with idols to this day. Should I allow you to ask
for a message from me, O people of Israel? As surely as I live, says
the Sovereign LORD, I will tell you nothing.

32“You say, ‘We want to be like the nations all around us, who serve
idols of wood and stone.’ But what you have in mind will never
happen. 33As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I will rule
over you with an iron fist in great anger and with awesome power.
34And in anger I will reach out with my strong hand and powerful
arm, and I will bring you back* from the lands where you are

scattered. 35I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations, and
there I will judge you face to face. 36I will judge you there just as I
did your ancestors in the wilderness after bringing them out of
Egypt, says the Sovereign LORD. 37I will examine you carefully and
hold you to the terms of the covenant. 38I will purge you of all those
who rebel and revolt against me. I will bring them out of the
countries where they are in exile, but they will never enter the land
of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

39"As for you, O people of Israel, this is what the Sovereign LORD
says: Go right ahead and worship your idols, but sooner or later you
will obey me and will stop bringing shame on my holy name by
worshiping idols. 40For on my holy mountain, the great mountain of
Israel, says the Sovereign LORD, the people of Israel will someday
worship me, and I will accept them. There I will require that you
bring me all your offerings and choice gifts and sacrifices. 41When I
bring you home from exile, you will be like a pleasing sacrifice to
me. And I will display my holiness through you as all the nations
watch. 42Then when I have brought you home to the land I
promised with a solemn oath to give to your ancestors, you will
know that I am the LORD. 43You will look back on all the ways you
defiled yourselves and will hate yourselves because of the evil you
have done. 44You will know that I am the LORD, O people of Israel,
when I have honored my name by treating you mercifully in spite
of your wickedness. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!"

JUDGMENT AGAINST THE NEGEV

45*Then this message came to me from the LORD: 46"Son of man,
turn and face the south* and speak out against it; prophesy against
the brushlands of the Negev. 47Tell the southern wilderness, 'This is
what the Sovereign LORD says: Hear the word of the LORD! I will
set you on fire, and every tree, both green and dry, will be burned.
The terrible flames will not be quenched and will scorch everything
from south to north. 48And everyone in the world will see that I, the
LORD, have set this fire. It will not be put out.'"

49Then I said, “O Sovereign LORD, they are saying of me, ‘He only talks in riddles!’”

Ezekiel 21

THE LORD’S SWORD OF JUDGMENT

1*Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, turn and face Jerusalem and prophesy against Israel and her sanctuaries. 3Tell her, ‘This is what the LORD says: I am your enemy, O Israel, and I am about to unsheath my sword to destroy your people—the righteous and the wicked alike. 4Yes, I will cut off both the righteous and the wicked! I will draw my sword against everyone in the land from south to north. 5Everyone in the world will know that I am the LORD. My sword is in my hand, and it will not return to its sheath until its work is finished.’

6“Son of man, groan before the people! Groan before them with bitter anguish and a broken heart. 7When they ask why you are groaning, tell them, ‘I groan because of the terrifying news I have heard. When it comes true, the boldest heart will melt with fear; all strength will disappear. Every spirit will faint; strong knees will become as weak as water. And the Sovereign LORD says: It is coming! It’s on its way!’”

8Then the LORD said to me, 9“Son of man, give the people this message from the Lord: “A sword, a sword is being sharpened and polished.

10It is sharpened for terrible slaughter and polished to flash like lightning!
Now will you laugh?
Those far stronger than you have fallen beneath its power!*

11Yes, the sword is now being sharpened and polished; it is being prepared for the executioner.

12“Son of man, cry out and wail; pound your thighs in anguish, for
that sword will slaughter my people and their leaders— everyone
will die!

13It will put them all to the test.
What chance do they have?*
says the Sovereign LORD.

14“Son of man, prophesy to them and clap your hands.
Then take the sword and brandish it twice, even three times, to
symbolize the great massacre, the great massacre facing them on
every side.

15Let their hearts melt with terror, for the sword glitters at every
gate.
It flashes like lightning and is polished for slaughter!

16O sword, slash to the right, then slash to the left, wherever you
will, wherever you want.

17I, too, will clap my hands, and I will satisfy my fury.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

OMENS FOR BABYLON’S KING

18Then this message came to me from the LORD: 19“Son of man,
make a map and trace two routes on it for the sword of Babylon’s
king to follow. Put a signpost on the road that comes out of Babylon
where the road forks into two—20one road going to Ammon and its
capital, Rabbah, and the other to Judah and fortified Jerusalem.
21The king of Babylon now stands at the fork, uncertain whether to
attack Jerusalem or Rabbah. He calls his magicians to look for
omens. They cast lots by shaking arrows from the quiver. They
inspect the livers of animal sacrifices. 22The omen in his right hand
says, ‘Jerusalem!’ With battering rams his soldiers will go against
the gates, shouting for the kill. They will put up siege towers and
build ramps against the walls. 23The people of Jerusalem will think
it is a false omen, because of their treaty with the Babylonians. But
the king of Babylon will remind the people of their rebellion. Then
he will attack and capture them.

24“Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Again and
again you remind me of your sin and your guilt. You don’t even try
to hide it! In everything you do, your sins are obvious for all to see.
So now the time of your punishment has come!

25“O you corrupt and wicked prince of Israel, your final day of
reckoning is here! 26This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “Take off
your jeweled crown, for the old order changes.

Now the lowly will be exalted, and the mighty will be brought
down.

27Destruction! Destruction!
I will surely destroy the kingdom.
And it will not be restored until the one appears who has the right
to judge it.
Then I will hand it over to him.

A MESSAGE FOR THE AMMONITES

28“And now, son of man, prophesy concerning the Ammonites and
their mockery. Give them this message from the Sovereign LORD:
“A sword, a sword is drawn for your slaughter.

It is polished to destroy, flashing like lightning!

29Your prophets have given false visions, and your fortune-tellers
have told lies.
The sword will fall on the necks of the wicked for whom the day of
final reckoning has come.

30“Now return the sword to its sheath, for in your own country, the
land of your birth, I will pass judgment upon you.

31I will pour out my fury on you and blow on you with the fire of
my anger.
I will hand you over to cruel men who are skilled in destruction.

32You will be fuel for the fire, and your blood will be spilled in your
own land.

You will be utterly wiped out, your memory lost to history, for I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 22

THE SINS OF JERUSALEM

1Now this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, are you ready to judge Jerusalem? Are you ready to judge this city of murderers? Publicly denounce her detestable sins, 3and give her this message from the Sovereign LORD: O city of murderers, doomed and damned—city of idols,* filthy and foul—4you are guilty because of the blood you have shed. You are defiled because of the idols you have made. Your day of destruction has come! You have reached the end of your years. I will make you an object of mockery throughout the world. 5O infamous city, filled with confusion, you will be mocked by people far and near.

6“Every leader in Israel who lives within your walls is bent on murder. 7Fathers and mothers are treated with contempt. Foreigners are forced to pay for protection. Orphans and widows are wronged and oppressed among you. 8You despise my holy things and violate my Sabbath days of rest. 9People accuse others falsely and send them to their death. You are filled with idol worshipers and people who do obscene things. 10Men sleep with their fathers’ wives and force themselves on women who are menstruating. 11Within your walls live men who commit adultery with their neighbors’ wives, who defile their daughters-in-law, or who rape their own sisters. 12There are hired murderers, loan racketeers, and extortioners everywhere. They never even think of me and my commands, says the Sovereign LORD.

13“But now I clap my hands in indignation over your dishonest gain and bloodshed. 14How strong and courageous will you be in my day of reckoning? I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do what I said. 15I will scatter you among the nations and purge you of your wickedness. 16And when I have been dishonored among the nations because of you,* you will know that I am the LORD.”

THE LORD'S REFINING FURNACE

17Then this message came to me from the LORD: 18"Son of man, the
people of Israel are the worthless slag that remains after silver is
smelted. They are the dross that is left over—a useless mixture of
copper, tin, iron, and lead. 19So tell them, 'This is what the
Sovereign LORD says: Because you are all worthless slag, I will
bring you to my crucible in Jerusalem. 20Just as silver, copper, iron,
lead, and tin are melted down in a furnace, I will melt you down in
the heat of my fury. 21I will gather you together and blow the fire of
my anger upon you, 22and you will melt like silver in fierce heat.
Then you will know that I, the LORD, have poured out my fury on
you.'"

THE SINS OF ISRAEL'S LEADERS

23Again a message came to me from the LORD: 24"Son of man, give
the people of Israel this message: In the day of my indignation, you
will be like a polluted land, a land without rain. 25Your princes* plot
conspiracies just as lions stalk their prey. They devour innocent
people, seizing treasures and extorting wealth. They make many
widows in the land. 26Your priests have violated my instructions
and defiled my holy things. They make no distinction between what
is holy and what is not. And they do not teach my people the
difference between what is ceremonially clean and unclean. They
disregard my Sabbath days so that I am dishonored among them.
27Your leaders are like wolves who tear apart their victims. They
actually destroy people's lives for money! 28And your prophets
cover up for them by announcing false visions and making lying
predictions. They say, 'My message is from the Sovereign LORD,'
when the LORD hasn't spoken a single word to them. 29Even
common people oppress the poor, rob the needy, and deprive
foreigners of justice.

30"I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of
righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand
in the gap in the wall so I wouldn't have to destroy the land, but I
found no one. 31So now I will pour out my fury on them, consuming

them with the fire of my anger. I will heap on their heads the full penalty for all their sins. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 23

THE ADULTERY OF TWO SISTERS

1This message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, once there were two sisters who were daughters of the same mother. 3They became prostitutes in Egypt. Even as young girls, they allowed men to fondle their breasts. 4The older girl was named Oholah, and her sister was Oholibah. I married them, and they bore me sons and daughters. I am speaking of Samaria and Jerusalem, for Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem.

5“Then Oholah lusted after other lovers instead of me, and she gave her love to the Assyrian officers. 6They were all attractive young men, captains and commanders dressed in handsome blue, charioteers driving their horses. 7And so she prostituted herself with the most desirable men of Assyria, worshiping their idols* and defiling herself. 8For when she left Egypt, she did not leave her spirit of prostitution behind. She was still as lewd as in her youth, when the Egyptians slept with her, fondled her breasts, and used her as a prostitute.

9“And so I handed her over to her Assyrian lovers, whom she desired so much. 10They stripped her, took away her children as their slaves, and then killed her. After she received her punishment, her reputation was known to every woman in the land.

11“Yet even though Oholibah saw what had happened to Oholah, her sister, she followed right in her footsteps. And she was even more depraved, abandoning herself to her lust and prostitution. 12She fawned over all the Assyrian officers—those captains and commanders in handsome uniforms, those charioteers driving their horses—all of them attractive young men. 13I saw the way she was going, defiling herself just like her older sister.

14“Then she carried her prostitution even further. She fell in love
with pictures that were painted on a wall—pictures of Babylonian*
military officers, outfitted in striking red uniforms. 15Handsome
belts encircled their waists, and flowing turbans crowned their
heads. They were dressed like chariot officers from the land of
Babylonia.*16When she saw these paintings, she longed to give
herself to them, so she sent messengers to Babylonia to invite them
to come to her. 17So they came and committed adultery with her,
defiling her in the bed of love. After being defiled, however, she
rejected them in disgust.

18“In the same way, I became disgusted with Oholibah and rejected
her, just as I had rejected her sister, because she flaunted herself
before them and gave herself to satisfy their lusts. 19Yet she turned
to even greater prostitution, remembering her youth when she was
a prostitute in Egypt. 20She lusted after lovers with genitals as large
as a donkey’s and emissions like those of a horse. 21And so,
Oholibah, you relived your former days as a young girl in Egypt,
when you first allowed your breasts to be fondled.

THE LORD’S JUDGMENT OF OHOLIBAH

22“Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will
send your lovers against you from every direction—those very
nations from which you turned away in disgust. 23For the
Babylonians will come with all the Chaldeans from Pekod and Shoa
and Koa. And all the Assyrians will come with them—handsome
young captains, commanders, chariot officers, and other high-
ranking officers, all riding their horses. 24They will all come against
you from the north* with chariots, wagons, and a great army
prepared for attack. They will take up positions on every side,
surrounding you with men armed with shields and helmets. And I
will hand you over to them for punishment so they can do with you
as they please. 25I will turn my jealous anger against you, and they
will deal harshly with you. They will cut off your nose and ears,
and any survivors will then be slaughtered by the sword. Your

children will be taken away as captives, and everything that is left will be burned. 26They will strip you of your beautiful clothes and jewels. 27In this way, I will put a stop to the lewdness and prostitution you brought from Egypt. You will never again cast longing eyes on those things or fondly remember your time in Egypt.

28“For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will surely hand you over to your enemies, to those you loathe, those you rejected. 29They will treat you with hatred and rob you of all you own, leaving you stark naked. The shame of your prostitution will be exposed to all the world. 30You brought all this on yourself by prostituting yourself to other nations, defiling yourself with all their idols. 31Because you have followed in your sister’s footsteps, I will force you to drink the same cup of terror she drank.

32“Yes, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “You will drink from your sister’s cup of terror, a cup that is large and deep.

It is filled to the brim with scorn and derision.

33Drunkenness and anguish will fill you, for your cup is filled to the brim with distress and desolation, the same cup your sister Samaria drank.

34You will drain that cup of terror to the very bottom.
Then you will smash it to pieces and beat your breast in anguish.
I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!

35“And because you have forgotten me and turned your back on me, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: You must bear the consequences of all your lewdness and prostitution.”

THE LORD’S JUDGMENT ON BOTH SISTERS

36The LORD said to me, “Son of man, you must accuse Oholah and Oholibah of all their detestable sins. 37They have committed both adultery and murder—adultery by worshiping idols and murder by burning as sacrifices the children they bore to me. 38Furthermore,

they have defiled my Temple and violated my Sabbath day! 39On the very day that they sacrificed their children to their idols, they boldly came into my Temple to worship! They came in and defiled my house.

40“You sisters sent messengers to distant lands to get men. Then when they arrived, you bathed yourselves, painted your eyelids, and put on your finest jewels for them. 41You sat with them on a beautifully embroidered couch and put my incense and my special oil on a table that was spread before you. 42From your room came the sound of many men carousing. They were lustful men and drunkards* from the wilderness, who put bracelets on your wrists and beautiful crowns on your heads. 43Then I said, ‘If they really want to have sex with old worn-out prostitutes like these, let them!’ 44And that is what they did. They had sex with Oholah and Oholibah, these shameless prostitutes. 45But righteous people will judge these sister cities for what they really are—adulterers and murderers.

46“Now this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Bring an army against them and hand them over to be terrorized and plundered. 47For their enemies will stone them and kill them with swords. They will butcher their sons and daughters and burn their homes. 48In this way, I will put an end to lewdness and idolatry in the land, and my judgment will be a warning to all women not to follow your wicked example. 49You will be fully repaid for all your prostitution —your worship of idols. Yes, you will suffer the full penalty. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.”

Ezekiel 24

THE SIGN OF THE COOKING POT

1On January 15,* during the ninth year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity, this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, write down today’s date, because on this very day the king of Babylon is beginning his attack against Jerusalem. 3Then give these

rebels an illustration with this message from the Sovereign LORD:
“Put a pot on the fire, and pour in some water.

4Fill it with choice pieces of meat— the rump and the shoulder and
all the most tender cuts.

5Use only the best sheep from the flock, and heap fuel on the fire
beneath the pot.
Bring the pot to a boil, and cook the bones along with the meat.

6“Now this is what the Sovereign LORD says: What sorrow awaits
Jerusalem, the city of murderers!
She is a cooking pot whose corruption can’t be cleaned out.
Take the meat out in random order, for no piece is better than
another.

7For the blood of her murders is splashed on the rocks.
It isn’t even spilled on the ground, where the dust could cover it!

8So I will splash her blood on a rock for all to see, an expression of
my anger and vengeance against her.

9“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: What sorrow awaits
Jerusalem, the city of murderers!
I myself will pile up the fuel beneath her.

10Yes, heap on the wood!
Let the fire roar to make the pot boil.
Cook the meat with many spices, and afterward burn the bones.

11Now set the empty pot on the coals.
Heat it red hot!
Burn away the filth and corruption.

12But it’s hopeless; the corruption can’t be cleaned out.
So throw it into the fire.

13Your impurity is your lewdness and the corruption of your
idolatry.
I tried to cleanse you, but you refused.
So now you will remain in your filth until my fury against you has

been satisfied.

14"I, the LORD, have spoken! The time has come, and I won't hold back. I will not change my mind, and I will have no pity on you. You will be judged on the basis of all your wicked actions, says the Sovereign LORD."

THE DEATH OF EZEKIEL'S WIFE

15Then this message came to me from the LORD: 16"Son of man, with one blow I will take away your dearest treasure. Yet you must not show any sorrow at her death. Do not weep; let there be no tears. 17Groan silently, but let there be no wailing at her grave. Do not uncover your head or take off your sandals. Do not perform the usual rituals of mourning or accept any food brought to you by consoling friends."

18So I proclaimed this to the people the next morning, and in the evening my wife died. The next morning I did everything I had been told to do. 19Then the people asked, "What does all this mean? What are you trying to tell us?"

20So I said to them, "A message came to me from the LORD, 21and I was told to give this message to the people of Israel. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will defile my Temple, the source of your security and pride, the place your heart delights in. Your sons and daughters whom you left behind in Judea will be slaughtered by the sword. 22Then you will do as Ezekiel has done. You will not mourn in public or console yourselves by eating the food brought by friends. 23Your heads will remain covered, and your sandals will not be taken off. You will not mourn or weep, but you will waste away because of your sins. You will groan among yourselves for all the evil you have done. 24Ezekiel is an example for you; you will do just as he has done. And when that time comes, you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD."

25Then the LORD said to me, "Son of man, on the day I take away their stronghold—their joy and glory, their heart's desire, their

dearest treasure—I will also take away their sons and daughters.
26And on that day a survivor from Jerusalem will come to you in
Babylon and tell you what has happened. 27And when he arrives,
your voice will suddenly return so you can talk to him, and you will
be a symbol for these people. Then they will know that I am the
LORD."

Ezekiel 25

A MESSAGE FOR AMMON

1Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2"Son of man, turn
and face the land of Ammon and prophesy against its people. 3Give
the Ammonites this message from the Sovereign LORD: Hear the
word of the Sovereign LORD! Because you cheered when my
Temple was defiled, mocked Israel in her desolation, and laughed at
Judah as she went away into exile, 4I will allow nomads from the
eastern deserts to overrun your country. They will set up their
camps among you and pitch their tents on your land. They will
harvest all your fruit and drink the milk from your livestock. 5And I
will turn the city of Rabbah into a pasture for camels, and all the
land of the Ammonites into a resting place for sheep and goats.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.

6"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you clapped and
danced and cheered with glee at the destruction of my people, 7I
will raise my fist of judgment against you. I will give you as plunder
to many nations. I will cut you off from being a nation and destroy
you completely. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

A MESSAGE FOR MOAB

8"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because the people of
Moab* have said that Judah is just like all the other nations, 9I will
open up their eastern flank and wipe out their glorious frontier
towns—Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim. 10And I will

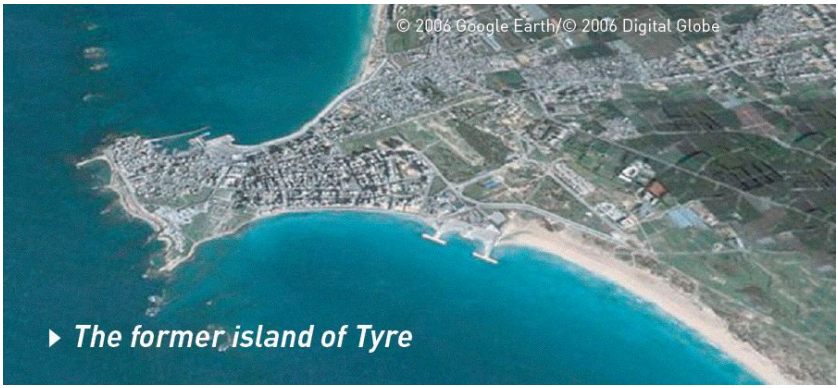
hand Moab over to nomads from the eastern deserts, just as I handed over Ammon. Yes, the Ammonites will no longer be counted among the nations. 11In the same way, I will bring my judgment down on the Moabites. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

A MESSAGE FOR EDOM

12"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The people of Edom have sinned greatly by avenging themselves against the people of Judah. 13Therefore, says the Sovereign LORD, I will raise my fist of judgment against Edom. I will wipe out its people and animals with the sword. I will make a wasteland of everything from Teman to Dedan. 14I will accomplish this by the hand of my people of Israel. They will carry out my vengeance with anger, and Edom will know that this vengeance is from me. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!

A MESSAGE FOR PHILISTIA

15"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The people of Philistia have acted against Judah out of bitter revenge and long-standing contempt. 16Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will raise my fist of judgment against the land of the Philistines. I will wipe out the Kerethites and utterly destroy the people who live by the sea. 17I will execute terrible vengeance against them to punish them for what they have done. And when I have inflicted my revenge, they will know that I am the LORD."



TYRE

Ezekiel 26

A MESSAGE FOR TYRE

1On February 3, during the twelfth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity,* this message came to me from the LORD: 2"Son of man, Tyre has rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem, saying, 'Ha! She who was the gateway to the rich trade routes to the east has been broken, and I am the heir! Because she has been made desolate, I will become wealthy!'

3"Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am your enemy, O Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the waves of the sea crashing against your shoreline. 4They will destroy the walls of Tyre and tear down its towers. I will scrape away its soil and make it a bare rock! 5It will be just a rock in the sea, a place for fishermen to spread their nets, for I have spoken, says the Sovereign LORD. Tyre will become the prey of many nations, 6and its mainland villages will be destroyed by the sword. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

7"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: From the north I will bring

King Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon against Tyre. He is king of kings
and brings his horses, chariots, charioteers, and great army. 8First
he will destroy your mainland villages. Then he will attack you by
building a siege wall, constructing a ramp, and raising a roof of
shields against you. 9He will pound your walls with battering rams
and demolish your towers with sledgehammers. 10The hooves of his
horses will choke the city with dust, and the noise of the charioteers
and chariot wheels will shake your walls as they storm through
your broken gates. 11His horsemen will trample through every street
in the city. They will butcher your people, and your strong pillars
will topple.

12"They will plunder all your riches and merchandise and break
down your walls. They will destroy your lovely homes and dump
your stones and timbers and even your dust into the sea. 13I will
stop the music of your songs. No more will the sound of harps be
heard among your people. 14I will make your island a bare rock, a
place for fishermen to spread their nets. You will never be rebuilt,
for I, the LORD, have spoken. Yes, the Sovereign LORD has spoken!

THE EFFECT OF TYRE'S DESTRUCTION

15"This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Tyre: The whole
coastline will tremble at the sound of your fall, as the screams of
the wounded echo in the continuing slaughter. 16All the seaport
rulers will step down from their thrones and take off their royal
robes and beautiful clothing. They will sit on the ground trembling
with horror at your destruction. 17Then they will wail for you,
singing this funeral song: "O famous island city, once ruler of the
sea, how you have been destroyed!

Your people, with their naval power, once spread fear around the
world.

18Now the coastlands tremble at your fall.
The islands are dismayed as you disappear.

19"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will make Tyre an
uninhabited ruin, like many others. I will bury you beneath the

terrible waves of enemy attack. Great seas will swallow you. 20I will send you to the pit to join those who descended there long ago. Your city will lie in ruins, buried beneath the earth, like those in the pit who have entered the world of the dead. You will have no place of respect here in the land of the living. 21I will bring you to a terrible end, and you will exist no more. You will be looked for, but you will never again be found. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 27

THE END OF TYRE’S GLORY

1Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, sing a funeral song for Tyre, 3that mighty gateway to the sea, the trading center of the world. Give Tyre this message from the Sovereign LORD: “You boasted, O Tyre, ‘My beauty is perfect!’

4You extended your boundaries into the sea.
Your builders made your beauty perfect.

5You were like a great ship built of the finest cypress from Senir.*
They took a cedar from Lebanon to make a mast for you.

6They carved your oars from the oaks of Bashan.
Your deck of pine from the coasts of Cyprus*
was inlaid with ivory.

7Your sails were made of Egypt’s finest linen, and they flew as a banner above you.
You stood beneath blue and purple awnings made bright with dyes from the coasts of Elishah.

8Your oarsmen came from Sidon and Arvad; your helmsmen were skilled men from Tyre itself.

9Wise old craftsmen from Gebal did the caulking.

Ships from every land came with goods to barter for your trade.

10“Men from distant Persia, Lydia, and Libya* served in your great
army. They hung their shields and helmets on your walls, giving
you great honor. 11Men from Arvad and Helech stood on your walls.
Your towers were manned by men from Gammad. Their shields
hung on your walls, completing your beauty.

12“Tarshish sent merchants to buy your wares in exchange for
silver, iron, tin, and lead. 13Merchants from Greece,* Tubal, and
Meshech brought slaves and articles of bronze to trade with you.

14“From Beth-togarmah came riding horses, chariot horses, and
mules, all in exchange for your goods. 15Merchants came to you
from Dedan.* Numerous coastlands were your captive markets; they
brought payment in ivory tusks and ebony wood.

16“Syria* sent merchants to buy your rich variety of goods. They
traded turquoise, purple dyes, embroidery, fine linen, and jewelry
of coral and rubies. 17Judah and Israel traded for your wares,
offering wheat from Minnith, figs,* honey, olive oil, and balm.

18“Damascus sent merchants to buy your rich variety of goods,
bringing wine from Helbon and white wool from Zahar. 19Greeks
from Uzal* came to trade for your merchandise. Wrought iron,
cassia, and fragrant calamus were bartered for your wares.

20“Dedan sent merchants to trade their expensive saddle blankets
with you. 21The Arabians and the princes of Kedar sent merchants to
trade lambs and rams and male goats in exchange for your goods.
22The merchants of Sheba and Raamah came with all kinds of
spices, jewels, and gold in exchange for your wares.

23“Haran, Canneh, Eden, Sheba, Asshur, and Kilmad came with
their merchandise, too. 24They brought choice fabrics to trade—blue
cloth, embroidery, and multicolored carpets rolled up and bound
with cords. 25The ships of Tarshish were your ocean caravans. Your
island warehouse was filled to the brim!

THE DESTRUCTION OF TYRE

26“But look! Your oarsmen have taken you into stormy seas!

A mighty eastern gale has wrecked you in the heart of the sea!

27Everything is lost— your riches and wares, your sailors and pilots,
your ship builders, merchants, and warriors.
On the day of your ruin, everyone on board sinks into the depths of
the sea.

28Your cities by the sea tremble as your pilots cry out in terror.

29All the oarsmen abandon their ships; the sailors and pilots stand
on the shore.

30They cry aloud over you and weep bitterly.
They throw dust on their heads and roll in ashes.

31They shave their heads in grief for you and dress themselves in
burlap.
They weep for you with bitter anguish and deep mourning.

32As they wail and mourn over you, they sing this sad funeral song:
‘Was there ever such a city as Tyre, now silent at the bottom of the
sea?

33The merchandise you traded satisfied the desires of many nations.
Kings at the ends of the earth were enriched by your trade.

34Now you are a wrecked ship, broken at the bottom of the sea.
All your merchandise and crew have gone down with you.

35All who live along the coastlands are appalled at your terrible
fate.

Their kings are filled with horror and look on with twisted faces.

36The merchants among the nations shake their heads at the sight of you,*
for you have come to a horrible end and will exist no more.’”

Ezekiel 28

A MESSAGE FOR TYRE’S KING

1Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, give the prince of Tyre this message from the Sovereign LORD: “In your great pride you claim, ‘I am a god!

I sit on a divine throne in the heart of the sea.’
But you are only a man and not a god, though you boast that you are a god.

3You regard yourself as wiser than Daniel and think no secret is hidden from you.

4With your wisdom and understanding you have amassed great wealth— gold and silver for your treasuries.

5Yes, your wisdom has made you very rich, and your riches have made you very proud.

6“Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you think you are as wise as a god,

7I will now bring against you a foreign army, the terror of the nations.
They will draw their swords against your marvelous wisdom and defile your splendor!

8They will bring you down to the pit, and you will die in the heart of the sea, pierced with many wounds.

9Will you then boast, ‘I am a god!’
to those who kill you?

To them you will be no god but merely a man!

10You will die like an outcast*
at the hands of foreigners.
I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

11Then this further message came to me from the LORD: 12“Son of man, sing this funeral song for the king of Tyre. Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: “You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty.

13You were in Eden, the garden of God.
Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone*— red carnelian, pale-green peridot, white moonstone, blue-green beryl, onyx, green jasper, blue lapis lazuli, turquoise, and emerald— all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold.
They were given to you on the day you were created.

14I ordained and anointed you as the mighty angelic guardian.*
You had access to the holy mountain of God and walked among the stones of fire.

15“You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created until the day evil was found in you.

16Your rich commerce led you to violence, and you sinned.
So I banished you in disgrace from the mountain of God.
I expelled you, O mighty guardian, from your place among the stones of fire.

17Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty.
Your wisdom was corrupted by your love of splendor.
So I threw you to the ground and exposed you to the curious gaze of kings.

18You defiled your sanctuaries with your many sins and your dishonest trade.

So I brought fire out from within you, and it consumed you.
I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching.

19All who knew you are appalled at your fate.
You have come to a terrible end, and you will exist no more.”

A MESSAGE FOR SIDON

20Then another message came to me from the LORD: 21“Son of man, turn and face the city of Sidon and prophesy against it. 22Give the people of Sidon this message from the Sovereign LORD: “I am your enemy, O Sidon, and I will reveal my glory by what I do to you.

When I bring judgment against you and reveal my holiness among you, everyone watching will know that I am the LORD.

23I will send a plague against you, and blood will be spilled in your streets.
The attack will come from every direction, and your people will lie slaughtered within your walls.
Then everyone will know that I am the LORD.

24No longer will Israel’s scornful neighbors prick and tear at her like briers and thorns.
For then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

RESTORATION FOR ISRAEL

25“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The people of Israel will again live in their own land, the land I gave my servant Jacob. For I will gather them from the distant lands where I have scattered them. I will reveal to the nations of the world my holiness among my people. 26They will live safely in Israel and build homes and plant vineyards. And when I punish the neighboring nations that treated them with contempt, they will know that I am the LORD their God.”

A MESSAGE FOR EGYPT

1On January 7,* during the tenth year of King Jehoiachin's
captivity, this message came to me from the LORD: 2"Son of man,
turn and face Egypt and prophesy against Pharaoh the king and all
the people of Egypt. 3Give them this message from the Sovereign
LORD: "I am your enemy, O Pharaoh, king of Egypt— you great
monster, lurking in the streams of the Nile.

For you have said, 'The Nile River is mine; I made it for myself.'

4I will put hooks in your jaws and drag you out on the land with
fish sticking to your scales.

5I will leave you and all your fish stranded in the wilderness to die.
You will lie unburied on the open ground, for I have given you as
food to the wild animals and birds.

6All the people of Egypt will know that I am the LORD, for to Israel
you were just a staff made of reeds.

7When Israel leaned on you, you splintered and broke and stabbed
her in the armpit.
When she put her weight on you, you collapsed, and her legs gave
way.

8"Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will bring an
army against you, O Egypt, and destroy both people and animals.
9The land of Egypt will become a desolate wasteland, and the
Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.

"Because you said, 'The Nile River is mine; I made it,' 10I am now
the enemy of both you and your river. I will make the land of Egypt
a totally desolate wasteland, from Migdol to Aswan, as far south as
the border of Ethiopia.*11For forty years not a soul will pass that
way, neither people nor animals. It will be completely uninhabited.
12I will make Egypt desolate, and it will be surrounded by other
desolate nations. Its cities will be empty and desolate for forty
years, surrounded by other ruined cities. I will scatter the Egyptians
to distant lands.

13“But this is what the Sovereign LORD also says: At the end of the
forty years I will bring the Egyptians home again from the nations
to which they have been scattered. 14I will restore the prosperity of
Egypt and bring its people back to the land of Pathros in southern
Egypt from which they came. But Egypt will remain an
unimportant, minor kingdom. 15It will be the lowliest of all the
nations, never again great enough to rise above its neighbors.

16“Then Israel will no longer be tempted to trust in Egypt for help.
Egypt’s shattered condition will remind Israel of how sinful she was
to trust Egypt in earlier days. Then Israel will know that I am the
Sovereign LORD.”

NEBUCHADNEZZAR TO CONQUER EGYPT

17On April 26, the first day of the new year,* during the twenty-
seventh year of King Jehoiachin’s captivity, this message came to
me from the LORD: 18“Son of man, the army of King
Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon fought so hard against Tyre that the
warriors’ heads were rubbed bare and their shoulders were raw and
blistered. Yet Nebuchadnezzar and his army won no plunder to
compensate them for all their work. 19Therefore, this is what the
Sovereign LORD says: I will give the land of Egypt to
Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He will carry off its wealth,
plundering everything it has so he can pay his army. 20Yes, I have
given him the land of Egypt as a reward for his work, says the
Sovereign LORD, because he was working for me when he
destroyed Tyre.

21“And the day will come when I will cause the ancient glory of
Israel to revive,* and then, Ezekiel, your words will be respected.
Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel 30

A SAD DAY FOR EGYPT

1This is another message that came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of
man, prophesy and give this message from the Sovereign LORD:
“Weep and wail for that day,

3for the terrible day is almost here— the day of the LORD!
It is a day of clouds and gloom, a day of despair for the nations.

4A sword will come against Egypt, and those who are slaughtered
will cover the ground.
Its wealth will be carried away and its foundations destroyed.
The land of Ethiopia* will be ravished.

5Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, all Arabia,*
and all their other allies will be destroyed in that war.

6“For this is what the LORD says: All of Egypt’s allies will fall, and
the pride of her power will end.
From Migdol to Aswan*
they will be slaughtered by the sword, says the Sovereign LORD.

7Egypt will be desolate, surrounded by desolate nations, and its
cities will be in ruins, surrounded by other ruined cities.

8And the people of Egypt will know that I am the LORD
when I have set Egypt on fire and destroyed all their allies.

9At that time I will send swift messengers in ships to terrify the
complacent Ethiopians.
Great panic will come upon them on that day of Egypt’s certain
destruction.
Watch for it!
It is sure to come!

10“For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: By the power of King
Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon, I will destroy the hordes of Egypt.

11He and his armies—the most ruthless of all— will be sent to demolish the land.
They will make war against Egypt until slaughtered Egyptians cover the ground.

12I will dry up the Nile River and sell the land to wicked men.
I will destroy the land of Egypt and everything in it by the hands of foreigners.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

13"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will smash the idols* of Egypt and the images at Memphis.*
There will be no rulers left in Egypt; terror will sweep the land.

14I will destroy southern Egypt,*
set fire to Zoan, and bring judgment against Thebes.*

15I will pour out my fury on Pelusium,*
the strongest fortress of Egypt, and I will stamp out the hordes of Thebes.

16Yes, I will set fire to all Egypt!
Pelusium will be racked with pain; Thebes will be torn apart;
Memphis will live in constant terror.

17The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis* will die in battle, and the women* will be taken away as slaves.

18When I come to break the proud strength of Egypt, it will be a dark day for Tahpanhes, too.
A dark cloud will cover Tahpanhes, and its daughters will be led away as captives.

19And so I will greatly punish Egypt, and they will know that I am the LORD."

THE BROKEN ARMS OF PHARAOH

20On April 29,* during the eleventh year of King Jehoiachin's
captivity, this message came to me from the LORD: 21"Son of man, I
have broken the arm of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. His arm has not
been put in a cast so that it may heal. Neither has it been bound up
with a splint to make it strong enough to hold a sword. 22Therefore,
this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am the enemy of Pharaoh,
the king of Egypt! I will break both of his arms—the good arm
along with the broken one—and I will make his sword clatter to the
ground. 23I will scatter the Egyptians to many lands throughout the
world. 24I will strengthen the arms of Babylon's king and put my
sword in his hand. But I will break the arms of Pharaoh, king of
Egypt, and he will lie there mortally wounded, groaning in pain. 25I
will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, while the arms of
Pharaoh fall useless to his sides. And when I put my sword in the
hand of Babylon's king and he brings it against the land of Egypt,
Egypt will know that I am the LORD. 26I will scatter the Egyptians
among the nations, dispersing them throughout the earth. Then
they will know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 31

EGYPT COMPARED TO FALLEN ASSYRIA

1On June 21,* during the eleventh year of King Jehoiachin's
captivity, this message came to me from the LORD: 2"Son of man,
give this message to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and all his hordes: "To
whom would you compare your greatness?

3You are like mighty Assyria, which was once like a cedar of
Lebanon, with beautiful branches that cast deep forest shade and
with its top high among the clouds.

4Deep springs watered it and helped it to grow tall and luxuriant.
The water flowed around it like a river, streaming to all the trees
nearby.

5This great tree towered high, higher than all the other trees around it.
It prospered and grew long thick branches because of all the water at its roots.

6The birds nested in its branches, and in its shade all the wild animals gave birth.
All the great nations of the world lived in its shadow.

7It was strong and beautiful, with wide-spreading branches, for its roots went deep into abundant water.

8No other cedar in the garden of God could rival it.
No cypress had branches to equal it; no plane tree had boughs to compare.
No tree in the garden of God came close to it in beauty.

9Because I made this tree so beautiful, and gave it such magnificent foliage, it was the envy of all the other trees of Eden, the garden of God.

10"Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because Egypt* became proud and arrogant, and because it set itself so high above the others, with its top reaching to the clouds, 11I will hand it over to a mighty nation that will destroy it as its wickedness deserves. I have already discarded it. 12A foreign army—the terror of the nations—has cut it down and left it fallen on the ground. Its branches are scattered across the mountains and valleys and ravines of the land. All those who lived in its shadow have gone away and left it lying there.

13"The birds roost on its fallen trunk, and the wild animals lie among its branches.

14Let the tree of no other nation proudly exult in its own prosperity, though it be higher than the clouds and it be watered from the depths.
For all are doomed to die, to go down to the depths of the earth.
They will land in the pit along with everyone else on earth.

15“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When Assyria went down
to the grave,* I made the deep springs mourn. I stopped its rivers
and dried up its abundant water. I clothed Lebanon in black and
caused the trees of the field to wilt. 16I made the nations shake with
fear at the sound of its fall, for I sent it down to the grave with all
the others who descend to the pit. And all the other proud trees of
Eden, the most beautiful and the best of Lebanon, the ones whose
roots went deep into the water, took comfort to find it there with
them in the depths of the earth. 17Its allies, too, were all destroyed
and had passed away. They had gone down to the grave—all those
nations that had lived in its shade.

18“O Egypt, to which of the trees of Eden will you compare your
strength and glory? You, too, will be brought down to the depths
with all these other nations. You will lie there among the outcasts*
who have died by the sword. This will be the fate of Pharaoh and
all his hordes. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 32

A WARNING FOR PHARAOH

1On March 3,* during the twelfth year of King Jehoiachin’s
captivity, this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man,
mourn for Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and give him this message: “You
think of yourself as a strong young lion among the nations, but you
are really just a sea monster, heaving around in your own rivers,
stirring up mud with your feet.

3Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will send many
people to catch you in my net and haul you out of the water.

4I will leave you stranded on the land to die.
All the birds of the heavens will land on you, and the wild animals
of the whole earth will gorge themselves on you.

5I will scatter your flesh on the hills and fill the valleys with your bones.

6I will drench the earth with your gushing blood all the way to the mountains, filling the ravines to the brim.

7When I blot you out, I will veil the heavens and darken the stars.
I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give you its light.

8I will darken the bright stars overhead and cover your land in darkness.
I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!

9“I will disturb many hearts when I bring news of your downfall to distant nations you have never seen. 10Yes, I will shock many lands, and their kings will be terrified at your fate. They will shudder in fear for their lives as I brandish my sword before them on the day of your fall. 11For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “The sword of the king of Babylon will come against you.

12I will destroy your hordes with the swords of mighty warriors—
the terror of the nations.
They will shatter the pride of Egypt, and all its hordes will be destroyed.

13I will destroy all your flocks and herds that graze beside the streams.
Never again will people or animals muddy those waters with their feet.

14Then I will let the waters of Egypt become calm again, and they will flow as smoothly as olive oil, says the Sovereign LORD.

15And when I destroy Egypt and strip you of everything you own and strike down all your people, then you will know that I am the LORD.

16Yes, this is the funeral song they will sing for Egypt.
Let all the nations mourn.

Let them mourn for Egypt and its hordes.
I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

EGYPT FALLS INTO THE PIT

17On March 17,* during the twelfth year, another message came to
me from the LORD: 18“Son of man, weep for the hordes of Egypt
and for the other mighty nations.* For I will send them down to the
world below in company with those who descend to the pit. 19Say to
them, ‘O Egypt, are you lovelier than the other nations?

No! So go down to the pit and lie there among the outcasts.*’

20The Egyptians will fall with the many who have died by the
sword, for the sword is drawn against them. Egypt and its hordes
will be dragged away to their judgment. 21Down in the grave*
mighty leaders will mockingly welcome Egypt and its allies, saying,
‘They have come down; they lie among the outcasts, hordes
slaughtered by the sword.’

22“Assyria lies there surrounded by the graves of its army, those
who were slaughtered by the sword. 23Their graves are in the depths
of the pit, and they are surrounded by their allies. They struck
terror in the hearts of people everywhere, but now they have been
slaughtered by the sword.

24“Elam lies there surrounded by the graves of all its hordes, those
who were slaughtered by the sword. They struck terror in the hearts
of people everywhere, but now they have descended as outcasts to
the world below. Now they lie in the pit and share the shame of
those who have gone before them. 25They have a resting place
among the slaughtered, surrounded by the graves of all their
hordes. Yes, they terrorized the nations while they lived, but now
they lie in shame with others in the pit, all of them outcasts,
slaughtered by the sword.

26“Meshech and Tubal are there, surrounded by the graves of all
their hordes. They once struck terror in the hearts of people

everywhere. But now they are outcasts, all slaughtered by the sword. 27They are not buried in honor like their fallen heroes, who went down to the grave* with their weapons—their shields covering their bodies* and their swords beneath their heads. Their guilt rests upon them because they brought terror to everyone while they were still alive.

28“You too, Egypt, will lie crushed and broken among the outcasts, all slaughtered by the sword.

29“Edom is there with its kings and princes. Mighty as they were, they also lie among those slaughtered by the sword, with the outcasts who have gone down to the pit.

30“All the princes of the north and the Sidonians are there with others who have died. Once a terror, they have been put to shame. They lie there as outcasts with others who were slaughtered by the sword. They share the shame of all who have descended to the pit.

31“When Pharaoh and his entire army arrive, he will take comfort that he is not alone in having his hordes killed, says the Sovereign LORD. 32Although I have caused his terror to fall upon all the living, Pharaoh and his hordes will lie there among the outcasts who were slaughtered by the sword. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 33

EZEKIEL AS ISRAEL'S WATCHMAN

1Once again a message came to me from the LORD: 2"Son of man,
give your people this message: 'When I bring an army against a
country, the people of that land choose one of their own to be a
watchman. 3When the watchman sees the enemy coming, he sounds
the alarm to warn the people. 4Then if those who hear the alarm
refuse to take action, it is their own fault if they die. 5They heard
the alarm but ignored it, so the responsibility is theirs. If they had
listened to the warning, they could have saved their lives. 6But if
the watchman sees the enemy coming and doesn't sound the alarm
to warn the people, he is responsible for their captivity. They will
die in their sins, but I will hold the watchman responsible for their
deaths.'

7"Now, son of man, I am making you a watchman for the people of
Israel. Therefore, listen to what I say and warn them for me. 8If I
announce that some wicked people are sure to die and you fail to
tell them to change their ways, then they will die in their sins, and I
will hold you responsible for their deaths. 9But if you warn them to
repent and they don't repent, they will die in their sins, but you will

have saved yourself.

THE WATCHMAN'S MESSAGE

10"Son of man, give the people of Israel this message: You are
saying, 'Our sins are heavy upon us; we are wasting away! How can
we survive?' 11As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I take
no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn
from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your
wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die?

12"Son of man, give your people this message: The righteous
behavior of righteous people will not save them if they turn to sin,
nor will the wicked behavior of wicked people destroy them if they
repent and turn from their sins. 13When I tell righteous people that
they will live, but then they sin, expecting their past righteousness
to save them, then none of their righteous acts will be remembered.
I will destroy them for their sins. 14And suppose I tell some wicked
people that they will surely die, but then they turn from their sins
and do what is just and right. 15For instance, they might give back a
debtor's security, return what they have stolen, and obey my life-
giving laws, no longer doing what is evil. If they do this, then they
will surely live and not die. 16None of their past sins will be brought
up again, for they have done what is just and right, and they will
surely live.

17"Your people are saying, 'The Lord isn't doing what's right,' but it
is they who are not doing what's right. 18For again I say, when
righteous people turn away from their righteous behavior and turn
to evil, they will die. 19But if wicked people turn from their
wickedness and do what is just and right, they will live. 20O people
of Israel, you are saying, 'The Lord isn't doing what's right.' But I
judge each of you according to your deeds."

EXPLANATION OF JERUSALEM'S FALL

21On January 8,* during the twelfth year of our captivity, a survivor

from Jerusalem came to me and said, “The city has fallen!” 22The previous evening the LORD had taken hold of me and given me back my voice. So I was able to speak when this man arrived the next morning.

23Then this message came to me from the LORD: 24“Son of man, the scattered remnants of Israel living among the ruined cities keep saying, ‘Abraham was only one man, yet he gained possession of the entire land. We are many; surely the land has been given to us as a possession.’ 25So tell these people, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You eat meat with blood in it, you worship idols,* and you murder the innocent. Do you really think the land should be yours? 26Murderers! Idolaters! Adulterers! Should the land belong to you?’

27“Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: As surely as I live, those living in the ruins will die by the sword. And I will send wild animals to eat those living in the open fields. Those hiding in the forts and caves will die of disease. 28I will completely destroy the land and demolish her pride. Her arrogant power will come to an end. The mountains of Israel will be so desolate that no one will even travel through them. 29When I have completely destroyed the land because of their detestable sins, then they will know that I am the LORD.’

30“Son of man, your people talk about you in their houses and whisper about you at the doors. They say to each other, ‘Come on, let’s go hear the prophet tell us what the LORD is saying!’ 31So my people come pretending to be sincere and sit before you. They listen to your words, but they have no intention of doing what you say. Their mouths are full of lustful words, and their hearts seek only after money. 32You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they don’t act on it! 33But when all these terrible things happen to them—as they certainly will—then they will know a prophet has been among them.”

Ezekiel 34

THE SHEPHERDS OF ISRAEL

1Then this message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man,
prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this
message from the Sovereign LORD: What sorrow awaits you
shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn’t
shepherds feed their sheep? 3You drink the milk, wear the wool, and
butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. 4You have
not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound
up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have
wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with
harshness and cruelty. 5So my sheep have been scattered without a
shepherd, and they are easy prey for any wild animal. 6They have
wandered through all the mountains and all the hills, across the
face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them.

7“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: 8As surely
as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, you abandoned my flock and left
them to be attacked by every wild animal. And though you were my
shepherds, you didn’t search for my sheep when they were lost. You
took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve. 9Therefore, you
shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. 10This is what the Sovereign
LORD says: I now consider these shepherds my enemies, and I will
hold them responsible for what has happened to my flock. I will
take away their right to feed the flock, and I will stop them from
feeding themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths; the
sheep will no longer be their prey.

THE MESSIAH EZEKIEL 34:11-24

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

11“For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search
and find my sheep. 12I will be like a shepherd looking for his
scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the
places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. 13I
will bring them back home to their own land of Israel from among
the peoples and nations. I will feed them on the mountains of Israel
and by the rivers and in all the places where people live. 14Yes, I
will give them good pastureland on the high hills of Israel. There
they will lie down in pleasant places and feed in the lush pastures
of the hills. 15I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to
lie down in peace, says the Sovereign LORD. 16I will search for my
lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home
again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak. But I
will destroy those who are fat and powerful. I will feed them, yes—
feed them justice!

17“And as for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says
to his people: I will judge between one animal of the flock and
another, separating the sheep from the goats. 18Isn’t it enough for
you to keep the best of the pastures for yourselves? Must you also
trample down the rest? Isn’t it enough for you to drink clear water
for yourselves? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? 19Why
must my flock eat what you have trampled down and drink water
you have fouled?

20“Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will surely
judge between the fat sheep and the scrawny sheep. 21For you fat
sheep pushed and butted and crowded my sick and hungry flock
until you scattered them to distant lands. 22So I will rescue my
flock, and they will no longer be abused. I will judge between one
animal of the flock and another. 23And I will set over them one
shepherd, my servant David. He will feed them and be a shepherd
to them. 24And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant
David will be a prince among my people. I, the LORD, have spoken!

THE LORD’S COVENANT OF PEACE

25“I will make a covenant of peace with my people and drive away
the dangerous animals from the land. Then they will be able to
camp safely in the wildest places and sleep in the woods without
fear. 26I will bless my people and their homes around my holy hill.
And in the proper season I will send the showers they need. There
will be showers of blessing. 27The orchards and fields of my people
will yield bumper crops, and everyone will live in safety. When I
have broken their chains of slavery and rescued them from those
who enslaved them, then they will know that I am the LORD.
28They will no longer be prey for other nations, and wild animals
will no longer devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will
frighten them.

29“And I will make their land famous for its crops, so my people will
never again suffer from famines or the insults of foreign nations.
30In this way, they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with
them. And they will know that they, the people of Israel, are my
people, says the Sovereign LORD. 31You are my flock, the sheep of
my pasture. You are my people, and I am your God. I, the Sovereign
LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 35

A MESSAGE FOR EDOM

1Again a message came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of man, turn
and face Mount Seir, and prophesy against its people. 3Give them
this message from the Sovereign LORD: “I am your enemy, O Mount
Seir, and I will raise my fist against you to destroy you completely.

4I will demolish your cities and make you desolate.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.

5“Your eternal hatred for the people of Israel led you to butcher
them when they were helpless, when I had already punished them
for all their sins. 6As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, since
you show no distaste for blood, I will give you a bloodbath of your
own. Your turn has come! 7I will make Mount Seir utterly desolate,
killing off all who try to escape and any who return. 8I will fill your
mountains with the dead. Your hills, your valleys, and your ravines
will be filled with people slaughtered by the sword. 9I will make
you desolate forever. Your cities will never be rebuilt. Then you will
know that I am the LORD.

10“For you said, ‘The lands of Israel and Judah will be ours. We will
take possession of them. What do we care that the LORD is there!’
11Therefore, as surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I will pay
back your angry deeds with my own. I will punish you for all your
acts of anger, envy, and hatred. And I will make myself known to
Israel* by what I do to you. 12Then you will know that I, the LORD,
have heard every contemptuous word you spoke against the
mountains of Israel. For you said, ‘They are desolate; they have
been given to us as food to eat!’ 13In saying that, you boasted
proudly against me, and I have heard it all!

14“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The whole world will
rejoice when I make you desolate. 15You rejoiced at the desolation
of Israel’s territory. Now I will rejoice at yours! You will be wiped
out, you people of Mount Seir and all who live in Edom! Then you
will know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 36

RESTORATION FOR ISRAEL

1“Son of man, prophesy to Israel’s mountains. Give them this
message: O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD! 2This is
what the Sovereign LORD says: Your enemies have taunted you,
saying, ‘Aha! Now the ancient heights belong to us!’ 3Therefore, son
of man, give the mountains of Israel this message from the
Sovereign LORD: Your enemies have attacked you from all
directions, making you the property of many nations and the object
of much mocking and slander. 4Therefore, O mountains of Israel,
hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. He speaks to the hills and
mountains, ravines and valleys, and to ruined wastes and long-
deserted cities that have been destroyed and mocked by the
surrounding nations. 5This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My
jealous anger burns against these nations, especially Edom, because
they have shown utter contempt for me by gleefully taking my land
for themselves as plunder.

6“Therefore, prophesy to the hills and mountains, the ravines and
valleys of Israel. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am furious
that you have suffered shame before the surrounding nations.
7Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I have taken a
solemn oath that those nations will soon have their own shame to
endure.

8“But the mountains of Israel will produce heavy crops of fruit for
my people—for they will be coming home again soon! 9See, I care
about you, and I will pay attention to you. Your ground will be
plowed and your crops planted. 10I will greatly increase the
population of Israel, and the ruined cities will be rebuilt and filled
with people. 11I will increase not only the people, but also your
animals. O mountains of Israel, I will bring people to live on you
once again. I will make you even more prosperous than you were
before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 12I will cause my
people to walk on you once again, and you will be their territory.
You will never again rob them of their children.

13“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The other nations taunt
you, saying, ‘Israel is a land that devours its own people and robs
them of their children!’ 14But you will never again devour your
people or rob them of their children, says the Sovereign LORD. 15I
will not let you hear those other nations insult you, and you will no
longer be mocked by them. You will not be a land that causes its
nation to fall, says the Sovereign LORD.”

16Then this further message came to me from the LORD: 17“Son of
man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they
defiled it by the evil way they lived. To me their conduct was as
unclean as a woman’s menstrual cloth. 18They polluted the land
with murder and the worship of idols,* so I poured out my fury on
them. 19I scattered them to many lands to punish them for the evil
way they had lived. 20But when they were scattered among the
nations, they brought shame on my holy name. For the nations said,
‘These are the people of the LORD, but he couldn’t keep them safe
in his own land!’ 21Then I was concerned for my holy name, on
which my people brought shame among the nations.

22“Therefore, give the people of Israel this message from the
Sovereign LORD: I am bringing you back, but not because you
deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, on which you
brought shame while you were scattered among the nations. 23I will
show how holy my great name is—the name on which you brought
shame among the nations. And when I reveal my holiness through
you before their very eyes, says the Sovereign LORD, then the
nations will know that I am the LORD. 24For I will gather you up
from all the nations and bring you home again to your land.

25“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean.
Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship
idols. 26And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit
in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a
tender, responsive heart.*27And I will put my Spirit in you so that
you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

28“And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long
ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God. 29I will cleanse
you of your filthy behavior. I will give you good crops of grain, and
I will send no more famines on the land. 30I will give you great
harvests from your fruit trees and fields, and never again will the
surrounding nations be able to scoff at your land for its famines.
31Then you will remember your past sins and despise yourselves for
all the detestable things you did. 32But remember, says the
Sovereign LORD, I am not doing this because you deserve it. O my
people of Israel, you should be utterly ashamed of all you have
done!

33“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I cleanse you from
your sins, I will repopulate your cities, and the ruins will be rebuilt.
34The fields that used to lie empty and desolate in plain view of
everyone will again be farmed. 35And when I bring you back, people
will say, ‘This former wasteland is now like the Garden of Eden!
The abandoned and ruined cities now have strong walls and are
filled with people!’ 36Then the surrounding nations that survive will
know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruins and replanted the
wasteland. For I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will do what I say.

37“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am ready to hear Israel’s
prayers and to increase their numbers like a flock. 38They will be as
numerous as the sacred flocks that fill Jerusalem’s streets at the
time of her festivals. The ruined cities will be crowded with people
once more, and everyone will know that I am the LORD.”

Ezekiel 37

A VALLEY OF DRY BONES

1The LORD took hold of me, and I was carried away by the Spirit of
the LORD to a valley filled with bones. 2He led me all around
among the bones that covered the valley floor. They were scattered
everywhere across the ground and were completely dried out. 3Then
he asked me, “Son of man, can these bones become living people
again?”

“O Sovereign LORD,” I replied, “you alone know the answer to
that.”

4Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to these bones and
say, ‘Dry bones, listen to the word of the LORD! 5This is what the
Sovereign LORD says: Look! I am going to put breath into you and
make you live again! 6I will put flesh and muscles on you and cover
you with skin. I will put breath into you, and you will come to life.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.’”

7So I spoke this message, just as he told me. Suddenly as I spoke,

there was a rattling noise all across the valley. The bones of each body came together and attached themselves as complete skeletons. 8Then as I watched, muscles and flesh formed over the bones. Then skin formed to cover their bodies, but they still had no breath in them.

9Then he said to me, “Speak a prophetic message to the winds, son of man. Speak a prophetic message and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, O breath, from the four winds! Breathe into these dead bodies so they may live again.’”

10So I spoke the message as he commanded me, and breath came into their bodies. They all came to life and stood up on their feet—a great army.

11Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones represent the people of Israel. They are saying, ‘We have become old, dry bones—all hope is gone. Our nation is finished.’ 12Therefore, prophesy to them and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I will open your graves of exile and cause you to rise again. Then I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13When this happens, O my people, you will know that I am the LORD. 14I will put my Spirit in you, and you will live again and return home to your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done what I said. Yes, the LORD has spoken!’”

REUNION OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

15Again a message came to me from the LORD: 16“Son of man, take

a piece of wood and carve on it these words: ‘This represents Judah and its allied tribes.’ Then take another piece and carve these words on it: ‘This represents Ephraim and the northern tribes of Israel.’*17Now hold them together in your hand as if they were one piece of wood. 18When your people ask you what your actions mean, 19say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take Ephraim and the northern tribes and join them to Judah. I will make them one piece of wood in my hand.’

20“Then hold out the pieces of wood you have inscribed, so the people can see them. 21And give them this message from the Sovereign LORD: I will gather the people of Israel from among the nations. I will bring them home to their own land from the places where they have been scattered. 22I will unify them into one nation on the mountains of Israel. One king will rule them all; no longer will they be divided into two nations or into two kingdoms. 23They will never again pollute themselves with their idols* and vile images and rebellion, for I will save them from their sinful apostasy.* I will cleanse them. Then they will truly be my people, and I will be their God.

24“My servant David will be their king, and they will have only one shepherd. They will obey my regulations and be careful to keep my decrees. 25They will live in the land I gave my servant Jacob, the land where their ancestors lived. They and their children and their grandchildren after them will live there forever, generation after generation. And my servant David will be their prince forever. 26And I will make a covenant of peace with them, an everlasting covenant. I will give them their land and increase their numbers,* and I will put my Temple among them forever. 27I will make my home among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 28And when my Temple is among them forever, the nations will know that I am the LORD, who makes Israel holy.”

Ezekiel 38

A MESSAGE FOR GOG

1This is another message that came to me from the LORD: 2“Son of
man, turn and face Gog of the land of Magog, the prince who rules
over the nations of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him.
3Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: Gog, I am your
enemy! 4I will turn you around and put hooks in your jaws to lead
you out with your whole army—your horses and charioteers in full
armor and a great horde armed with shields and swords. 5Persia,
Ethiopia, and Libya* will join you, too, with all their weapons.
6Gomer and all its armies will also join you, along with the armies
of Beth-togarmah from the distant north, and many others.

7“Get ready; be prepared! Keep all the armies around you
mobilized, and take command of them. 8A long time from now you
will be called into action. In the distant future you will swoop down
on the land of Israel, which will be enjoying peace after recovering
from war and after its people have returned from many lands to the
mountains of Israel. 9You and all your allies—a vast and awesome
army—will roll down on them like a storm and cover the land like a
cloud.

10“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: At that time evil thoughts
will come to your mind, and you will devise a wicked scheme.
11You will say, ‘Israel is an unprotected land filled with unwalled
villages! I will march against her and destroy these people who live
in such confidence! 12I will go to those formerly desolate cities that
are now filled with people who have returned from exile in many
nations. I will capture vast amounts of plunder, for the people are
rich with livestock and other possessions now. They think the whole
world revolves around them!’ 13But Sheba and Dedan and the
merchants of Tarshish will ask, ‘Do you really think the armies you
have gathered can rob them of silver and gold? Do you think you
can drive away their livestock and seize their goods and carry off
plunder?’

14“Therefore, son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this
message from the Sovereign LORD: When my people are living in
peace in their land, then you will rouse yourself.*15You will come

from your homeland in the distant north with your vast cavalry and your mighty army, 16and you will attack my people Israel, covering their land like a cloud. At that time in the distant future, I will bring you against my land as everyone watches, and my holiness will be displayed by what happens to you, Gog. Then all the nations will know that I am the LORD.

17"This is what the Sovereign LORD asks: Are you the one I was talking about long ago, when I announced through Israel's prophets that in the future I would bring you against my people? 18But this is what the Sovereign LORD says: When Gog invades the land of Israel, my fury will boil over! 19In my jealousy and blazing anger, I promise a mighty shaking in the land of Israel on that day. 20All living things—the fish in the sea, the birds of the sky, the animals of the field, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the people on earth—will quake in terror at my presence. Mountains will be thrown down; cliffs will crumble; walls will fall to the earth. 21I will summon the sword against you on all the hills of Israel, says the Sovereign LORD. Your men will turn their swords against each other. 22I will punish you and your armies with disease and bloodshed; I will send torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur! 23In this way, I will show my greatness and holiness, and I will make myself known to all the nations of the world. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

Ezekiel 39

THE SLAUGHTER OF GOG'S HORDES

1"Son of man, prophesy against Gog. Give him this message from the Sovereign LORD: I am your enemy, O Gog, ruler of the nations of Meshech and Tubal. 2I will turn you around and drive you toward the mountains of Israel, bringing you from the distant north. 3I will knock the bow from your left hand and the arrows from your right hand, and I will leave you helpless. 4You and your army and your allies will all die on the mountains. I will feed you to the vultures and wild animals. 5You will fall in the open fields, for I have spoken, says the Sovereign LORD. 6And I will rain down fire on

Magog and on all your allies who live safely on the coasts. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

7“In this way, I will make known my holy name among my people of Israel. I will not let anyone bring shame on it. And the nations, too, will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. 8That day of judgment will come, says the Sovereign LORD. Everything will happen just as I have declared it.

9“Then the people in the towns of Israel will go out and pick up your small and large shields, bows and arrows, javelins and spears, and they will use them for fuel. There will be enough to last them seven years! 10They won’t need to cut wood from the fields or forests, for these weapons will give them all the fuel they need. They will plunder those who planned to plunder them, and they will rob those who planned to rob them, says the Sovereign LORD.

11“And I will make a vast graveyard for Gog and his hordes in the Valley of the Travelers, east of the Dead Sea.* It will block the way of those who travel there, and they will change the name of the place to the Valley of Gog’s Hordes. 12It will take seven months for the people of Israel to bury the bodies and cleanse the land. 13Everyone in Israel will help, for it will be a glorious victory for Israel when I demonstrate my glory on that day, says the Sovereign LORD.

14“After seven months, teams of men will be appointed to search the land for skeletons to bury, so the land will be made clean again. 15Whenever bones are found, a marker will be set up so the burial crews will take them to be buried in the Valley of Gog’s Hordes. 16(There will be a town there named Hamonah, which means ‘horde.’) And so the land will finally be cleansed.

17“And now, son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Call all the birds and wild animals. Say to them: Gather together for my great sacrificial feast. Come from far and near to the mountains of

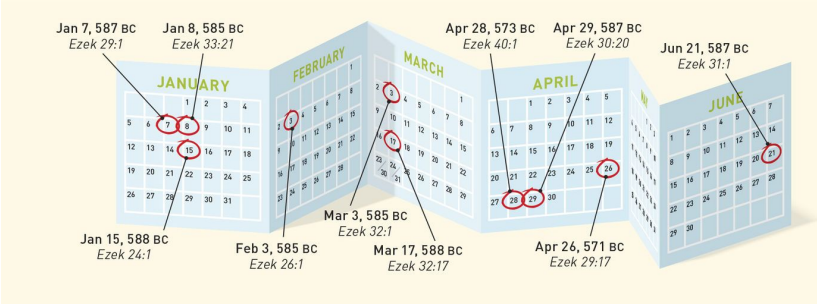
Israel, and there eat flesh and drink blood! 18Eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of princes as though they were rams, lambs, goats, and bulls—all fattened animals from Bashan! 19Gorge yourselves with flesh until you are glutted; drink blood until you are drunk. This is the sacrificial feast I have prepared for you. 20Feast at my banquet table—feast on horses and charioteers, on mighty men and all kinds of valiant warriors, says the Sovereign LORD.

21"In this way, I will demonstrate my glory to the nations. Everyone will see the punishment I have inflicted on them and the power of my fist when I strike. 22And from that time on the people of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God. 23The nations will then know why Israel was sent away to exile—it was punishment for sin, for they were unfaithful to their God. Therefore, I turned away from them and let their enemies destroy them. 24I turned my face away and punished them because of their defilement and their sins.

RESTORATION FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

25"So now, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will end the captivity of my people*; I will have mercy on all Israel, for I jealously guard my holy reputation! 26They will accept responsibility for* their past shame and unfaithfulness after they come home to live in peace in their own land, with no one to bother them. 27When I bring them home from the lands of their enemies, I will display my holiness among them for all the nations to see. 28Then my people will know that I am the LORD their God, because I sent them away to exile and brought them home again. I will leave none of my people behind. 29And I will never again turn my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit upon the people of Israel. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!"

THE FUTURE EZEKIEL 40:1-49



DATING IN EZEKIEL

Ezekiel 40

THE NEW TEMPLE AREA

1On April 28,* during the twenty-fifth year of our captivity—
fourteen years after the fall of Jerusalem—the LORD took hold of
me. 2In a vision from God he took me to the land of Israel and set
me down on a very high mountain. From there I could see toward
the south what appeared to be a city. 3As he brought me nearer, I
saw a man whose face shone like bronze standing beside a gateway
entrance. He was holding in his hand a linen measuring cord and a
measuring rod.

4He said to me, “Son of man, watch and listen. Pay close attention

to everything I show you. You have been brought here so I can show you many things. Then you will return to the people of Israel and tell them everything you have seen."

THE EAST GATEWAY

5I could see a wall completely surrounding the Temple area. The man took a measuring rod that was 10 1/2 feet* long and measured the wall, and the wall was 10 1/2 feet* thick and 10 1/2 feet high.

6Then he went over to the eastern gateway. He climbed the steps and measured the threshold of the gateway; it was 10 1/2 feet front to back.*7There were guard alcoves on each side built into the gateway passage. Each of these alcoves was 10 1/2 feet square, with a distance between them of 8 3/4 feet* along the passage wall. The gateway's inner threshold, which led to the entry room at the inner end of the gateway passage, was 10 1/2 feet front to back. 8He also measured the entry room of the gateway.*9It was 14 feet* across, with supporting columns 3 1/2 feet* thick. This entry room was at the inner end of the gateway structure, facing toward the Temple.

10There were three guard alcoves on each side of the gateway passage. Each had the same measurements, and the dividing walls separating them were also identical. 11The man measured the gateway entrance, which was 17 1/2 feet* wide at the opening and 22 3/4 feet* wide in the gateway passage. 12In front of each of the guard alcoves was a 21-inch* curb. The alcoves themselves were 10 1/2 feet* on each side.

13Then he measured the entire width of the gateway, measuring the distance between the back walls of facing guard alcoves; this distance was 43 3/4 feet.*14He measured the dividing walls all along the inside of the gateway up to the entry room of the gateway; this distance was 105 feet.*15The full length of the gateway passage was

87 1/2 feet* from one end to the other. 16There were recessed windows that narrowed inward through the walls of the guard alcoves and their dividing walls. There were also windows in the entry room. The surfaces of the dividing walls were decorated with carved palm trees.

THE OUTER COURTYARD

17Then the man brought me through the gateway into the outer courtyard of the Temple. A stone pavement ran along the walls of the courtyard, and thirty rooms were built against the walls, opening onto the pavement. 18This pavement flanked the gates and extended out from the walls into the courtyard the same distance as the gateway entrance. This was the lower pavement. 19Then the man measured across the Temple's outer courtyard between the outer and inner gateways; the distance was 175 feet.*

THE NORTH GATEWAY

20The man measured the gateway on the north just like the one on the east. 21Here, too, there were three guard alcoves on each side, with dividing walls and an entry room. All the measurements matched those of the east gateway. The gateway passage was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide between the back walls of facing guard alcoves. 22The windows, the entry room, and the palm tree decorations were identical to those in the east gateway. There were seven steps leading up to the gateway entrance, and the entry room was at the inner end of the gateway passage. 23Here on the north side, just as on the east, there was another gateway leading to the Temple's inner courtyard directly opposite this outer gateway. The distance between the two gateways was 175 feet.

THE SOUTH GATEWAY

24Then the man took me around to the south gateway and measured its various parts, and they were exactly the same as in the others. 25It had windows along the walls as the others did, and there was an entry room where the gateway passage opened into the outer

courtyard. And like the others, the gateway passage was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide between the back walls of facing guard alcoves. 26This gateway also had a stairway of seven steps leading up to it, and an entry room at the inner end, and palm tree decorations along the dividing walls. 27And here again, directly opposite the outer gateway, was another gateway that led into the inner courtyard. The distance between the two gateways was 175 feet.

GATEWAYS TO THE INNER COURTYARD

28Then the man took me to the south gateway leading into the inner courtyard. He measured it, and it had the same measurements as the other gateways. 29Its guard alcoves, dividing walls, and entry room were the same size as those in the others. It also had windows along its walls and in the entry room. And like the others, the gateway passage was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. 30(The entry rooms of the gateways leading into the inner courtyard were 14 feet* across and 43 3/4 feet wide.) 31The entry room to the south gateway faced into the outer courtyard. It had palm tree decorations on its columns, and there were eight steps leading to its entrance.

32Then he took me to the east gateway leading to the inner courtyard. He measured it, and it had the same measurements as the other gateways. 33Its guard alcoves, dividing walls, and entry room were the same size as those of the others, and there were windows along the walls and in the entry room. The gateway passage measured 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. 34Its entry room faced into the outer courtyard. It had palm tree decorations on its columns, and there were eight steps leading to its entrance.

35Then he took me around to the north gateway leading to the inner courtyard. He measured it, and it had the same measurements as the other gateways. 36The guard alcoves, dividing walls, and entry room of this gateway had the same measurements as in the others and the same window arrangements. The gateway passage measured 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. 37Its entry room*

faced into the outer courtyard, and it had palm tree decorations on the columns. There were eight steps leading to its entrance.

ROOMS FOR PREPARING SACRIFICES

38A door led from the entry room of one of the inner gateways into a side room, where the meat for sacrifices was washed. 39On each side of this entry room were two tables, where the sacrificial animals were slaughtered for the burnt offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings. 40Outside the entry room, on each side of the stairs going up to the north entrance, were two more tables. 41So there were eight tables in all—four inside and four outside—where the sacrifices were cut up and prepared. 42There were also four tables of finished stone for preparation of the burnt offerings, each 31 *1/2* inches square and 21 inches high.* On these tables were placed the butchering knives and other implements for slaughtering the sacrificial animals. 43There were hooks, each 3 inches* long, fastened all around the foyer walls. The sacrificial meat was laid on the tables.

ROOMS FOR THE PRIESTS

44Inside the inner courtyard were two rooms,* one beside the north gateway, facing south, and the other beside the south* gateway, facing north. 45And the man said to me, “The room beside the north inner gate is for the priests who supervise the Temple maintenance. 46The room beside the south inner gate is for the priests in charge of the altar—the descendants of Zadok—for they alone of all the Levites may approach the LORD to minister to him.”

THE INNER COURTYARD AND TEMPLE

47Then the man measured the inner courtyard, and it was a square, 175 feet wide and 175 feet across. The altar stood in the courtyard in front of the Temple. 48Then he brought me to the entry room of the Temple. He measured the walls on either side of the opening to the entry room, and they were 8 *3/4* feet thick. The entrance itself

was 24 1/2 feet wide, and the walls on each side of the entrance were an additional 5 1/4 feet long.* 49 The entry room was 35 feet* wide and 21 feet* deep. There were ten steps* leading up to it, with a column on each side.

Ezekiel 41

1 After that, the man brought me into the sanctuary of the Temple. He measured the walls on either side of its doorway,* and they were 10 1/2 feet* thick. 2 The doorway was 17 1/2 feet* wide, and the walls on each side of it were 8 3/4 feet* long. The sanctuary itself was 70 feet long and 35 feet wide.*

3 Then he went beyond the sanctuary into the inner room. He measured the walls on either side of its entrance, and they were 3 1/2 feet* thick. The entrance was 10 1/2 feet wide, and the walls on each side of the entrance were 12 1/4 feet* long. 4 The inner room of the sanctuary was 35 feet* long and 35 feet wide. "This," he told me, "is the Most Holy Place."

5 Then he measured the wall of the Temple, and it was 10 1/2 feet thick. There was a row of rooms along the outside wall; each room was 7 feet* wide. 6 These side rooms were built in three levels, one above the other, with thirty rooms on each level. The supports for these side rooms rested on exterior ledges on the Temple wall; they did not extend into the wall. 7 Each level was wider than the one below it, corresponding to the narrowing of the Temple wall as it rose higher. A stairway led up from the bottom level through the middle level to the top level.

8 I saw that the Temple was built on a terrace, which provided a foundation for the side rooms. This terrace was 10 1/2 feet* high. 9 The outer wall of the Temple's side rooms was 8 3/4 feet thick. This

left an open area between these side rooms 10and the row of rooms
along the outer wall of the inner courtyard. This open area was 35
feet wide, and it went all the way around the Temple. 11Two doors
opened from the side rooms into the terrace yard, which was 8 3/4
feet wide. One door faced north and the other south.

12A large building stood on the west, facing the Temple courtyard.
It was 122 1/2 feet wide and 157 1/2 feet long, and its walls were 8 3/4
feet* thick. 13Then the man measured the Temple, and it was 175
feet* long. The courtyard around the building, including its walls,
was an additional 175 feet in length. 14The inner courtyard to the
east of the Temple was also 175 feet wide. 15The building to the
west, including its two walls, was also 175 feet wide.

The sanctuary, the inner room, and the entry room of the Temple
16were all paneled with wood, as were the frames of the recessed
windows. The inner walls of the Temple were paneled with wood
above and below the windows. 17The space above the door leading
into the inner room, and its walls inside and out, were also paneled.
18All the walls were decorated with carvings of cherubim, each with
two faces, and there was a carving of a palm tree between each of
the cherubim. 19One face—that of a man—looked toward the palm
tree on one side. The other face—that of a young lion—looked
toward the palm tree on the other side. The figures were carved all
along the inside of the Temple, 20from the floor to the top of the
walls, including the outer wall of the sanctuary.

21There were square columns at the entrance to the sanctuary, and
the ones at the entrance of the Most Holy Place were similar.
22There was an altar made of wood, 5 1/4 feet high and 3 1/2 feet
across.* Its corners, base, and sides were all made of wood. “This,”
the man told me, “is the table that stands in the LORD’s presence.”

23Both the sanctuary and the Most Holy Place had double doorways,
24each with two swinging doors. 25The doors leading into the
sanctuary were decorated with carved cherubim and palm trees,
just as on the walls. And there was a wooden roof at the front of the

entry room to the Temple. 26On both sides of the entry room were recessed windows decorated with carved palm trees. The side rooms along the outside wall also had roofs.

Ezekiel 42

ROOMS FOR THE PRIESTS

1Then the man led me out of the Temple courtyard by way of the north gateway. We entered the outer courtyard and came to a group of rooms against the north wall of the inner courtyard. 2This structure, whose entrance opened toward the north, was 175 feet* long and 87*1/2* feet* wide. 3One block of rooms overlooked the 35-foot* width of the inner courtyard. Another block of rooms looked out onto the pavement of the outer courtyard. The two blocks were built three levels high and stood across from each other. 4Between the two blocks of rooms ran a walkway 17*1/2* feet* wide. It extended the entire 175 feet of the complex,* and all the doors faced north. 5Each of the two upper levels of rooms was narrower than the one beneath it because the upper levels had to allow space for walkways in front of them. 6Since there were three levels and they did not have supporting columns as in the courtyards, each of the upper levels was set back from the level beneath it. 7There was an outer wall that separated the rooms from the outer courtyard; it was 87*1/2* feet long. 8This wall added length to the outer block of rooms, which extended for only 87*1/2* feet, while the inner block—the rooms toward the Temple—extended for 175 feet. 9There was an eastern entrance from the outer courtyard to these rooms.

10On the south* side of the Temple there were two blocks of rooms just south of the inner courtyard between the Temple and the outer courtyard. These rooms were arranged just like the rooms on the north. 11There was a walkway between the two blocks of rooms just like the complex on the north side of the Temple. This complex of rooms was the same length and width as the other one, and it had the same entrances and doors. The dimensions of each were identical. 12So there was an entrance in the wall facing the doors of

the inner block of rooms, and another on the east at the end of the interior walkway.

13Then the man told me, “These rooms that overlook the Temple from the north and south are holy. Here the priests who offer sacrifices to the LORD will eat the most holy offerings. And because these rooms are holy, they will be used to store the sacred offerings —the grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings. 14When the priests leave the sanctuary, they must not go directly to the outer courtyard. They must first take off the clothes they wore while ministering, because these clothes are holy. They must put on other clothes before entering the parts of the building complex open to the public.”

15When the man had finished measuring the inside of the Temple area, he led me out through the east gateway to measure the entire perimeter. 16He measured the east side with his measuring rod, and it was 875 feet long.*17Then he measured the north side, and it was also 875 feet. 18The south side was also 875 feet, 19and the west side was also 875 feet. 20So the area was 875 feet on each side with a wall all around it to separate what was holy from what was common.

Ezekiel 43

THE LORD'S GLORY RETURNS

1After this, the man brought me back around to the east gateway.
2Suddenly, the glory of the God of Israel appeared from the east.
The sound of his coming was like the roar of rushing waters, and
the whole landscape shone with his glory. 3This vision was just like
the others I had seen, first by the Kebar River and then when he
came* to destroy Jerusalem. I fell face down on the ground. 4And
the glory of the LORD came into the Temple through the east
gateway.

5Then the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner
courtyard, and the glory of the LORD filled the Temple. 6And I
heard someone speaking to me from within the Temple, while the
man who had been measuring stood beside me. 7The LORD said to
me, "Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place where
I will rest my feet. I will live here forever among the people of
Israel. They and their kings will not defile my holy name any longer
by their adulterous worship of other gods or by honoring the relics
of their kings who have died.*8They put their idol altars right next
to mine with only a wall between them and me. They defiled my
holy name by such detestable sin, so I consumed them in my anger.
9Now let them stop worshiping other gods and honoring the relics
of their kings, and I will live among them forever.

10"Son of man, describe to the people of Israel the Temple I have
shown you, so they will be ashamed of all their sins. Let them study
its plan, 11and they will be ashamed* of what they have done.
Describe to them all the specifications of the Temple—including its
entrances and exits—and everything else about it. Tell them about
its decrees and laws. Write down all these specifications and
decrees as they watch so they will be sure to remember and follow
them. 12And this is the basic law of the Temple: absolute holiness!
The entire top of the mountain where the Temple is built is holy.
Yes, this is the basic law of the Temple.

THE ALTAR

13“These are the measurements of the altar*: There is a gutter all
around the altar 21 inches deep and 21 inches wide,* with a curb 9
inches* wide around its edge. And this is the height* of the altar:
14From the gutter the altar rises 3 1/2 feet* to a lower ledge that
surrounds the altar and is 21 inches* wide. From the lower ledge
the altar rises 7 feet* to the upper ledge that is also 21 inches wide.
15The top of the altar, the hearth, rises another 7 feet higher, with a
horn rising up from each of the four corners. 16The top of the altar
is square, measuring 21 feet by 21 feet.*17The upper ledge also
forms a square, measuring 24 1/2 feet by 24 1/2 feet,* with a 21-inch
gutter and a 10 1/2-inch curb* all around the edge. There are steps
going up the east side of the altar.”

18Then he said to me, “Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD
says: These will be the regulations for the burning of offerings and
the sprinkling of blood when the altar is built. 19At that time, the
Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who minister before me, are
to be given a young bull for a sin offering, says the Sovereign
LORD. 20You will take some of its blood and smear it on the four
horns of the altar, the four corners of the upper ledge, and the curb
that runs around that ledge. This will cleanse and make atonement
for the altar. 21Then take the young bull for the sin offering and
burn it at the appointed place outside the Temple area.

22“On the second day, sacrifice as a sin offering a young male goat
that has no physical defects. Then cleanse and make atonement for
the altar again, just as you did with the young bull. 23When you
have finished the cleansing ceremony, offer another young bull that

has no defects and a perfect ram from the flock. 24You are to present them to the LORD, and the priests are to sprinkle salt on them and offer them as a burnt offering to the LORD.

25“Every day for seven days a male goat, a young bull, and a ram from the flock will be sacrificed as a sin offering. None of these animals may have physical defects of any kind. 26Do this each day for seven days to cleanse and make atonement for the altar, thus setting it apart for holy use. 27On the eighth day, and on each day afterward, the priests will sacrifice on the altar the burnt offerings and peace offerings of the people. Then I will accept you. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

Ezekiel 44

THE PRINCE, LEVITES, AND PRIESTS

1Then the man brought me back to the east gateway in the outer wall of the Temple area, but it was closed. 2And the LORD said to me, “This gate must remain closed; it will never again be opened. No one will ever open it and pass through, for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered here. Therefore, it must always remain shut. 3Only the prince himself may sit inside this gateway to feast in the LORD’s presence. But he may come and go only through the entry room of the gateway.”

4Then the man brought me through the north gateway to the front of the Temple. I looked and saw that the glory of the LORD filled the Temple of the LORD, and I fell face down on the ground.

5And the LORD said to me, “Son of man, take careful notice. Use your eyes and ears, and listen to everything I tell you about the regulations concerning the LORD’s Temple. Take careful note of the procedures for using the Temple’s entrances and exits. 6And give these rebels, the people of Israel, this message from the Sovereign LORD: O people of Israel, enough of your detestable sins! 7You have brought uncircumcised foreigners into my sanctuary—people who

have no heart for God. In this way, you defiled my Temple even as you offered me my food, the fat and blood of sacrifices. In addition to all your other detestable sins, you have broken my covenant. 8Instead of safeguarding my sacred rituals, you have hired foreigners to take charge of my sanctuary.

9"So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: No foreigners, including those who live among the people of Israel, will enter my sanctuary if they have not been circumcised and have not surrendered themselves to the LORD. 10And the men of the tribe of Levi who abandoned me when Israel strayed away from me to worship idols* must bear the consequences of their unfaithfulness. 11They may still be Temple guards and gatekeepers, and they may slaughter the animals brought for burnt offerings and be present to help the people. 12But they encouraged my people to worship idols, causing Israel to fall into deep sin. So I have taken a solemn oath that they must bear the consequences for their sins, says the Sovereign LORD. 13They may not approach me to minister as priests. They may not touch any of my holy things or the holy offerings, for they must bear the shame of all the detestable sins they have committed. 14They are to serve as the Temple caretakers, taking charge of the maintenance work and performing general duties.

15"However, the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok continued to minister faithfully in the Temple when Israel abandoned me for idols. These men will serve as my ministers. They will stand in my presence and offer the fat and blood of the sacrifices, says the Sovereign LORD. 16They alone will enter my sanctuary and approach my table to serve me. They will fulfill all my requirements.

17"When they enter the gateway to the inner courtyard, they must wear only linen clothing. They must wear no wool while on duty in the inner courtyard or in the Temple itself. 18They must wear linen turbans and linen undergarments. They must not wear anything that would cause them to perspire. 19When they return to the outer courtyard where the people are, they must take off the clothes they wear while ministering to me. They must leave them in the sacred

rooms and put on other clothes so they do not endanger anyone by transmitting holiness to them through this clothing.

20“They must neither shave their heads nor let their hair grow too long. Instead, they must trim it regularly. 21The priests must not drink wine before entering the inner courtyard. 22They may choose their wives only from among the virgins of Israel or the widows of the priests. They may not marry other widows or divorced women. 23They will teach my people the difference between what is holy and what is common, what is ceremonially clean and unclean.

24“They will serve as judges to resolve any disagreements among my people. Their decisions must be based on my regulations. And the priests themselves must obey my instructions and decrees at all the sacred festivals, and see to it that the Sabbaths are set apart as holy days.

25“A priest must not defile himself by being in the presence of a dead person unless it is his father, mother, child, brother, or unmarried sister. In such cases it is permitted. 26Even then, he can return to his Temple duties only after being ceremonially cleansed and then waiting for seven days. 27The first day he returns to work and enters the inner courtyard and the sanctuary, he must offer a sin offering for himself, says the Sovereign LORD.

28“The priests will not have any property or possession of land, for I alone am their special possession. 29Their food will come from the gifts and sacrifices brought to the Temple by the people—the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings. Whatever anyone sets apart* for the LORD will belong to the priests. 30The first of the ripe fruits and all the gifts brought to the LORD will go to the priests. The first batch of dough must also be given to the priests so the LORD will bless your homes. 31The priests may not eat meat from any bird or animal that dies a natural death or that dies after being attacked by another animal.

DIVISION OF THE LAND

1“When you divide the land among the tribes of Israel, you must set
aside a section for the LORD as his holy portion. This piece of land
will be 8 1/3 miles long and 6 2/3 miles wide.* The entire area will be
holy. 2A section of this land, measuring 875 feet by 875 feet,* will
be set aside for the Temple. An additional strip of land 87 1/2 feet*
wide is to be left empty all around it. 3Within the larger sacred area,
measure out a portion of land 8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles wide.*
Within it the sanctuary of the Most Holy Place will be located. 4This
area will be holy, set aside for the priests who minister to the LORD
in the sanctuary. They will use it for their homes, and my Temple
will be located within it. 5The strip of sacred land next to it, also
8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles wide, will be a living area for the
Levites who work at the Temple. It will be their possession and a
place for their towns.*

6“Adjacent to the larger sacred area will be a section of land 8 1/3
miles long and 1 2/3 miles wide.* This will be set aside for a city
where anyone in Israel can live.

7“Two special sections of land will be set apart for the prince. One
section will share a border with the east side of the sacred lands
and city, and the second section will share a border on the west
side. Then the far eastern and western borders of the prince’s lands
will line up with the eastern and western boundaries of the tribal
areas. 8These sections of land will be the prince’s allotment. Then
my princes will no longer oppress and rob my people; they will
assign the rest of the land to the people, giving an allotment to each
tribe.

RULES FOR THE PRINCES

9“For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Enough, you princes of
Israel! Stop your violence and oppression and do what is just and

right. Quit robbing and cheating my people out of their land. Stop expelling them from their homes, says the Sovereign LORD. 10Use only honest weights and scales and honest measures, both dry and liquid.*11The homer* will be your standard unit for measuring volume. The ephah and the bath* will each measure one-tenth of a homer. 12The standard unit for weight will be the silver shekel.* One shekel will consist of twenty gerahs, and sixty shekels will be equal to one mina.*

SPECIAL OFFERINGS AND CELEBRATIONS

13"You must give this tax to the prince: one bushel of wheat or barley for every 60* you harvest, 14one percent of your olive oil,*15and one sheep or goat for every 200 in your flocks in Israel. These will be the grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings that will make atonement for the people who bring them, says the Sovereign LORD. 16All the people of Israel must join in bringing these offerings to the prince. 17The prince will be required to provide offerings that are given at the religious festivals, the new moon celebrations, the Sabbath days, and all other similar occasions. He will provide the sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings, liquid offerings, and peace offerings to purify the people of Israel, making them right with the LORD.*

18"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In early spring, on the first day of each new year,* sacrifice a young bull with no defects to purify the Temple. 19The priest will take blood from this sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the Temple, the four corners of the upper ledge of the altar, and the gateposts at the entrance to the inner courtyard. 20Do this also on the seventh day of the new year for anyone who has sinned through error or ignorance. In this way, you will purify* the Temple.

21"On the fourteenth day of the first month,* you must celebrate the Passover. This festival will last for seven days. The bread you eat

during that time must be made without yeast. 22On the day of Passover the prince will provide a young bull as a sin offering for himself and the people of Israel. 23On each of the seven days of the feast he will prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, consisting of seven young bulls and seven rams without defects. A male goat will also be given each day for a sin offering. 24The prince will provide a basket of flour as a grain offering and a gallon of olive oil* with each young bull and ram.

25"During the seven days of the Festival of Shelters, which occurs every year in early autumn,* the prince will provide these same sacrifices for the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the grain offering, along with the required olive oil.

Ezekiel 46

1"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The east gateway of the inner courtyard will be closed during the six workdays each week, but it will be open on Sabbath days and the days of new moon celebrations. 2The prince will enter the entry room of the gateway from the outside. Then he will stand by the gatepost while the priest offers his burnt offering and peace offering. He will bow down in worship inside the gateway passage and then go back out the way he came. The gateway will not be closed until evening. 3The common people will bow down and worship the LORD in front of this gateway on Sabbath days and the days of new moon celebrations.

4"Each Sabbath day the prince will present to the LORD a burnt offering of six lambs and one ram, all with no defects. 5He will present a grain offering of a basket of choice flour to go with the ram and whatever amount of flour he chooses to go with each lamb, and he is to offer one gallon of olive oil* for each basket of flour. 6At the new moon celebrations, he will bring one young bull, six lambs, and one ram, all with no defects. 7With the young bull he must bring a basket of choice flour for a grain offering. With the ram he

must bring another basket of flour. And with each lamb he is to bring whatever amount of flour he chooses to give. With each basket of flour he must offer one gallon of olive oil.

8“The prince must enter the gateway through the entry room, and he must leave the same way. 9But when the people come in through the north gateway to worship the LORD during the religious festivals, they must leave by the south gateway. And those who entered through the south gateway must leave by the north gateway. They must never leave by the same gateway they came in, but must always use the opposite gateway. 10The prince will enter and leave with the people on these occasions.

11“So at the special feasts and sacred festivals, the grain offering will be a basket of choice flour with each young bull, another basket of flour with each ram, and as much flour as the worshiper chooses to give with each lamb. Give one gallon of olive oil with each basket of flour. 12When the prince offers a voluntary burnt offering or peace offering to the LORD, the east gateway to the inner courtyard will be opened for him, and he will offer his sacrifices as he does on Sabbath days. Then he will leave, and the gateway will be shut behind him.

13“Each morning you must sacrifice a one-year-old lamb with no defects as a burnt offering to the LORD. 14With the lamb, a grain offering must also be given to the LORD—about three quarts of flour with a third of a gallon of olive oil* to moisten the choice flour. This will be a permanent law for you. 15The lamb, the grain offering, and the olive oil must be given as a daily sacrifice every morning without fail.

16“This is what the Sovereign LORD says: If the prince gives a gift of land to one of his sons as his inheritance, it will belong to him and his descendants forever. 17But if the prince gives a gift of land from his inheritance to one of his servants, the servant may keep it only until the Year of Jubilee, which comes every fiftieth year.* At that time the land will return to the prince. But when the prince gives

gifts to his sons, those gifts will be permanent. 18And the prince may never take anyone's property by force. If he gives property to his sons, it must be from his own land, for I do not want any of my people unjustly evicted from their property."

THE TEMPLE KITCHENS

19In my vision, the man brought me through the entrance beside the gateway and led me to the sacred rooms assigned to the priests, which faced toward the north. He showed me a place at the extreme west end of these rooms. 20He explained, "This is where the priests will cook the meat from the guilt offerings and sin offerings and bake the flour from the grain offerings into bread. They will do it here to avoid carrying the sacrifices through the outer courtyard and endangering the people by transmitting holiness to them."

21Then he brought me back to the outer courtyard and led me to each of its four corners. In each corner I saw an enclosure. 22Each of these enclosures was 70 feet long and 52*1/2* feet wide,* surrounded by walls. 23Along the inside of these walls was a ledge of stone with fireplaces under the ledge all the way around. 24The man said to me, "These are the kitchens to be used by the Temple assistants to boil the sacrifices offered by the people."

Ezekiel 47

THE RIVER OF HEALING

1In my vision, the man brought me back to the entrance of the Temple. There I saw a stream flowing east from beneath the door of the Temple and passing to the right of the altar on its south side. 2The man brought me outside the wall through the north gateway and led me around to the eastern entrance. There I could see the water flowing out through the south side of the east gateway.

3Measuring as he went, he took me along the stream for 1,750 feet*

and then led me across. The water was up to my ankles. 4He measured off another 1,750 feet and led me across again. This time the water was up to my knees. After another 1,750 feet, it was up to my waist. 5Then he measured another 1,750 feet, and the river was too deep to walk across. It was deep enough to swim in, but too deep to walk through.

6He asked me, “Have you been watching, son of man?” Then he led me back along the riverbank. 7When I returned, I was surprised by the sight of many trees growing on both sides of the river. 8Then he said to me, “This river flows east through the desert into the valley of the Dead Sea.* The waters of this stream will make the salty waters of the Dead Sea fresh and pure. 9There will be swarms of living things wherever the water of this river flows.* Fish will abound in the Dead Sea, for its waters will become fresh. Life will flourish wherever this water flows. 10Fishermen will stand along the shores of the Dead Sea. All the way from En-gedi to En-eglaim, the shores will be covered with nets drying in the sun. Fish of every kind will fill the Dead Sea, just as they fill the Mediterranean.*11But the marshes and swamps will not be purified; they will still be salty. 12Fruit trees of all kinds will grow along both sides of the river. The leaves of these trees will never turn brown and fall, and there will always be fruit on their branches. There will be a new crop every month, for they are watered by the river flowing from the Temple. The fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing.”

BOUNDARIES FOR THE LAND

13This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “Divide the land in this way for the twelve tribes of Israel: The descendants of Joseph will be given two shares of land.*14Otherwise each tribe will receive an equal share. I took a solemn oath and swore that I would give this land to your ancestors, and it will now come to you as your possession.

15“These are the boundaries of the land: The northern border will

run from the Mediterranean toward Hethlon, then on through Lebo-hamath to Zedad; 16then it will run to Berothah and Sibraim,* which are on the border between Damascus and Hamath, and finally to Hazer-hatticon, on the border of Hauran. 17So the northern border will run from the Mediterranean to Hazar-enan, on the border between Hamath to the north and Damascus to the south.

18"The eastern border starts at a point between Hauran and Damascus and runs south along the Jordan River between Israel and Gilead, past the Dead Sea* and as far south as Tamar.* This will be the eastern border.

19"The southern border will go west from Tamar to the waters of Meribah at Kadesh* and then follow the course of the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean. This will be the southern border.

20"On the west side, the Mediterranean itself will be your border from the southern border to the point where the northern border begins, opposite Lebo-hamath.

21"Divide the land within these boundaries among the tribes of Israel. 22Distribute the land as an allotment for yourselves and for the foreigners who have joined you and are raising their families among you. They will be like native-born Israelites to you and will receive an allotment among the tribes. 23These foreigners are to be given land within the territory of the tribe with whom they now live. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!

Ezekiel 48

DIVISION OF THE LAND

1"Here is the list of the tribes of Israel and the territory each is to receive. The territory of Dan is in the extreme north. Its boundary line follows the Hethlon road to Lebo-hamath and then runs on to Hazar-enan on the border of Damascus, with Hamath to the north. Dan's territory extends all the way across the land of Israel from east to west.

2“Asher’s territory lies south of Dan’s and also extends from east to
west. 3Naphtali’s land lies south of Asher’s, also extending from east
to west. 4Then comes Manasseh south of Naphtali, and its territory
also extends from east to west. 5South of Manasseh is Ephraim, 6and
then Reuben, 7and then Judah, all of whose boundaries extend from
east to west.

8“South of Judah is the land set aside for a special purpose. It will
be 8 1/3 miles* wide and will extend as far east and west as the tribal
territories, with the Temple at the center.

9“The area set aside for the LORD’s Temple will be 8 1/3 miles long
and 6 2/3 miles wide.*10For the priests there will be a strip of land
measuring 8 1/3 miles long by 3 1/3 miles wide,* with the LORD’s
Temple at the center. 11This area is set aside for the ordained
priests, the descendants of Zadok who served me faithfully and did
not go astray with the people of Israel and the rest of the Levites.
12It will be their special portion when the land is distributed, the
most sacred land of all. Next to the priests’ territory will lie the land
where the other Levites will live.

13“The land allotted to the Levites will be the same size and shape
as that belonging to the priests—8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles
wide. Together these portions of land will measure 8 1/3 miles long
by 6 2/3 miles wide.*14None of this special land may ever be sold or
traded or used by others, for it belongs to the LORD; it is set apart
as holy.

15“An additional strip of land 8 1/3 miles long by 1 2/3 miles wide,*
south of the sacred Temple area, will be allotted for public use—
homes, pasturelands, and common lands, with a city at the center.
16The city will measure 1 1/2 miles* on each side—north, south, east,

and west. 17Open lands will surround the city for 150 yards* in every direction. 18Outside the city there will be a farming area that stretches 3*1/3* miles to the east and 3*1/3* miles to the west* along the border of the sacred area. This farmland will produce food for the people working in the city. 19Those who come from the various tribes to work in the city may farm it. 20This entire area—including the sacred lands and the city—is a square that measures 8*1/3* miles* on each side.

21"The areas that remain, to the east and to the west of the sacred lands and the city, will belong to the prince. Each of these areas will be 8*1/3* miles wide, extending in opposite directions to the eastern and western borders of Israel, with the sacred lands and the sanctuary of the Temple in the center. 22So the prince's land will include everything between the territories allotted to Judah and Benjamin, except for the areas set aside for the sacred lands and the city.

23"These are the territories allotted to the rest of the tribes. Benjamin's territory lies just south of the prince's lands, and it extends across the entire land of Israel from east to west. 24South of Benjamin's territory lies that of Simeon, also extending across the land from east to west. 25Next is the territory of Issachar with the same eastern and western boundaries.

26"Then comes the territory of Zebulun, which also extends across the land from east to west. 27The territory of Gad is just south of Zebulun with the same borders to the east and west. 28The southern border of Gad runs from Tamar to the waters of Meribah at Kadesh* and then follows the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean.*

29"These are the allotments that will be set aside for each tribe's exclusive possession. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken!

THE GATES OF THE CITY

30"These will be the exits to the city: On the north wall, which is

1 1/2 miles long, 31 there will be three gates, each one named after a tribe of Israel. The first will be named for Reuben, the second for Judah, and the third for Levi. 32 On the east wall, also 1 1/2 miles long, the gates will be named for Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan. 33 The south wall, also 1 1/2 miles long, will have gates named for Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun. 34 And on the west wall, also 1 1/2 miles long, the gates will be named for Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

35 "The distance around the entire city will be 6 miles.* And from that day the name of the city will be 'The LORD Is There.'*"

Daniel

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

WELCOME TO

DANIEL

The Jews are living in captivity. Daniel and his friends, some of the most promising young men of Judah, are in the first group of captives hauled off to Babylon. They remain obedient to God in spite of the pagan influences of their foreign surroundings. Their discipline is noticed by the royal court, and soon Daniel becomes a prominent leader, serving several kings and even surviving the transition from Babylonian to Persian rule with his position intact. He has several visions from God about the future and the coming Messiah who will establish an eternal kingdom.

The stories of this book span over eighty years of Daniel's lifetime. He is a young man when he first arrives in Babylon; he is an old man when he faces the lions for remaining true to God. God is with Daniel, actively guiding and protecting him in every stage of his life. Daniel is not where he wants to be, but he is faithful to God despite his circumstances.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll stop at one of the most famous stories in the Bible: Daniel facing the lions' den. Your next stop is at Daniel 6:1.

3 STOPS

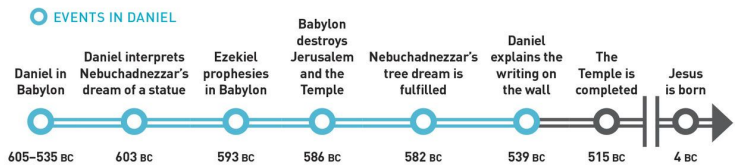
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The three readings on your route will highlight some accounts of how God protected his faithful followers during their time in Babylon. Your next stop is at Daniel 1:1.

7 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The readings on this route will give you an overview of Daniel's life serving the rulers of three empires, all while remaining obedient to God and receiving astonishing visions of the future. Your next stop is at Daniel 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN DANIEL

Daniel's vision of the "son of man coming with the clouds of heaven" who had "authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations" (7:13, 14) was a vision of Jesus. Daniel also proclaimed that this Messiah would come after a specific period of time following rebuilding of Jerusalem.
You will catch glimpses of Jesus in the fourth figure who appears in the blazing furnace (3:25) and in the Anointed One who rules in Jerusalem (9:25). Jesus' great mission is also hinted at in Daniel's explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream about a stone that would shatter the nations of the world (2:34, 44).

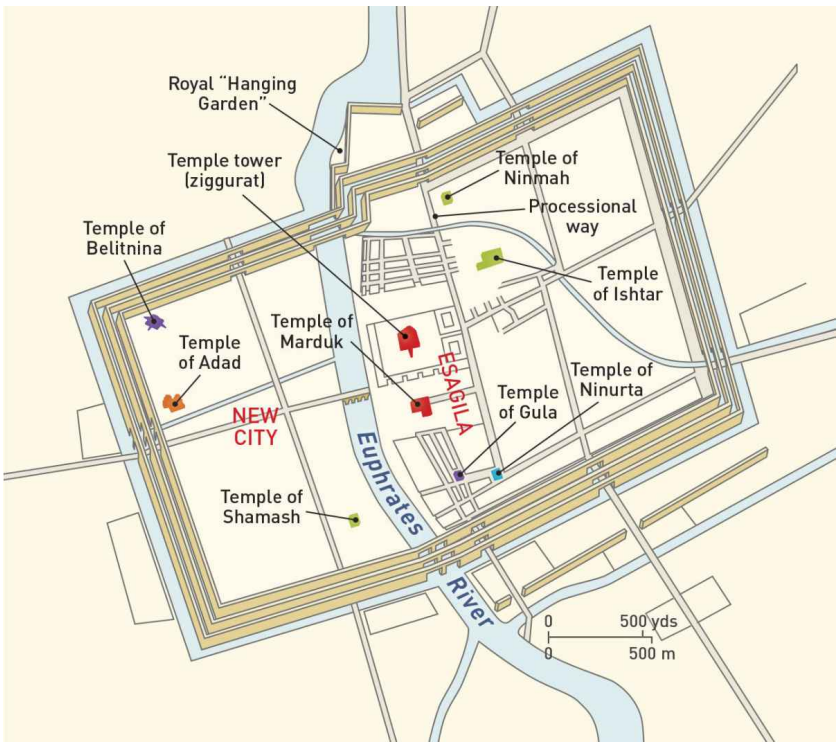


EXCAVATING BABYLON

Daniel 1

DANIEL IN NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S COURT

1During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah,* King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.
2The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and
permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple
of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of
Babylonia* and placed them in the treasure-house of his god.



THE CITY OF BABYLON

3Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the
palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other
noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives.
4"Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he
said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning,

are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon.*" 5The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service.

6Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. 7The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names: Daniel was called Belteshazzar.

Hananiah was called Shadrach.
Mishael was called Meshach.
Azariah was called Abednego.

8But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. 9Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. 10But he responded, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded."

11Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 12"Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said. 13"At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see." 14The attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days.

15At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. 16So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for the others.

17God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for

understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams.

18When the training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. 19The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the royal service. 20Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.

21Daniel remained in the royal service until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus.*

Daniel 2

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

1One night during the second year of his reign,* Nebuchadnezzar
had such disturbing dreams that he couldn't sleep. 2He called in his
magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers,* and he
demanded that they tell him what he had dreamed. As they stood
before the king, 3he said, "I have had a dream that deeply troubles
me, and I must know what it means."

4Then the astrologers answered the king in Aramaic,* "Long live the
king! Tell us the dream, and we will tell you what it means."

5But the king said to the astrologers, "I am serious about this. If you
don't tell me what my dream was and what it means, you will be
torn limb from limb, and your houses will be turned into heaps of
rubble! 6But if you tell me what I dreamed and what the dream
means, I will give you many wonderful gifts and honors. Just tell
me the dream and what it means!"

7They said again, “Please, Your Majesty. Tell us the dream, and we will tell you what it means.”

8The king replied, “I know what you are doing! You’re stalling for time because you know I am serious when I say, 9‘If you don’t tell me the dream, you are doomed.’ So you have conspired to tell me lies, hoping I will change my mind. But tell me the dream, and then I’ll know that you can tell me what it means.”

10The astrologers replied to the king, “No one on earth can tell the king his dream! And no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked such a thing of any magician, enchanter, or astrologer! 11The king’s demand is impossible. No one except the gods can tell you your dream, and they do not live here among people.”

12The king was furious when he heard this, and he ordered that all the wise men of Babylon be executed. 13And because of the king’s decree, men were sent to find and kill Daniel and his friends.

14When Arioch, the commander of the king’s guard, came to kill them, Daniel handled the situation with wisdom and discretion. 15He asked Arioch, “Why has the king issued such a harsh decree?” So Arioch told him all that had happened. 16Daniel went at once to see the king and requested more time to tell the king what the dream meant.

17Then Daniel went home and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what had happened. 18He urged them to ask the God of heaven to show them his mercy by telling them the secret, so they would not be executed along with the other wise men of Babylon. 19That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. 20He said, “Praise the name of God forever and ever, for he has all wisdom and power.

21He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings.

He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the scholars.

22He reveals deep and mysterious things and knows what lies
hidden in darkness, though he is surrounded by light.

23I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors, for you have given
me wisdom and strength.
You have told me what we asked of you and revealed to us what
the king demanded."

DANIEL INTERPRETS THE DREAM

24Then Daniel went in to see Arioch, whom the king had ordered to execute the wise men of Babylon. Daniel said to him, "Don't kill the wise men. Take me to the king, and I will tell him the meaning of his dream."

25Arioch quickly took Daniel to the king and said, "I have found one of the captives from Judah who will tell the king the meaning of his dream!"

26The king said to Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar), "Is this true? Can you tell me what my dream was and what it means?"

27Daniel replied, "There are no wise men, enchanters, magicians, or fortune-tellers who can reveal the king's secret. 28But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and he has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the future. Now I will tell you your dream and the visions you saw as you lay on your bed.

29"While Your Majesty was sleeping, you dreamed about coming events. He who reveals secrets has shown you what is going to happen. 30And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because God wants you to understand what was in your heart.

31"In your vision, Your Majesty, you saw standing before you a

huge, shining statue of a man. It was a frightening sight. 32The head of the statue was made of fine gold. Its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs were bronze, 33its legs were iron, and its feet were a combination of iron and baked clay. 34As you watched, a rock was cut from a mountain,* but not by human hands. It struck the feet of iron and clay, smashing them to bits. 35The whole statue was crushed into small pieces of iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold. Then the wind blew them away without a trace, like chaff on a threshing floor. But the rock that knocked the statue down became a great mountain that covered the whole earth.

36"That was the dream. Now we will tell the king what it means. 37Your Majesty, you are the greatest of kings. The God of heaven has given you sovereignty, power, strength, and honor. 38He has made you the ruler over all the inhabited world and has put even the wild animals and birds under your control. You are the head of gold.

39"But after your kingdom comes to an end, another kingdom, inferior to yours, will rise to take your place. After that kingdom has fallen, yet a third kingdom, represented by bronze, will rise to rule the world. 40Following that kingdom, there will be a fourth one, as strong as iron. That kingdom will smash and crush all previous empires, just as iron smashes and crushes everything it strikes. 41The feet and toes you saw were a combination of iron and baked clay, showing that this kingdom will be divided. Like iron mixed with clay, it will have some of the strength of iron. 42But while some parts of it will be as strong as iron, other parts will be as weak as clay. 43This mixture of iron and clay also shows that these kingdoms will try to strengthen themselves by forming alliances with each other through intermarriage. But they will not hold together, just as iron and clay do not mix.

44"During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever. 45That is the meaning of the rock cut from the mountain, though not by

human hands, that crushed to pieces the statue of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God was showing the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its meaning is certain."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR REWARDS DANIEL

46Then King Nebuchadnezzar threw himself down before Daniel and worshiped him, and he commanded his people to offer sacrifices and burn sweet incense before him. 47The king said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is the greatest of gods, the Lord over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this secret."

48Then the king appointed Daniel to a high position and gave him many valuable gifts. He made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon, as well as chief over all his wise men. 49At Daniel's request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be in charge of all the affairs of the province of Babylon, while Daniel remained in the king's court.

THE PLAIN OF DURA

Daniel 3

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLD STATUE

1 King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue ninety feet tall and nine
feet wide* and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of
Babylon. 2 Then he sent messages to the high officers, officials,
governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the
provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had
set up. 3 So all these officials* came and stood before the statue King
Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then a herald shouted out, "People of all races and nations and
languages, listen to the king's command! 5 When you hear the sound
of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical
instruments,* bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's
gold statue. 6 Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be

thrown into a blazing furnace.”

7So at the sound of the musical instruments,* all the people,
whatever their race or nation or language, bowed to the ground and
worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8But some of the astrologers* went to the king and informed on the
Jews. 9They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “Long live the king!
10You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and
worship the gold statue when they hear the sound of the horn, flute,
zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments. 11That
decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown
into a blazing furnace. 12But there are some Jews—Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have put in charge of the
province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty.
They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue
you have set up.”

13Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they were
brought in, 14Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to
worship the gold statue I have set up? 15I will give you one more
chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you
hear the sound of the musical instruments.* But if you refuse, you
will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what
god will be able to rescue you from my power?”

16Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, “O Nebuchadnezzar,
we do not need to defend ourselves before you. 17If we are thrown
into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us.
He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. 18But even if he
doesn’t, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will
never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”

THE BLAZING FURNACE

19Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded
that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. 20Then he
ordered some of the strongest men of his army to bind Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace.
21So they tied them up and threw them into the furnace, fully
dressed in their pants, turbans, robes, and other garments. 22And
because the king, in his anger, had demanded such a hot fire in the
furnace, the flames killed the soldiers as they threw the three men
in. 23So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, securely tied, fell into
the roaring flames.

24But suddenly, Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in amazement and
exclaimed to his advisers, "Didn't we tie up three men and throw
them into the furnace?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, we certainly did," they replied.

25"Look!" Nebuchadnezzar shouted. "I see four men, unbound,
walking around in the fire unharmed! And the fourth looks like a
god*!"

26Then Nebuchadnezzar came as close as he could to the door of the
flaming furnace and shouted: "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,
servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stepped out of the fire.
27Then the high officers, officials, governors, and advisers crowded
around them and saw that the fire had not touched them. Not a hair
on their heads was singed, and their clothing was not scorched.
They didn't even smell of smoke!

28Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise to the God of Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants
who trusted in him. They defied the king's command and were

willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their
own God. 29Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever
their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from
limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. There is
no other god who can rescue like this!”

30Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to
even higher positions in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 4

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S DREAM ABOUT A TREE

1*King Nebuchadnezzar sent this message to the people of every

race and nation and language throughout the world:

“Peace and prosperity to you!

2“I want you all to know about the miraculous signs and wonders
the Most High God has performed for me.

3How great are his signs, how powerful his wonders!
His kingdom will last forever, his rule through all generations.

4* “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was living in my palace in comfort and
prosperity. 5But one night I had a dream that frightened me; I saw
visions that terrified me as I lay in my bed. 6So I issued an order
calling in all the wise men of Babylon, so they could tell me what
my dream meant. 7When all the magicians, enchanters, astrologers,*
and fortune-tellers came in, I told them the dream, but they could
not tell me what it meant. 8At last Daniel came in before me, and I
told him the dream. (He was named Belteshazzar after my god, and
the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

9“I said to him, ‘Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that
the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too great
for you to solve. Now tell me what my dream means.

10“‘While I was lying in my bed, this is what I dreamed. I saw a
large tree in the middle of the earth. 11The tree grew very tall and
strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. 12It
had fresh green leaves, and it was loaded with fruit for all to eat.
Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. All
the world was fed from this tree.

13“‘Then as I lay there dreaming, I saw a messenger,* a holy one,
coming down from heaven. 14The messenger shouted, “Cut down
the tree and lop off its branches!
Shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit!
Chase the wild animals from its shade and the birds from its
branches.

15But leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a

band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass.
Now let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live
with the wild animals among the plants of the field.

16For seven periods of time, let him have the mind of a wild animal
instead of the mind of a human.

17For this has been decreed by the messengers*; it is commanded by
the holy ones, so that everyone may know that the Most High rules
over the kingdoms of the world.
He gives them to anyone he chooses— even to the lowliest of
people."

18"'Belteshazzar, that was the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar,
had. Now tell me what it means, for none of the wise men of my
kingdom can do so. But you can tell me because the spirit of the
holy gods is in you.'

DANIEL EXPLAINS THE DREAM

19"Upon hearing this, Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) was
overcome for a time, frightened by the meaning of the dream. Then
the king said to him, 'Belteshazzar, don't be alarmed by the dream
and what it means.'
"Belteshazzar replied, 'I wish the events foreshadowed in this dream
would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you! 20The tree
you saw was growing very tall and strong, reaching high into the
heavens for all the world to see. 21It had fresh green leaves and was
loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and
birds nested in its branches. 22That tree, Your Majesty, is you. For
you have grown strong and great; your greatness reaches up to
heaven, and your rule to the ends of the earth.

23"'Then you saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from
heaven and saying, "Cut down the tree and destroy it. But leave the
stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and
bronze and surrounded by tender grass. Let him be drenched with
the dew of heaven. Let him live with the animals of the field for
seven periods of time."

24“‘This is what the dream means, Your Majesty, and what the Most
High has declared will happen to my lord the king. 25You will be
driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the
wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be
drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time will pass
while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules
over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he
chooses. 26But the stump and roots of the tree were left in the
ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again
when you have learned that heaven rules.

27“‘King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. Stop sinning
and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful
to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper.’

THE DREAM’S FULFILLMENT

28“But all these things did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar.
29Twelve months later he was taking a walk on the flat roof of the
royal palace in Babylon. 30As he looked out across the city, he said,
‘Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I
have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my
majestic splendor.’

31“While these words were still in his mouth, a voice called down
from heaven, ‘O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you! You
are no longer ruler of this kingdom. 32You will be driven from
human society. You will live in the fields with the wild animals, and
you will eat grass like a cow. Seven periods of time will pass while
you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the
kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses.’

33“That same hour the judgment was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar
was driven from human society. He ate grass like a cow, and he was
drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair
was as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR PRAISES GOD

34“After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to

heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever.
His rule is everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal.

35All the people of the earth are nothing compared to him.
He does as he pleases among the angels of heaven and among the people of the earth.
No one can stop him or say to him, 'What do you mean by doing these things?'

36"When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before.

37"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud."

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

Daniel 5

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

1Many years later King Belshazzar gave a great feast for 1,000 of his
nobles, and he drank wine with them. 2While Belshazzar was
drinking the wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver
cups that his predecessor,* Nebuchadnezzar, had taken from the
Temple in Jerusalem. He wanted to drink from them with his
nobles, his wives, and his concubines. 3So they brought these gold
cups taken from the Temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, and the
king and his nobles, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.
4While they drank from them they praised their idols made of gold,
silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

5Suddenly, they saw the fingers of a human hand writing on the
plaster wall of the king's palace, near the lampstand. The king
himself saw the hand as it wrote, 6and his face turned pale with
fright. His knees knocked together in fear and his legs gave way
beneath him.

7The king shouted for the enchanters, astrologers,* and fortune-
tellers to be brought before him. He said to these wise men of
Babylon, "Whoever can read this writing and tell me what it means
will be dressed in purple robes of royal honor and will have a gold
chain placed around his neck. He will become the third highest
ruler in the kingdom!"

8But when all the king's wise men had come in, none of them could
read the writing or tell him what it meant. 9So the king grew even

more alarmed, and his face turned pale. His nobles, too, were shaken.

10But when the queen mother heard what was happening, she hurried to the banquet hall. She said to Belshazzar, “Long live the king! Don’t be so pale and frightened. 11There is a man in your kingdom who has within him the spirit of the holy gods. During Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, this man was found to have insight, understanding, and wisdom like that of the gods. Your predecessor, the king—your predecessor King Nebuchadnezzar—made him chief over all the magicians, enchanters, astrologers, and fortune-tellers of Babylon. 12This man Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, has exceptional ability and is filled with divine knowledge and understanding. He can interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means.”

DANIEL EXPLAINS THE WRITING

13So Daniel was brought in before the king. The king asked him, “Are you Daniel, one of the exiles brought from Judah by my predecessor, King Nebuchadnezzar? 14I have heard that you have the spirit of the gods within you and that you are filled with insight, understanding, and wisdom. 15My wise men and enchanters have tried to read the words on the wall and tell me their meaning, but they cannot do it. 16I am told that you can give interpretations and solve difficult problems. If you can read these words and tell me their meaning, you will be clothed in purple robes of royal honor, and you will have a gold chain placed around your neck. You will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom.”

17Daniel answered the king, “Keep your gifts or give them to someone else, but I will tell you what the writing means. 18Your Majesty, the Most High God gave sovereignty, majesty, glory, and honor to your predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar. 19He made him so great that people of all races and nations and languages trembled before him in fear. He killed those he wanted to kill and spared those he wanted to spare. He honored those he wanted to honor

and disgraced those he wanted to disgrace. 20But when his heart
and mind were puffed up with arrogance, he was brought down
from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. 21He was driven
from human society. He was given the mind of a wild animal, and
he lived among the wild donkeys. He ate grass like a cow, and he
was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he learned that the
Most High God rules over the kingdoms of the world and appoints
anyone he desires to rule over them.

22"You are his successor,* O Belshazzar, and you knew all this, yet
you have not humbled yourself. 23For you have proudly defied the
Lord of heaven and have had these cups from his Temple brought
before you. You and your nobles and your wives and concubines
have been drinking wine from them while praising gods of silver,
gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone—gods that neither see nor hear
nor know anything at all. But you have not honored the God who
gives you the breath of life and controls your destiny! 24So God has
sent this hand to write this message.

25"This is the message that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and
PARSIN. 26This is what these words mean: *Mene* means
'numbered'—God has numbered the days of your reign and has
brought it to an end.

27*Tekel* means 'weighed'—you have been weighed on the balances
and have not measured up.

28*Parsin** means 'divided'—your kingdom has been divided and
given to the Medes and Persians."

29Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was dressed in purple
robes, a gold chain was hung around his neck, and he was
proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

30That very night Belshazzar, the Babylonian* king, was killed.*

31 *And Darius the Mede took over the kingdom at the age of sixty-
two.

ANGELS DANIEL 6:1-28

Daniel 6

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

1*Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120
provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each
province. 2The king also chose Daniel and two others as
administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king's
interests. 3Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the
other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great
ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.

4Then the other administrators and high officers began searching
for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs,
but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was
faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. 5So they
concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel
will be in connection with the rules of his religion."

6So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said,
"Long live King Darius! 7We are all in agreement—we
administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that
the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give
orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone,
divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into
the den of lions. 8And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so
it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that
cannot be revoked." 9So King Darius signed the law.

10But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went
home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its
windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just
as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. 11Then the officials
went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking
for God's help. 12So they went straight to the king and reminded

him about his law. “Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?”

“Yes,” the king replied, “that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.”

13Then they told the king, “That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day.”

14Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.

15In the evening the men went together to the king and said, “Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed.”

16So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, “May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you.”

17A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. 18Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn’t sleep at all that night.

19Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions’ den. 20When he got there, he called out in anguish, “Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?”

21Daniel answered, “Long live the king! 22My God sent his angel to

shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

23The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

24Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den.

25Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world:

"Peace and prosperity to you!

26"I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel.
For he is the living God, and he will endure forever.
His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his rule will never end.

27He rescues and saves his people; he performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth.
He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

28So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

VISIONS DANIEL 7:1-28

Daniel 7

DANIEL'S VISION OF FOUR BEASTS

1Earlier, during the first year of King Belshazzar's reign in Babylon,* Daniel had a dream and saw visions as he lay in his bed. He wrote down the dream, and this is what he saw.

2In my vision that night, I, Daniel, saw a great storm churning the surface of a great sea, with strong winds blowing from every direction. 3Then four huge beasts came up out of the water, each different from the others.

4The first beast was like a lion with eagles' wings. As I watched, its wings were pulled off, and it was left standing with its two hind feet on the ground, like a human being. And it was given a human mind.

5Then I saw a second beast, and it looked like a bear. It was rearing up on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And I heard a voice saying to it, "Get up! Devour the flesh of many people!"

6Then the third of these strange beasts appeared, and it looked like a leopard. It had four bird's wings on its back, and it had four

heads. Great authority was given to this beast.

7Then in my vision that night, I saw a fourth beast—terrifying,
dreadful, and very strong. It devoured and crushed its victims with
huge iron teeth and trampled their remains beneath its feet. It was
different from any of the other beasts, and it had ten horns.

8As I was looking at the horns, suddenly another small horn
appeared among them. Three of the first horns were torn out by the
roots to make room for it. This little horn had eyes like human eyes
and a mouth that was boasting arrogantly.

9I watched as thrones were put in place and the Ancient One* sat
down to judge.
His clothing was as white as snow, his hair like purest wool.
He sat on a fiery throne with wheels of blazing fire,

10and a river of fire was pouring out, flowing from his presence.
Millions of angels ministered to him; many millions stood to attend
him.
Then the court began its session, and the books were opened.

11I continued to watch because I could hear the little horn's boastful
speech. I kept watching until the fourth beast was killed and its
body was destroyed by fire. 12The other three beasts had their
authority taken from them, but they were allowed to live a while
longer.*

13As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of
man* coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient
One and was led into his presence. 14He was given authority, honor,
and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of
every race and nation and language would obey him. His rule is
eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.

THE VISION IS EXPLAINED

15I, Daniel, was troubled by all I had seen, and my visions terrified
me. 16So I approached one of those standing beside the throne and
asked him what it all meant. He explained it to me like this:
17"These four huge beasts represent four kingdoms that will arise
from the earth. 18But in the end, the holy people of the Most High
will be given the kingdom, and they will rule forever and ever."

19Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, the
one so different from the others and so terrifying. It had devoured
and crushed its victims with iron teeth and bronze claws, trampling
their remains beneath its feet. 20I also asked about the ten horns on
the fourth beast's head and the little horn that came up afterward
and destroyed three of the other horns. This horn had seemed
greater than the others, and it had human eyes and a mouth that
was boasting arrogantly. 21As I watched, this horn was waging war
against God's holy people and was defeating them, 22until the
Ancient One—the Most High—came and judged in favor of his holy
people. Then the time arrived for the holy people to take over the
kingdom.

23Then he said to me, "This fourth beast is the fourth world power
that will rule the earth. It will be different from all the others. It
will devour the whole world, trampling and crushing everything in
its path. 24Its ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire.
Then another king will arise, different from the other ten, who will
subdue three of them. 25He will defy the Most High and oppress the
holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred
festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a
time, times, and half a time.

26"But then the court will pass judgment, and all his power will be
taken away and completely destroyed. 27Then the sovereignty,
power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be
given to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will last
forever, and all rulers will serve and obey him."

28That was the end of the vision. I, Daniel, was terrified by my
thoughts and my face was pale with fear, but I kept these things to
myself.

Daniel 8

DANIEL'S VISION OF A RAM AND GOAT

1*During the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, saw
another vision, following the one that had already appeared to me.
2In this vision I was at the fortress of Susa, in the province of Elam,
standing beside the Ulai River.*

3As I looked up, I saw a ram with two long horns standing beside
the river.* One of the horns was longer than the other, even though
it had grown later than the other one. 4The ram butted everything
out of his way to the west, to the north, and to the south, and no
one could stand against him or help his victims. He did as he
pleased and became very great.

5While I was watching, suddenly a male goat appeared from the
west, crossing the land so swiftly that he didn't even touch the
ground. This goat, which had one very large horn between its eyes,
6headed toward the two-horned ram that I had seen standing beside
the river, rushing at him in a rage. 7The goat charged furiously at
the ram and struck him, breaking off both his horns. Now the ram
was helpless, and the goat knocked him down and trampled him.
No one could rescue the ram from the goat's power.

8The goat became very powerful. But at the height of his power, his
large horn was broken off. In the large horn's place grew four
prominent horns pointing in the four directions of the earth. 9Then
from one of the prominent horns came a small horn whose power
grew very great. It extended toward the south and the east and
toward the glorious land of Israel. 10Its power reached to the
heavens, where it attacked the heavenly army, throwing some of

the heavenly beings and some of the stars to the ground and trampling them. 11It even challenged the Commander of heaven's army by canceling the daily sacrifices offered to him and by destroying his Temple. 12The army of heaven was restrained from responding to this rebellion. So the daily sacrifice was halted, and truth was overthrown. The horn succeeded in everything it did.*

13Then I heard two holy ones talking to each other. One of them asked, "How long will the events of this vision last? How long will the rebellion that causes desecration stop the daily sacrifices? How long will the Temple and heaven's army be trampled on?"

14The other replied, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the Temple will be made right again."

GABRIEL EXPLAINS THE VISION

15As I, Daniel, was trying to understand the meaning of this vision, someone who looked like a man stood in front of me. 16And I heard a human voice calling out from the Ulai River, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of his vision."

17As Gabriel approached the place where I was standing, I became so terrified that I fell with my face to the ground. "Son of man," he said, "you must understand that the events you have seen in your vision relate to the time of the end."

18While he was speaking, I fainted and lay there with my face to the ground. But Gabriel roused me with a touch and helped me to my feet.

19Then he said, "I am here to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath. What you have seen pertains to the very end of time. 20The two-horned ram represents the kings of Media and Persia. 21The shaggy male goat represents the king of Greece,* and the large horn between his eyes represents the first king of the Greek

Empire. 22The four prominent horns that replaced the one large
horn show that the Greek Empire will break into four kingdoms, but
none as great as the first.

23"At the end of their rule, when their sin is at its height, a fierce
king, a master of intrigue, will rise to power. 24He will become very
strong, but not by his own power. He will cause a shocking amount
of destruction and succeed in everything he does. He will destroy
powerful leaders and devastate the holy people. 25He will be a
master of deception and will become arrogant; he will destroy many
without warning. He will even take on the Prince of princes in
battle, but he will be broken, though not by human power.

26"This vision about the 2,300 evenings and mornings* is true. But
none of these things will happen for a long time, so keep this vision
a secret."

27Then I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for several days.
Afterward I got up and performed my duties for the king, but I was
greatly troubled by the vision and could not understand it.

Daniel 9

DANIEL'S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE

1It was the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, the son of
Ahasuerus, who became king of the Babylonians.*2During the first
year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from reading the word of the
LORD, as revealed to Jeremiah the prophet, that Jerusalem must lie
desolate for seventy years.*3So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded
with him in prayer and fasting. I also wore rough burlap and
sprinkled myself with ashes.

4I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

“O Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill your
covenant and keep your promises of unfailing love to those who
love you and obey your commands. 5But we have sinned and done
wrong. We have rebelled against you and scorned your commands
and regulations. 6We have refused to listen to your servants the
prophets, who spoke on your authority to our kings and princes and
ancestors and to all the people of the land.

7“Lord, you are in the right; but as you see, our faces are covered
with shame. This is true of all of us, including the people of Judah
and Jerusalem and all Israel, scattered near and far, wherever you
have driven us because of our disloyalty to you. 8O LORD, we and
our kings, princes, and ancestors are covered with shame because
we have sinned against you. 9But the Lord our God is merciful and
forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him. 10We have not
obeyed the LORD our God, for we have not followed the
instructions he gave us through his servants the prophets. 11All
Israel has disobeyed your instruction and turned away, refusing to
listen to your voice.
“So now the solemn curses and judgments written in the Law of
Moses, the servant of God, have been poured down on us because of
our sin. 12You have kept your word and done to us and our rulers
exactly as you warned. Never has there been such a disaster as
happened in Jerusalem. 13Every curse written against us in the Law
of Moses has come true. Yet we have refused to seek mercy from
the LORD our God by turning from our sins and recognizing his
truth. 14Therefore, the LORD has brought upon us the disaster he
prepared. The LORD our God was right to do all of these things, for
we did not obey him.

15“O Lord our God, you brought lasting honor to your name by
rescuing your people from Egypt in a great display of power. But we
have sinned and are full of wickedness. 16In view of all your faithful
mercies, Lord, please turn your furious anger away from your city
Jerusalem, your holy mountain. All the neighboring nations mock
Jerusalem and your people because of our sins and the sins of our
ancestors.

17“O our God, hear your servant’s prayer! Listen as I plead. For your
own sake, Lord, smile again on your desolate sanctuary.

18“O my God, lean down and listen to me. Open your eyes and see
our despair. See how your city—the city that bears your name—lies
in ruins. We make this plea, not because we deserve help, but
because of your mercy.

19“O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive. O Lord, listen and act! For your
own sake, do not delay, O my God, for your people and your city
bear your name.”

THE MESSIAH DANIEL 9:20-27

GABRIEL’S MESSAGE ABOUT THE ANOINTED ONE

20I went on praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people,
pleading with the LORD my God for Jerusalem, his holy mountain.
21As I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision,
came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22He
explained to me, “Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and
understanding. 23The moment you began praying, a command was
given. And now I am here to tell you what it was, for you are very
precious to God. Listen carefully so that you can understand the
meaning of your vision.

24“A period of seventy sets of seven* has been decreed for your
people and your holy city to finish their rebellion, to put an end to
their sin, to atone for their guilt, to bring in everlasting
righteousness, to confirm the prophetic vision, and to anoint the

Most Holy Place.*25Now listen and understand! Seven sets of seven
plus sixty-two sets of seven* will pass from the time the command is
given to rebuild Jerusalem until a ruler—the Anointed One*—
comes. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defenses,*
despite the perilous times.

26"After this period of sixty-two sets of seven,* the Anointed One
will be killed, appearing to have accomplished nothing, and a ruler
will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple. The
end will come with a flood, and war and its miseries are decreed
from that time to the very end. 27The ruler will make a treaty with
the people for a period of one set of seven,* but after half this time,
he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And as a climax to
all his terrible deeds,* he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes
desecration,* until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured
out on him."

VISIONS DANIEL 10–12

Daniel 10

DANIEL'S VISION OF A MESSENGER

1In the third year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia,* Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) had another vision. He understood that the vision concerned events certain to happen in the future—times of war and great hardship.

2When this vision came to me, I, Daniel, had been in mourning for three whole weeks. 3All that time I had eaten no rich food. No meat or wine crossed my lips, and I used no fragrant lotions until those three weeks had passed.

4On April 23,* as I was standing on the bank of the great Tigris River, 5I looked up and saw a man dressed in linen clothing, with a belt of pure gold around his waist. 6His body looked like a precious gem. His face flashed like lightning, and his eyes flamed like torches. His arms and feet shone like polished bronze, and his voice roared like a vast multitude of people.

7Only I, Daniel, saw this vision. The men with me saw nothing, but they were suddenly terrified and ran away to hide. 8So I was left there all alone to see this amazing vision. My strength left me, my face grew deathly pale, and I felt very weak. 9Then I heard the man speak, and when I heard the sound of his voice, I fainted and lay there with my face to the ground.

10Just then a hand touched me and lifted me, still trembling, to my
hands and knees. 11And the man said to me, “Daniel, you are very
precious to God, so listen carefully to what I have to say to you.
Stand up, for I have been sent to you.” When he said this to me, I
stood up, still trembling.

12Then he said, “Don’t be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you
began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your
God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer
to your prayer. 13But for twenty-one days the spirit prince* of the
kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the
archangels,* came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit
prince of the kingdom of Persia.*14Now I am here to explain what
will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a
time yet to come.”

15While he was speaking to me, I looked down at the ground,
unable to say a word. 16Then the one who looked like a man*
touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said
to the one standing in front of me, “I am filled with anguish because
of the vision I have seen, my lord, and I am very weak. 17How can
someone like me, your servant, talk to you, my lord? My strength is
gone, and I can hardly breathe.”

18Then the one who looked like a man touched me again, and I felt
my strength returning. 19“Don’t be afraid,” he said, “for you are
very precious to God. Peace! Be encouraged! Be strong!”

As he spoke these words to me, I suddenly felt stronger and said to
him, “Please speak to me, my lord, for you have strengthened me.”

20He replied, “Do you know why I have come? Soon I must return
to fight against the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia, and after
that the spirit prince of the kingdom of Greece* will come.
21Meanwhile, I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth.
(No one helps me against these spirit princes except Michael, your

spirit prince.*

11:1I have been standing beside Michael* to support and strengthen
him since the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede.)*

SKIP TO 12:1

Daniel 11

KINGS OF THE SOUTH AND NORTH

2"Now then, I will reveal the truth to you. Three more Persian kings
will reign, to be succeeded by a fourth, far richer than the others.
He will use his wealth to stir up everyone to fight against the
kingdom of Greece.*

3"Then a mighty king will rise to power who will rule with great
authority and accomplish everything he sets out to do. 4But at the
height of his power, his kingdom will be broken apart and divided
into four parts. It will not be ruled by the king's descendants, nor
will the kingdom hold the authority it once had. For his empire will
be uprooted and given to others.

5"The king of the south will increase in power, but one of his own
officials will become more powerful than he and will rule his
kingdom with great strength.

6"Some years later an alliance will be formed between the king of
the north and the king of the south. The daughter of the king of the
south will be given in marriage to the king of the north to secure
the alliance, but she will lose her influence over him, and so will
her father. She will be abandoned along with her supporters. 7But
when one of her relatives* becomes king of the south, he will raise
an army and enter the fortress of the king of the north and defeat
him. 8When he returns to Egypt, he will carry back their idols with

him, along with priceless articles of gold and silver. For some years afterward he will leave the king of the north alone.

9“Later the king of the north will invade the realm of the king of the south but will soon return to his own land. 10However, the sons of the king of the north will assemble a mighty army that will advance like a flood and carry the battle as far as the enemy’s fortress.

11“Then, in a rage, the king of the south will rally against the vast forces assembled by the king of the north and will defeat them. 12After the enemy army is swept away, the king of the south will be filled with pride and will execute many thousands of his enemies. But his success will be short lived.

13“A few years later the king of the north will return with a fully equipped army far greater than before. 14At that time there will be a general uprising against the king of the south. Violent men among your own people will join them in fulfillment of this vision, but they will not succeed. 15Then the king of the north will come and lay siege to a fortified city and capture it. The best troops of the south will not be able to stand in the face of the onslaught.

16“The king of the north will march onward unopposed; none will be able to stop him. He will pause in the glorious land of Israel,* intent on destroying it. 17He will make plans to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will form an alliance with the king of the south. He will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom from within, but his plan will fail.

18“After this, he will turn his attention to the coastland and conquer many cities. But a commander from another land will put an end to his insolence and cause him to retreat in shame. 19He will take refuge in his own fortresses but will stumble and fall and be seen no more.

20“His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal
splendor. But after a very brief reign, he will die, though not from
anger or in battle.

21“The next to come to power will be a despicable man who is not
in line for royal succession. He will slip in when least expected and
take over the kingdom by flattery and intrigue. 22Before him great
armies will be swept away, including a covenant prince. 23With
deceitful promises, he will make various alliances. He will become
strong despite having only a handful of followers. 24Without
warning he will enter the richest areas of the land. Then he will
distribute among his followers the plunder and wealth of the rich—
something his predecessors had never done. He will plot the
overthrow of strongholds, but this will last for only a short while.

25“Then he will stir up his courage and raise a great army against
the king of the south. The king of the south will go to battle with a
mighty army, but to no avail, for there will be plots against him.
26His own household will cause his downfall. His army will be
swept away, and many will be killed. 27Seeking nothing but each
other’s harm, these kings will plot against each other at the
conference table, attempting to deceive each other. But it will make
no difference, for the end will come at the appointed time.

28“The king of the north will then return home with great riches. On
the way he will set himself against the people of the holy covenant,
doing much damage before continuing his journey.

29“Then at the appointed time he will once again invade the south,
but this time the result will be different. 30For warships from
western coastlands* will scare him off, and he will withdraw and
return home. But he will vent his anger against the people of the
holy covenant and reward those who forsake the covenant.

31“His army will take over the Temple fortress, pollute the
sanctuary, put a stop to the daily sacrifices, and set up the

sacrilegious object that causes desecration.* 32He will flatter and win
over those who have violated the covenant. But the people who
know their God will be strong and will resist him.

33"Wise leaders will give instruction to many, but these teachers
will die by fire and sword, or they will be jailed and robbed.
34During these persecutions, little help will arrive, and many who
join them will not be sincere. 35And some of the wise will fall victim
to persecution. In this way, they will be refined and cleansed and
made pure until the time of the end, for the appointed time is still
to come.

36"The king will do as he pleases, exalting himself and claiming to
be greater than every god, even blaspheming the God of gods. He
will succeed, but only until the time of wrath is completed. For
what has been determined will surely take place. 37He will have no
respect for the gods of his ancestors, or for the god loved by
women, or for any other god, for he will boast that he is greater
than them all. 38Instead of these, he will worship the god of
fortresses—a god his ancestors never knew—and lavish on him
gold, silver, precious stones, and expensive gifts. 39Claiming this
foreign god's help, he will attack the strongest fortresses. He will
honor those who submit to him, appointing them to positions of
authority and dividing the land among them as their reward.*

40"Then at the time of the end, the king of the south will attack the
king of the north. The king of the north will storm out with
chariots, charioteers, and a vast navy. He will invade various lands
and sweep through them like a flood. 41He will enter the glorious
land of Israel,* and many nations will fall, but Moab, Edom, and the
best part of Ammon will escape. 42He will conquer many countries,
and even Egypt will not escape. 43He will gain control over the gold,
silver, and treasures of Egypt, and the Libyans and Ethiopians* will
be his servants.

44"But then news from the east and the north will alarm him, and
he will set out in great anger to destroy and obliterate many. 45He

will stop between the glorious holy mountain and the sea and will pitch his royal tents. But while he is there, his time will suddenly run out, and no one will help him.

Daniel 12

THE TIME OF THE END

1"At that time Michael, the archangel* who stands guard over your nation, will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued. 2Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace. 3Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever. 4But you, Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal up the book until the time of the end, when many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase."

5Then I, Daniel, looked and saw two others standing on opposite banks of the river. 6One of them asked the man dressed in linen, who was now standing above the river, "How long will it be until these shocking events are over?"

7The man dressed in linen, who was standing above the river, raised both his hands toward heaven and took a solemn oath by the One who lives forever, saying, "It will go on for a time, times, and half a time. When the shattering of the holy people has finally come to an end, all these things will have happened."

8I heard what he said, but I did not understand what he meant. So I asked, "How will all this finally end, my lord?"

9But he said, "Go now, Daniel, for what I have said is kept secret and sealed until the time of the end. 10Many will be purified,

cleansed, and refined by these trials. But the wicked will continue in their wickedness, and none of them will understand. Only those who are wise will know what it means.

11“From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the sacrilegious object that causes desecration* is set up to be worshiped, there will be 1,290 days. 12And blessed are those who wait and remain until the end of the 1,335 days!

13“As for you, go your way until the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days, you will rise again to receive the inheritance set aside for you.”

WELCOME TO

HOSEA

Hosea lives during the final years of the northern kingdom of Israel. He preaches in Israel until its capital city, Samaria, falls to the Assyrians. Hosea is appalled by the sins of the people and their blatant worship of idols. He warns the people that God will judge them for their sinful ways by sending the Assyrians to destroy their nation.

Hosea's unhappy home life symbolically shows how broken the Israelites' relationship with God is. Just as Hosea's wife leaves home to be a prostitute, so Israel has left the Lord to seek after false gods. And just as Hosea continues to love his wife and finally brings her home again, so God continues to love his people and promises to restore them to his favor as well.

0 STOPS

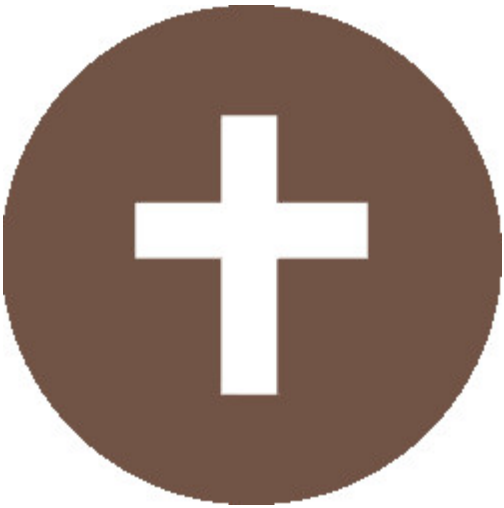
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You will fly over Hosea on your way to the book of one of his fellow prophets. Your next stop is at Jonah 1:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You will read about how God commands Hosea to marry a promiscuous woman as a vivid way of illustrating the current situation between God and Israel. Your next stop is at Hosea 1:1.

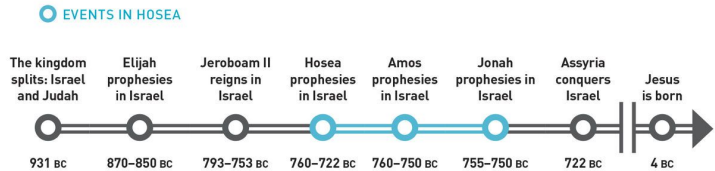
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The readings in Hosea will help you understand God's great love for Israel, even though the people are unfaithful to him and worship other gods. Your next stop is at Hosea 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN HOSEA

You will catch a glimpse of Jesus in the loving and faithful prophet Hosea, who continued to love his wife even when she was unfaithful. When Hosea went to buy back his adulterous wife, he paid "fifteen pieces of silver and five bushels of barley and a measure of wine" (3:2). But Jesus paid everything to buy back the people whom God loved. This is what God meant when he told Hosea, "I will show love to those I called 'Not loved'" (2:23). When we sin and turn our backs on him, Jesus finds a way to restore us and renew our relationship with him.



Hosea 1

1The LORD gave this message to Hosea son of Beeri during the
years when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of
Judah, and Jeroboam son of Jehoash* was king of Israel.

HOSEA'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

2When the LORD first began speaking to Israel through Hosea, he
said to him, "Go and marry a prostitute,* so that some of her
children will be conceived in prostitution. This will illustrate how
Israel has acted like a prostitute by turning against the LORD and

worshiping other gods.”

3So Hosea married Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she became pregnant and gave Hosea a son. 4And the LORD said, “Name the child Jezreel, for I am about to punish King Jehu’s dynasty to avenge the murders he committed at Jezreel. In fact, I will bring an end to Israel’s independence. 5I will break its military power in the Jezreel Valley.”

6Soon Gomer became pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. And the LORD said to Hosea, “Name your daughter Lo-ruhamah —‘Not loved’—for I will no longer show love to the people of Israel or forgive them. 7But I will show love to the people of Judah. I will free them from their enemies—not with weapons and armies or horses and charioteers, but by my power as the LORD their God.”

8After Gomer had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she again became pregnant and gave birth to a second son. 9And the LORD said, “Name him Lo-ammi—‘Not my people’—for Israel is not my people, and I am not their God.

10*“Yet the time will come when Israel’s people will be like the sands of the seashore—too many to count! Then, at the place where they were told, ‘You are not my people,’ it will be said, ‘You are children of the living God.’ 11Then the people of Judah and Israel will unite together. They will choose one leader for themselves, and they will return from exile together. What a day that will be—the day of Jezreel*—when God will again plant his people in his land.

2:1*“In that day you will call your brothers Ammi—‘My people.’ And you will call your sisters Ruhamah—‘The ones I love.’*

Hosea 2

CHARGES AGAINST AN UNFAITHFUL WIFE

2“But now bring charges against Israel—your mother— for she is no longer my wife,
and I am no longer her husband.
Tell her to remove the prostitute’s makeup from her face
and the clothing that exposes her breasts.

3Otherwise, I will strip her as naked as she was on the day she was born.
I will leave her to die of thirst,
as in a dry and barren wilderness.

4And I will not love her children, for they were conceived in prostitution.

5Their mother is a shameless prostitute and became pregnant in a shameful way.
She said, ‘I’ll run after other lovers
and sell myself to them for food and water,
for clothing of wool and linen,
and for olive oil and drinks.’

6“For this reason I will fence her in with thornbushes.
I will block her path with a wall
to make her lose her way.

7When she runs after her lovers, she won’t be able to catch them.
She will search for them
but not find them.
Then she will think,

‘I might as well return to my husband,
for I was better off with him than I am now.’

8She doesn’t realize it was I who gave her everything she has— the
grain, the new wine, the olive oil;
I even gave her silver and gold.
But she gave all my gifts to Baal.

9“But now I will take back the ripened grain and new wine I
generously provided each harvest season.
I will take away the wool and linen clothing
I gave her to cover her nakedness.

10I will strip her naked in public, while all her lovers look on.
No one will be able
to rescue her from my hands.

11I will put an end to her annual festivals, her new moon
celebrations, and her Sabbath days— all her appointed festivals.

12I will destroy her grapevines and fig trees, things she claims her
lovers gave her.
I will let them grow into tangled thickets,
where only wild animals will eat the fruit.

13I will punish her for all those times when she burned incense to
her images of Baal,
when she put on her earrings and jewels
and went out to look for her lovers
but forgot all about me,”
says the LORD.

THE LORD’S LOVE FOR UNFAITHFUL ISRAEL

14“But then I will win her back once again.

I will lead her into the desert
and speak tenderly to her there.

15I will return her vineyards to her and transform the Valley of
Trouble* into a gateway of hope.

She will give herself to me there,
as she did long ago when she was young,
when I freed her from her captivity in Egypt.

16When that day comes," says the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband'
instead of 'my master.'*

17O Israel, I will wipe the many names of Baal from your lips, and you will never mention them again.

18On that day I will make a covenant with all the wild animals and the birds of the sky
and the animals that scurry along the ground
so they will not harm you.
I will remove all weapons of war from the land,
all swords and bows,
so you can live unafraid
in peace and safety.

19I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice,
unfailing love and compassion.

20I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me as the LORD.

21"In that day, I will answer,"
says the LORD.
"I will answer the sky as it pleads for clouds.
And the sky will answer the earth with rain.

22Then the earth will answer the thirsty cries of the grain, the grapevines, and the olive trees.
And they in turn will answer,
'Jezreel'—'God plants!'

23At that time I will plant a crop of Israelites and raise them for myself.

I will show love
to those I called ‘Not loved.’*
And to those I called ‘Not my people,’*
I will say, ‘Now you are my people.’
And they will reply, ‘You are our God!’”

Hosea 3

HOSEA’S WIFE IS REDEEMED

1Then the LORD said to me, “Go and love your wife again, even
though she* commits adultery with another lover. This will
illustrate that the LORD still loves Israel, even though the people
have turned to other gods and love to worship them.*”

2So I bought her back for fifteen pieces of silver* and five bushels of
barley and a measure of wine.*3Then I said to her, “You must live in
my house for many days and stop your prostitution. During this
time, you will not have sexual relations with anyone, not even with
me.*”

4This shows that Israel will go a long time without a king or prince,
and without sacrifices, sacred pillars, priests,* or even idols! 5But
afterward the people will return and devote themselves to the LORD
their God and to David’s descendant, their king.* In the last days,
they will tremble in awe of the LORD and of his goodness.

Hosea 4

THE LORD'S CASE AGAINST ISRAEL

1 Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel!
The LORD has brought charges against you, saying: "There is no
faithfulness, no kindness,
no knowledge of God in your land.

2 You make vows and break them; you kill and steal and commit
adultery.
There is violence everywhere—
one murder after another.

3 That is why your land is in mourning, and everyone is wasting
away.
Even the wild animals, the birds of the sky,
and the fish of the sea are disappearing.

4 "Don't point your finger at someone else and try to pass the blame!
My complaint, you priests,
is with you.*

5 So you will stumble in broad daylight, and your false prophets will
fall with you in the night.
And I will destroy Israel, your mother.

6 My people are being destroyed because they don't know me.
Since you priests refuse to know me,
I refuse to recognize you as my priests.
Since you have forgotten the laws of your God,
I will forget to bless your children.

7 The more priests there are, the more they sin against me.
They have exchanged the glory of God
for the shame of idols.*

8 "When the people bring their sin offerings, the priests get fed.
So the priests are glad when the people sin!

9‘And what the priests do, the people also do.’
So now I will punish both priests and people
for their wicked deeds.

10They will eat and still be hungry.
They will play the prostitute and gain nothing from it,
for they have deserted the LORD

11to worship other gods.
“Wine has robbed my people
of their understanding.

12They ask a piece of wood for advice!
They think a stick can tell them the future!
Longing after idols
has made them foolish.
They have played the prostitute,
serving other gods and deserting their God.

13They offer sacrifices to idols on the mountaintops.
They go up into the hills to burn incense
in the pleasant shade of oaks, poplars, and terebinth trees.
“That is why your daughters turn to prostitution,
and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.

14But why should I punish them for their prostitution and adultery?
For your men are doing the same thing,
sinning with whores and shrine prostitutes.
O foolish people! You refuse to understand,
so you will be destroyed.

15“Though you, Israel, are a prostitute, may Judah not be guilty of such things.
Do not join the false worship at Gilgal or Beth-aven,*
and do not take oaths there in the LORD’s name.

16Israel is stubborn, like a stubborn heifer.
So should the LORD feed her
like a lamb in a lush pasture?

17Leave Israel* alone, because she is married to idolatry.

18When the rulers of Israel finish their drinking, off they go to find some prostitutes.
They love shame more than honor.*

19So a mighty wind will sweep them away.
Their sacrifices to idols will bring them shame.

Hosea 5

THE FAILURE OF ISRAEL'S LEADERS

1"Hear this, you priests.
Pay attention, you leaders of Israel.
Listen, you members of the royal family.
Judgment has been handed down against you.
For you have led the people into a snare
by worshiping the idols at Mizpah and Tabor.

2You have dug a deep pit to trap them at Acacia Grove.*
But I will settle with you for what you have done.

3I know what you are like, O Ephraim.
You cannot hide yourself from me, O Israel.
You have left me as a prostitute leaves her husband;
you are utterly defiled.

4Your deeds won't let you return to your God.
You are a prostitute through and through,
and you do not know the LORD.

5"The arrogance of Israel testifies against her; Israel and Ephraim will stumble under their load of guilt.
Judah, too, will fall with them.

6When they come with their flocks and herds to offer sacrifices to the LORD,
they will not find him,

because he has withdrawn from them.

7They have betrayed the honor of the LORD, bearing children that
are not his.
Now their false religion will devour them
along with their wealth.*

8“Sound the alarm in Gibeah!
Blow the trumpet in Ramah!
Raise the battle cry in Beth-aven*!
Lead on into battle, O warriors of Benjamin!

9One thing is certain, Israel*: On your day of punishment,
you will become a heap of rubble.

10“The leaders of Judah have become like thieves.*
So I will pour my anger on them like a waterfall.

11The people of Israel will be crushed and broken by my judgment
because they are determined to worship idols.*

12I will destroy Israel as a moth consumes wool.
I will make Judah as weak as rotten wood.

13“When Israel and Judah saw how sick they were, Israel turned to
Assyria— to the great king there—
but he could neither help nor cure them.

14I will be like a lion to Israel, like a strong young lion to Judah.
I will tear them to pieces!
I will carry them off,
and no one will be left to rescue them.

15Then I will return to my place until they admit their guilt and
turn to me.

For as soon as trouble comes,
they will earnestly search for me.”

Hosea 6

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

1“Come, let us return to the LORD.
He has torn us to pieces;
now he will heal us.
He has injured us;
now he will bandage our wounds.

2In just a short time he will restore us, so that we may live in his presence.

3Oh, that we might know the LORD!
Let us press on to know him.
He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn
or the coming of rains in early spring.”

4“O Israel* and Judah, what should I do with you?” asks the LORD.
“For your love vanishes like the morning mist
and disappears like dew in the sunlight.

5I sent my prophets to cut you to pieces— to slaughter you with my words,
with judgments as inescapable as light.

6I want you to show love,*
not offer sacrifices.
I want you to know me*
more than I want burnt offerings.

7But like Adam,* you broke my covenant and betrayed my trust.

8“Gilead is a city of sinners, tracked with footprints of blood.

9Priests form bands of robbers, waiting in ambush for their victims.
They murder travelers along the road to Shechem
and practice every kind of sin.

10Yes, I have seen something horrible in Ephraim and Israel: My
people are defiled by prostituting themselves with other gods!

11"O Judah, a harvest of punishment is also waiting for you, though
I wanted to restore the fortunes of my people.

Hosea 7

ISRAEL'S LOVE FOR WICKEDNESS

1"I want to heal Israel, but its* sins are too great.
Samaria is filled with liars.
Thieves are on the inside
and bandits on the outside!

2Its people don't realize that I am watching them.
Their sinful deeds are all around them,
and I see them all.

3"The people entertain the king with their wickedness, and the
princes laugh at their lies.

4They are all adulterers, always aflame with lust.
They are like an oven that is kept hot
while the baker is kneading the dough.

5On royal holidays, the princes get drunk with wine, carousing with
those who mock them.

6Their hearts are like an oven blazing with intrigue.
Their plot smolders* through the night, and in the morning it breaks
out like a raging fire.

7Burning like an oven, they consume their leaders.
They kill their kings one after another,
and no one cries to me for help.

8“The people of Israel mingle with godless foreigners, making
themselves as worthless as a half-baked cake!

9Worshiping foreign gods has sapped their strength, but they don’t
even know it.
Their hair is gray,
but they don’t realize they’re old and weak.

10Their arrogance testifies against them, yet they don’t return to the
LORD their God
or even try to find him.

11“The people of Israel have become like silly, witless doves, first
calling to Egypt, then flying to Assyria for help.

12But as they fly about, I will throw my net over them
and bring them down like a bird from the sky.
I will punish them for all the evil they do.*

13“What sorrow awaits those who have deserted me!
Let them die, for they have rebelled against me.
I wanted to redeem them,
but they have told lies about me.

14They do not cry out to me with sincere hearts.
Instead, they sit on their couches and wail.
They cut themselves,* begging foreign gods for grain and new wine,
and they turn away from me.

15I trained them and made them strong, yet now they plot evil
against me.

16They look everywhere except to the Most High.
They are as useless as a crooked bow.
Their leaders will be killed by their enemies
because of their insolence toward me.
Then the people of Egypt
will laugh at them.

Hosea 8

ISRAEL HARVESTS THE WHIRLWIND

1“Sound the alarm!
The enemy descends like an eagle on the people of the LORD, for they have broken my covenant
and revolted against my law.

2Now Israel pleads with me, ‘Help us, for you are our God!’

3But it is too late.
The people of Israel have rejected what is good,
and now their enemies will chase after them.

4The people have appointed kings without my consent, and princes without my approval.
By making idols for themselves from their silver and gold,
they have brought about their own destruction.

5“O Samaria, I reject this calf— this idol you have made.
My fury burns against you.
How long will you be incapable of innocence?

6This calf you worship, O Israel, was crafted by your own hands!
It is not God!
Therefore, it must be smashed to bits.

7“They have planted the wind and will harvest the whirlwind.
The stalks of grain wither
and produce nothing to eat.
And even if there is any grain,
foreigners will eat it.

8The people of Israel have been swallowed up; they lie among the nations like an old discarded pot.

9Like a wild donkey looking for a mate, they have gone up to Assyria.
The people of Israel* have sold themselves— sold themselves to many lovers.

10But though they have sold themselves to many allies, I will now
gather them together for judgment.
Then they will writhe
under the burden of the great king.

11“Israel has built many altars to take away sin, but these very
altars became places for sinning!

12Even though I gave them all my laws, they act as if those laws
don’t apply to them.

13The people love to offer sacrifices to me, feasting on the meat,
but I do not accept their sacrifices.
I will hold my people accountable for their sins,
and I will punish them.
They will return to Egypt.

14Israel has forgotten its Maker and built great palaces, and Judah
has fortified its cities.
Therefore, I will send down fire on their cities
and will burn up their fortresses.”

Hosea 9

HOSEA ANNOUNCES ISRAEL’S PUNISHMENT

1O people of Israel,
do not rejoice as other nations do.
For you have been unfaithful to your God,
hiring yourselves out like prostitutes,
worshiping other gods on every threshing floor.

2So now your harvests will be too small to feed you.
There will be no grapes for making new wine.

3You may no longer stay here in the LORD’s land.
Instead, you will return to Egypt,
and in Assyria you will eat food
that is ceremonially unclean.

4There you will make no offerings of wine to the LORD.
None of your sacrifices there will please him.
They will be unclean, like food touched by a person in mourning.
All who present such sacrifices will be defiled.
They may eat this food themselves,
but they may not offer it to the LORD.

5What then will you do on festival days?
How will you observe the LORD's festivals?

6Even if you escape destruction from Assyria, Egypt will conquer you, and Memphis* will bury you.
Nettles will take over your treasures of silver;
thistles will invade your ruined homes.

7The time of Israel's punishment has come; the day of payment is here.
Soon Israel will know this all too well.
Because of your great sin and hostility,
you say, "The prophets are crazy
and the inspired men are fools!"

8The prophet is a watchman over Israel* for my God, yet traps are laid for him wherever he goes.
He faces hostility even in the house of God.

9The things my people do are as depraved as what they did in Gibeah long ago.
God will not forget.
He will surely punish them for their sins.

10The LORD says, "O Israel, when I first found you, it was like finding fresh grapes in the desert.
When I saw your ancestors,
it was like seeing the first ripe figs of the season.
But then they deserted me for Baal-peor,
giving themselves to that shameful idol.
Soon they became vile,
as vile as the god they worshiped.

11The glory of Israel will fly away like a bird, for your children will not be born
or grow in the womb
or even be conceived.

12Even if you do have children who grow up, I will take them from you.
It will be a terrible day when I turn away
and leave you alone.

13I have watched Israel become as beautiful as Tyre.
But now Israel will bring out her children for slaughter.”

14O LORD, what should I request for your people?
I will ask for wombs that don’t give birth
and breasts that give no milk.

15The LORD says, “All their wickedness began at Gilgal; there I began to hate them.
I will drive them from my land
because of their evil actions.
I will love them no more
because all their leaders are rebels.

16The people of Israel are struck down.
Their roots are dried up,
and they will bear no more fruit.
And if they give birth,
I will slaughter their beloved children.”

17My God will reject the people of Israel because they will not listen or obey.
They will be wanderers,
homeless among the nations.

Hosea 10

THE LORD’S JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL

1How prosperous Israel is— a luxuriant vine loaded with fruit.

But the richer the people get,
the more pagan altars they build.
The more bountiful their harvests,
the more beautiful their sacred pillars.

2The hearts of the people are fickle; they are guilty and must be punished.
The LORD will break down their altars
and smash their sacred pillars.

3Then they will say, “We have no king because we didn’t fear the LORD.
But even if we had a king,
what could he do for us anyway?”

4They spout empty words and make covenants they don’t intend to keep.
So injustice springs up among them
like poisonous weeds in a farmer’s field.

5The people of Samaria tremble in fear for their calf idol at Beth-aven,*
and they mourn for it.
Though its priests rejoice over it,
its glory will be stripped away.*

6This idol will be carted away to Assyria, a gift to the great king there.
Ephraim will be ridiculed and Israel will be shamed,
because its people have trusted in this idol.

7Samaria and its king will be cut off; they will float away like driftwood on an ocean wave.

8And the pagan shrines of Aven,* the place of Israel’s sin, will crumble.
Thorns and thistles will grow up around their altars.
They will beg the mountains, “Bury us!”
and plead with the hills, “Fall on us!”

9The LORD says, “O Israel, ever since Gibeah, there has been only sin and more sin!
You have made no progress whatsoever.
Was it not right that the wicked men of Gibeah were attacked?

10Now whenever it fits my plan, I will attack you, too.
I will call out the armies of the nations
to punish you for your multiplied sins.

11“Israel* is like a trained heifer treading out the grain— an easy job she loves.
But I will put a heavy yoke on her tender neck.
I will force Judah to pull the plow
and Israel* to break up the hard ground.

12I said, ‘Plant the good seeds of righteousness, and you will harvest a crop of love.
Plow up the hard ground of your hearts,
for now is the time to seek the LORD,
that he may come
and shower righteousness upon you.’

13“But you have cultivated wickedness and harvested a thriving crop of sins.
You have eaten the fruit of lies—
trusting in your military might,
believing that great armies
could make your nation safe.

14Now the terrors of war will rise among your people.
All your fortifications will fall,
just as when Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel.
Even mothers and children
were dashed to death there.

15You will share that fate, Bethel, because of your great wickedness.
When the day of judgment dawns,
the king of Israel will be completely destroyed.

Hosea 11

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

1"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called my son out of
Egypt.

2But the more I called to him, the farther he moved from me,*
offering sacrifices to the images of Baal
and burning incense to idols.

3I myself taught Israel* how to walk, leading him along by the hand.
But he doesn't know or even care
that it was I who took care of him.

4I led Israel along
with my ropes of kindness and love.
I lifted the yoke from his neck,
and I myself stooped to feed him.

5"But since my people refuse to return to me, they will return to
Egypt

and will be forced to serve Assyria.

6War will swirl through their cities; their enemies will crash
through their gates.
They will destroy them,
trapping them in their own evil plans.

7For my people are determined to desert me.
They call me the Most High,
but they don't truly honor me.

ADMAH AND ZEBOIIM

8"Oh, how can I give you up, Israel?
How can I let you go?
How can I destroy you like Admah
or demolish you like Zeboiim?
My heart is torn within me,
and my compassion overflows.

9No, I will not unleash my fierce anger.
I will not completely destroy Israel,
for I am God and not a mere mortal.
I am the Holy One living among you,
and I will not come to destroy.

10For someday the people will follow me.
I, the LORD, will roar like a lion.
And when I roar,
my people will return trembling from the west.

11Like a flock of birds, they will come from Egypt.
Trembling like doves, they will return from Assyria.
And I will bring them home again,"
says the LORD.

CHARGES AGAINST ISRAEL AND JUDAH

12*Israel surrounds me with lies and deceit, but Judah still obeys God

and is faithful to the Holy One.*

Hosea 12

1*The people of Israel* feed on the wind; they chase after the east wind all day long.
They pile up lies and violence;
they are making an alliance with Assyria
while sending olive oil to buy support from Egypt.

2Now the LORD is bringing charges against Judah.
He is about to punish Jacob* for all his deceitful ways, and pay him back for all he has done.

3Even in the womb,
Jacob struggled with his brother;
when he became a man,
he even fought with God.

4Yes, he wrestled with the angel and won.
He wept and pleaded for a blessing from him.
There at Bethel he met God face to face,
and God spoke to him*—

5the LORD God of Heaven's Armies, the LORD is his name!

6So now, come back to your God.
Act with love and justice,
and always depend on him.

7But no, the people are like crafty merchants selling from dishonest scales— they love to cheat.

8Israel boasts, “I am rich!
I’ve made a fortune all by myself!
No one has caught me cheating!
My record is spotless!”

9“But I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from slavery in Egypt.
And I will make you live in tents again,
as you do each year at the Festival of Shelters.*

10I sent my prophets to warn you with many visions and parables.”

11But the people of Gilead are worthless because of their idol worship.
And in Gilgal, too, they sacrifice bulls;
their altars are lined up like the heaps of stone
along the edges of a plowed field.

12Jacob fled to the land of Aram, and there he* earned a wife by tending sheep.

13Then by a prophet the LORD brought Jacob’s descendants* out of Egypt; and by that prophet
they were protected.

14But the people of Israel have bitterly provoked the LORD,
so their Lord will now sentence them to death
in payment for their sins.

Hosea 13

THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST ISRAEL

1When the tribe of Ephraim spoke, the people shook with fear,
for that tribe was important in Israel.
But the people of Ephraim sinned by worshiping Baal
and thus sealed their destruction.

2Now they continue to sin by making silver idols, images shaped
skillfully with human hands.
"Sacrifice to these," they cry,
"and kiss the calf idols!"

3Therefore, they will disappear like the morning mist, like dew in
the morning sun,
like chaff blown by the wind,
like smoke from a chimney.

4"I have been the LORD your God ever since I brought you out of
Egypt.
You must acknowledge no God but me,
for there is no other savior.

5I took care of you in the wilderness, in that dry and thirsty land.

6But when you had eaten and were satisfied, you became proud and
forgot me.

7So now I will attack you like a lion, like a leopard that lurks along
the road.

8Like a bear whose cubs have been taken away, I will tear out your
heart.
I will devour you like a hungry lioness
and mangle you like a wild animal.

9"You are about to be destroyed, O Israel— yes, by me, your only
helper.

10Now where is* your king?
Let him save you!

Where are all the leaders of the land,
the king and the officials you demanded of me?

11In my anger I gave you kings, and in my fury I took them away.

12“Ephraim’s guilt has been collected, and his sin has been stored up
for punishment.

13Pain has come to the people like the pain of childbirth,
but they are like a child
who resists being born.
The moment of birth has arrived,
but they stay in the womb!

14“Should I ransom them from the grave*?
Should I redeem them from death?
O death, bring on your terrors!
O grave, bring on your plagues!*
For I will not take pity on them.

15Ephraim was the most fruitful of all his brothers, but the east
wind—a blast from the LORD— will arise in the desert.
All their flowing springs will run dry,
and all their wells will disappear.
Every precious thing they own
will be plundered and carried away.

16*The people of Samaria must bear the consequences of their guilt
because they rebelled against their God.
They will be killed by an invading army,
their little ones dashed to death against the ground,
their pregnant women ripped open by swords.”

FORGIVENESS HOSEA 14:1-9

Hosea 14

HEALING FOR THE REPENTANT

1*Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for your sins have
brought you down.

2Bring your confessions, and return to the LORD.
Say to him,
“Forgive all our sins and graciously receive us,
so that we may offer you our praises.*

3Assyria cannot save us, nor can our warhorses.
Never again will we say to the idols we have made,
‘You are our gods.’
No, in you alone
do the orphans find mercy.”

4The LORD says, “Then I will heal you of your faithlessness;
my love will know no bounds,
for my anger will be gone forever.

5I will be to Israel like a refreshing dew from heaven.
Israel will blossom like the lily;
it will send roots deep into the soil
like the cedars in Lebanon.

6Its branches will spread out like beautiful olive trees, as fragrant as
the cedars of Lebanon.

7My people will again live under my shade.
They will flourish like grain and blossom like grapevines.
They will be as fragrant as the wines of Lebanon.

8“O Israel,* stay away from idols!
I am the one who answers your prayers and cares for you.
I am like a tree that is always green;
all your fruit comes from me.”

9Let those who are wise understand these things.
Let those with discernment listen carefully.
The paths of the LORD are true and right,
and righteous people live by walking in them.
But in those paths sinners stumble and fall.

Joel

Introduction 1 2 3

WELCOME TO

JOEL

The book of Joel records a devastating plague of locusts that consumes everything in the land of Judah. Joel, as God’s messenger, recognizes the locusts as God’s punishment on the people for their sinful lives. Just as locusts devour the land, so enemy armies will devour Jerusalem unless the nation repents of its sins. If the people respond, there will be a time of prosperity and a return of God’s favor. But the hope of restoration goes beyond their immediate future to a time when God will pour out his Holy Spirit upon all humanity (2:28-32), a time when the Lord will once again “live in Zion.”

0 STOPS

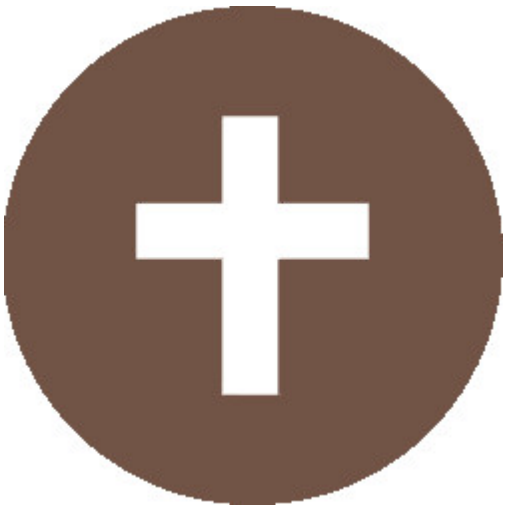
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over Joel, never touching down. You may want to take a glance at the section headings to get an idea of what the book of Joel contains. Your next stop is at Jonah 1:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: In your one stop you'll read about the famous plague of locusts that consumes all the land's crops. Your next stop is at Joel 1:1.

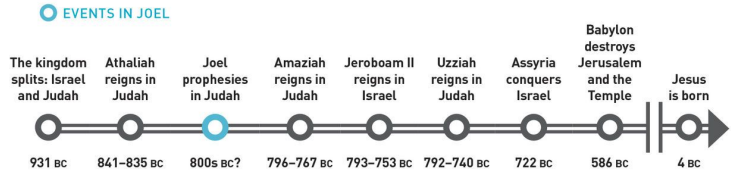
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your two readings will highlight the dual aspects of Joel's message: punishment and distress, followed by blessing and hope. Your next stop is at Joel 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN JOEL

Joel's message was one of judgment and salvation. We often see those two things as mutually exclusive, but that's not the case. Jesus also came with both judgment and salvation. Anyone who rejects Jesus will face judgment, "but everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved" (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21). One day in the future, Jesus will return to judge the world and set things right, bringing both justice and salvation. Joel called that day "the day of the LORD."



Joel 1

1The LORD gave this message to Joel son of Pethuel.

MOURNING OVER THE LOCUST PLAGUE

2Hear this, you leaders of the people.

Listen, all who live in the land.
In all your history,
has anything like this happened before?

3Tell your children about it in the years to come, and let your children tell their children.
Pass the story down from generation to generation.

4After the cutting locusts finished eating the crops, the swarming locusts took what was left!
After them came the hopping locusts,
and then the stripping locusts,* too!

5Wake up, you drunkards, and weep!

Wail, all you wine-drinkers!
All the grapes are ruined,
and all your sweet wine is gone.

6A vast army of locusts* has invaded my land, a terrible army too
numerous to count.
Its teeth are like lions' teeth,
its fangs like those of a lioness.

7It has destroyed my grapevines and ruined my fig trees,
stripping their bark and destroying it,
leaving the branches white and bare.

8Weep like a bride dressed in black, mourning the death of her
husband.

9For there is no grain or wine to offer at the Temple of the LORD.
So the priests are in mourning.
The ministers of the LORD are weeping.

10The fields are ruined, the land is stripped bare.
The grain is destroyed,
the grapes have shriveled,
and the olive oil is gone.

11Despair, all you farmers!
Wail, all you vine growers!
Weep, because the wheat and barley—
all the crops of the field—are ruined.

12The grapevines have dried up, and the fig trees have withered.
The pomegranate trees, palm trees, and apple trees—
all the fruit trees—have dried up.
And the people's joy has dried up with them.

13Dress yourselves in burlap and weep, you priests!
Wail, you who serve before the altar!
Come, spend the night in burlap,
you ministers of my God.
For there is no grain or wine

to offer at the Temple of your God.

14Announce a time of fasting; call the people together for a solemn meeting.
Bring the leaders
and all the people of the land
into the Temple of the LORD your God, and cry out to him there.

15The day of the LORD is near, the day when destruction comes from the Almighty.
How terrible that day will be!

16Our food disappears before our very eyes.
No joyful celebrations are held in the house of our God.

17The seeds die in the parched ground, and the grain crops fail.
The barns stand empty,
and granaries are abandoned.

18How the animals moan with hunger!
The herds of cattle wander about confused,
because they have no pasture.
The flocks of sheep and goats bleat in misery.

19LORD, help us!
The fire has consumed the wilderness pastures,
and flames have burned up all the trees.

20Even the wild animals cry out to you because the streams have dried up,
and fire has consumed the wilderness pastures.

LOCUSTS INVADE LIKE AN ARMY

1Sound the trumpet in Jerusalem*!
Raise the alarm on my holy mountain!
Let everyone tremble in fear
because the day of the LORD is upon us.

2It is a day of darkness and gloom, a day of thick clouds and deep blackness.
Suddenly, like dawn spreading across the mountains,
a great and mighty army appears.
Nothing like it has been seen before
or will ever be seen again.

3Fire burns in front of them, and flames follow after them.
Ahead of them the land lies
as beautiful as the Garden of Eden.
Behind them is nothing but desolation;
not one thing escapes.

4They look like horses; they charge forward like warhorses.*

5Look at them as they leap along the mountaintops.
Listen to the noise they make—like the rumbling of chariots, like the roar of fire sweeping across a field of stubble, or like a mighty army moving into battle.

6Fear grips all the people; every face grows pale with terror.

7The attackers march like warriors and scale city walls like soldiers.
Straight forward they march,
never breaking rank.

8They never jostle each other; each moves in exactly the right position.
They break through defenses
without missing a step.

9They swarm over the city and run along its walls.
They enter all the houses,

climbing like thieves through the windows.

10The earth quakes as they advance, and the heavens tremble.
The sun and moon grow dark,
and the stars no longer shine.

11The LORD is at the head of the column.
He leads them with a shout.
This is his mighty army,
and they follow his orders.
The day of the LORD is an awesome, terrible thing.
Who can possibly survive?

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

12That is why the LORD says,

"Turn to me now, while there is time.
Give me your hearts.
Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

13Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead."
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is merciful and compassionate,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.
He is eager to relent and not punish.

14Who knows? Perhaps he will give you a reprieve, sending you a blessing instead of this curse.
Perhaps you will be able to offer grain and wine
to the LORD your God as before.

15Blow the ram's horn in Jerusalem!
Announce a time of fasting;
call the people together
for a solemn meeting.

16Gather all the people— the elders, the children, and even the babies.
Call the bridegroom from his quarters

and the bride from her private room.

17Let the priests, who minister in the LORD's presence, stand and
weep between the entry room to the Temple and the altar.
Let them pray, "Spare your people, LORD!
Don't let your special possession become an object of mockery.
Don't let them become a joke for unbelieving foreigners who say,
'Has the God of Israel left them?'"

THE LORD'S PROMISE OF RESTORATION

18Then the LORD will pity his people

and jealously guard the honor of his land.

19The LORD will reply, "Look! I am sending you grain and new
wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy your needs.
You will no longer be an object of mockery
among the surrounding nations.

20I will drive away these armies from the north.
I will send them into the parched wastelands.
Those in the front will be driven into the Dead Sea,

and those at the rear into the Mediterranean.*
The stench of their rotting bodies will rise over the land."
Surely the LORD has done great things!

21Don't be afraid, O land.
Be glad now and rejoice,
for the LORD has done great things.

22Don't be afraid, you animals of the field, for the wilderness
pastures will soon be green.
The trees will again be filled with fruit;
fig trees and grapevines will be loaded down once more.

23Rejoice, you people of Jerusalem!
Rejoice in the LORD your God!
For the rain he sends demonstrates his faithfulness.
Once more the autumn rains will come,
as well as the rains of spring.

24The threshing floors will again be piled high with grain, and the
presses will overflow with new wine and olive oil.

25The LORD says, "I will give you back what you lost to the
swarming locusts, the hopping locusts,
the stripping locusts, and the cutting locusts.*
It was I who sent this great destroying army against you.

26Once again you will have all the food you want, and you will
praise the LORD your God, who does these miracles for you.
Never again will my people be disgraced.

27Then you will know that I am among my people Israel, that I am
the LORD your God, and there is no other.
Never again will my people be disgraced.

THE LORD'S PROMISE OF HIS SPIRIT

28*"Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon
all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your old men will dream dreams,
and your young men will see visions.

29In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants—men and women alike.

30And I will cause wonders in the heavens and on the earth— blood and fire and columns of smoke.

31The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red
before that great and terrible* day of the LORD arrives.

32But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD
will be saved,
for some on Mount Zion in Jerusalem will escape,
just as the LORD has said.
These will be among the survivors
whom the LORD has called.

THE VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT

Joel 3

JUDGMENT AGAINST ENEMY NATIONS

1*“At the time of those events,” says the LORD, “when I restore the prosperity of Judah and Jerusalem,

2I will gather the armies of the world into the valley of Jehoshaphat.*
There I will judge them
for harming my people, my special possession,

for scattering my people among the nations,
and for dividing up my land.

3They threw dice* to decide which of my people would be their slaves.
They traded boys to obtain prostitutes
and sold girls for enough wine to get drunk.

4"What do you have against me, Tyre and Sidon and you cities of Philistia? Are you trying to take revenge on me? If you are, then watch out! I will strike swiftly and pay you back for everything you have done. 5You have taken my silver and gold and all my precious treasures, and have carried them off to your pagan temples. 6You have sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks,* so they could take them far from their homeland.

7"But I will bring them back from all the places to which you sold them, and I will pay you back for everything you have done. 8I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the people of Arabia,* a nation far away. I, the LORD, have spoken!"

9Say to the nations far and wide: "Get ready for war!
Call out your best warriors.
Let all your fighting men advance for the attack.

10Hammer your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.
Train even your weaklings to be warriors.

11Come quickly, all you nations everywhere.
Gather together in the valley."
And now, O LORD, call out your warriors!

12"Let the nations be called to arms.
Let them march to the valley of Jehoshaphat.
There I, the LORD, will sit
to pronounce judgment on them all.

13Swing the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.*
Come, tread the grapes,
for the winepress is full.
The storage vats are overflowing
with the wickedness of these people.”

14Thousands upon thousands are waiting in the valley of decision.
There the day of the LORD will soon arrive.

15The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will no longer shine.

16The LORD’s voice will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem,
and the heavens and the earth will shake.
But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a strong fortress for the people of Israel.

BLESSINGS FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

17“Then you will know that I, the LORD your God,

live in Zion, my holy mountain.
Jerusalem will be holy forever,
and foreign armies will never conquer her again.

18In that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk.
Water will fill the streambeds of Judah,
and a fountain will burst forth from the LORD’s Temple, watering the arid valley of acacias.*

19But Egypt will become a wasteland and Edom will become a wilderness,
because they attacked the people of Judah
and killed innocent people in their land.

20“But Judah will be filled with people forever, and Jerusalem will endure through all generations.

21 I will pardon my people's crimes, which I have not yet pardoned;
and I, the LORD, will make my home in Jerusalem* with my
people."

Amos

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

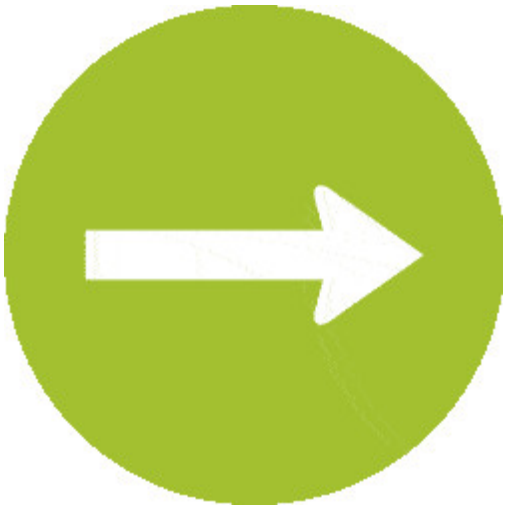
WELCOME TO

AMOS

God calls Amos to prophesy in Israel during a time of great affluence and prosperity in the northern kingdom. When times are good, no one wants to hear bad news, but Amos points out some of the horrible things going on among God's people: greed, corruption, social injustice, idol worship, moral decline, and pointless religious rituals devoid of true worship. He warns that God's judgment will come if the people don't change their ways. But God includes words of hope in Amos's warning. God will punish his people with exile, but he will also bring them back.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You're going to pass right over this short book of prophecy against the abusive and unjust. Your next stop is at Jonah 1:1.



1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: On your route, you will make a stop to

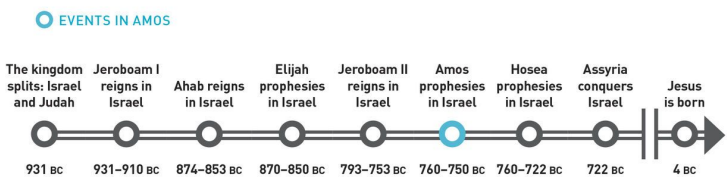
read about some of Amos's famous visions. Your next stop is at Amos 7:1.

3 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your three readings will give you the highlights of Amos's preaching, including his denunciation of injustice and improper worship. Your next stop is at Amos 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN AMOS

We can see aspects of Jesus in Amos, who was an unlikely prophet, being a lowly shepherd rather than a well-educated priest. Similarly, Jesus came from humble beginnings. He grew up in a small village with poor parents. Jesus, too, rose up to challenge the lifestyle that everyone took for granted—one that perpetuated injustice, corruption, and complacency. He healed people on the Sabbath and told stories that challenged the reigning values of his day. Sometimes even powerful religious leaders were among those whom he challenged. Like Amos, Jesus did not tolerate religious hypocrisy.



Amos 1

1This message was given to Amos, a shepherd from the town of
Tekoa in Judah. He received this message in visions two years
before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and
Jeroboam II, the son of Jehoash,* was king of Israel.

2This is what he saw and heard:

"The LORD's voice will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem!
The lush pastures of the shepherds will dry up;
the grass on Mount Carmel will wither and die."

SKIP TO 2:4

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS

3This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Damascus have sinned again and again,*
and I will not let them go unpunished!
They beat down my people in Gilead

as grain is threshed with iron sledges.

4So I will send down fire on King Hazael's palace, and the fortresses
of King Ben-hadad will be destroyed.

5I will break down the gates of Damascus and slaughter the people
in the valley of Aven.
I will destroy the ruler in Beth-eden,
and the people of Aram will go as captives to Kir,"
says the LORD.

6This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Gaza have sinned again and again,
and I will not let them go unpunished!
They sent whole villages into exile,
selling them as slaves to Edom.

7So I will send down fire on the walls of Gaza, and all its fortresses
will be destroyed.

8I will slaughter the people of Ashdod and destroy the king of
Ashkelon.
Then I will turn to attack Ekron,
and the few Philistines still left will be killed,"
says the Sovereign LORD.

9This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Tyre have sinned again and again,
and I will not let them go unpunished!
They broke their treaty of brotherhood with Israel,
selling whole villages as slaves to Edom.

10So I will send down fire on the walls of Tyre, and all its fortresses
will be destroyed."

11This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Edom have sinned again and again,
and I will not let them go unpunished!

They chased down their relatives, the Israelites, with swords,
showing them no mercy.
In their rage, they slashed them continually
and were unrelenting in their anger.

12So I will send down fire on Teman, and the fortresses of Bozrah
will be destroyed."

13This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Ammon have sinned again and again,
and I will not let them go unpunished!
When they attacked Gilead to extend their borders,
they ripped open pregnant women with their swords.

14So I will send down fire on the walls of Rabbah, and all its
fortresses will be destroyed.
The battle will come upon them with shouts,
like a whirlwind in a mighty storm.

15And their king* and his princes will go into exile together,"
says the LORD.

Amos 2

1This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Moab have sinned again and again,*
and I will not let them go unpunished!
They desecrated the bones of Edom's king,
burning them to ashes.

2So I will send down fire on the land of Moab, and all the fortresses
in Kerioth will be destroyed.
The people will fall in the noise of battle,
as the warriors shout and the ram's horn sounds.

3And I will destroy their king and slaughter all their princes,"
says the LORD.

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON JUDAH AND ISRAEL

4This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Judah have sinned again and again,
and I will not let them go unpunished!
They have rejected the instruction of the LORD, refusing to obey his decrees.
They have been led astray by the same lies
that deceived their ancestors.

5So I will send down fire on Judah, and all the fortresses of Jerusalem will be destroyed."

6This is what the LORD says:

"The people of Israel have sinned again and again,
and I will not let them go unpunished!
They sell honorable people for silver
and poor people for a pair of sandals.

7They trample helpless people in the dust and shove the oppressed out of the way.
Both father and son sleep with the same woman,
corrupting my holy name.

8At their religious festivals, they lounge in clothing their debtors put up as security.
In the house of their gods,*
they drink wine bought with unjust fines.

9"But as my people watched, I destroyed the Amorites,
though they were as tall as cedars
and as strong as oaks.
I destroyed the fruit on their branches
and dug out their roots.

10It was I who rescued you from Egypt and led you through the desert for forty years,
so you could possess the land of the Amorites.

11I chose some of your sons to be prophets and others to be Nazirites.
Can you deny this, my people of Israel?”
asks the LORD.

12“But you caused the Nazirites to sin by making them drink wine,
and you commanded the prophets, ‘Shut up!’

13“So I will make you groan like a wagon loaded down with sheaves of grain.

14Your fastest runners will not get away.
The strongest among you will become weak.
Even mighty warriors will be unable to save themselves.

15The archers will not stand their ground.
The swiftest runners won’t be fast enough to escape.
Even those riding horses won’t be able to save themselves.

16On that day the most courageous of your fighting men will drop their weapons and run for their lives,”
says the LORD.

Amos 3

1Listen to this message that the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel—against the entire family I rescued from Egypt:

2“From among all the families on the earth, I have been intimate with you alone.
That is why I must punish you

for all your sins.”

WITNESSES AGAINST GUILTY ISRAEL

3Can two people walk together

without agreeing on the direction?

4Does a lion ever roar in a thicket without first finding a victim?
Does a young lion growl in its den
without first catching its prey?

5Does a bird ever get caught in a trap that has no bait?
Does a trap spring shut
when there’s nothing to catch?

6When the ram’s horn blows a warning, shouldn’t the people be alarmed?
Does disaster come to a city
unless the LORD has planned it?

7Indeed, the Sovereign LORD never does anything until he reveals his plans to his servants the prophets.

8The lion has roared— so who isn’t frightened?
The Sovereign LORD has spoken—
so who can refuse to proclaim his message?

9Announce this to the leaders of Philistia*
and to the great ones of Egypt:
“Take your seats now on the hills around Samaria,
and witness the chaos and oppression in Israel.”

10“My people have forgotten how to do right,”
says the LORD.
“Their fortresses are filled with wealth
taken by theft and violence.

11Therefore,” says the Sovereign LORD, “an enemy is coming!
He will surround them and shatter their defenses.
Then he will plunder all their fortresses.”

12This is what the LORD says:

“A shepherd who tries to rescue a sheep from a lion’s mouth
will recover only two legs or a piece of an ear.
So it will be for the Israelites in Samaria lying on luxurious beds,
and for the people of Damascus reclining on couches.*

13“Now listen to this, and announce it throughout all Israel,*” says
the Lord, the LORD God of Heaven’s Armies.

14“On the very day I punish Israel for its sins, I will destroy the
pagan altars at Bethel.
The horns of the altar will be cut off
and fall to the ground.

15And I will destroy the beautiful homes of the wealthy— their
winter mansions and their summer houses, too—
all their palaces filled with ivory,”
says the LORD.

Amos 4

ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO LEARN

1Listen to me, you fat cows*
living in Samaria,
you women who oppress the poor
and crush the needy,
and who are always calling to your husbands,
"Bring us another drink!"

2The Sovereign LORD has sworn this by his holiness: "The time will come when you will be led away
with hooks in your noses.
Every last one of you will be dragged away
like a fish on a hook!

3You will be led out through the ruins of the wall; you will be thrown from your fortresses,*"
says the LORD.

4"Go ahead and offer sacrifices to the idols at Bethel.
Keep on disobeying at Gilgal.
Offer sacrifices each morning,
and bring your tithes every three days.

5Present your bread made with yeast as an offering of thanksgiving.
Then give your extra voluntary offerings
so you can brag about it everywhere!
This is the kind of thing you Israelites love to do,"
says the Sovereign LORD.

6"I brought hunger to every city and famine to every town.
But still you would not return to me,"
says the LORD.

7"I kept the rain from falling when your crops needed it the most.
I sent rain on one town
but withheld it from another.
Rain fell on one field,

while another field withered away.

8People staggered from town to town looking for water, but there was never enough.
But still you would not return to me,”
says the LORD.

9“I struck your farms and vineyards with blight and mildew.
Locusts devoured all your fig and olive trees.
But still you would not return to me,”
says the LORD.

10“I sent plagues on you like the plagues I sent on Egypt long ago.
I killed your young men in war
and led all your horses away.*
The stench of death filled the air!
But still you would not return to me,”
says the LORD.

11“I destroyed some of your cities, as I destroyed* Sodom and Gomorrah.
Those of you who survived
were like charred sticks pulled from a fire.
But still you would not return to me,”
says the LORD.

12“Therefore, I will bring upon you all the disasters I have announced.
Prepare to meet your God in judgment, you people of Israel!”

13For the LORD is the one who shaped the mountains, stirs up the winds, and reveals his thoughts to mankind.
He turns the light of dawn into darkness
and treads on the heights of the earth.
The LORD God of Heaven’s Armies is his name!

Amos 5

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

1Listen, you people of Israel! Listen to this funeral song I am
singing:

2“The virgin Israel has fallen, never to rise again!
She lies abandoned on the ground,
with no one to help her up.”

3The Sovereign LORD says:

“When a city sends a thousand men to battle,
only a hundred will return.
When a town sends a hundred,
only ten will come back alive.”

4Now this is what the LORD says to the family of Israel: “Come back
to me and live!

5Don’t worship at the pagan altars at Bethel; don’t go to the shrines
at Gilgal or Beersheba.
For the people of Gilgal will be dragged off into exile,
and the people of Bethel will be reduced to nothing.”

6Come back to the LORD and live!
Otherwise, he will roar through Israel* like a fire, devouring you
completely.

Your gods in Bethel
won't be able to quench the flames.

7You twist justice, making it a bitter pill for the oppressed.
You treat the righteous like dirt.

8It is the LORD who created the stars, the Pleiades and Orion.
He turns darkness into morning
and day into night.
He draws up water from the oceans
and pours it down as rain on the land.
The LORD is his name!

9With blinding speed and power he destroys the strong, crushing all their defenses.

10How you hate honest judges!
How you despise people who tell the truth!

11You trample the poor, stealing their grain through taxes and unfair rent.
Therefore, though you build beautiful stone houses,
you will never live in them.
Though you plant lush vineyards,
you will never drink wine from them.

12For I know the vast number of your sins and the depth of your rebellions.
You oppress good people by taking bribes
and deprive the poor of justice in the courts.

13So those who are smart keep their mouths shut, for it is an evil time.

14Do what is good and run from evil so that you may live!
Then the LORD God of Heaven's Armies will be your helper, just as you have claimed.

15Hate evil and love what is good; turn your courts into true halls of justice.

Perhaps even yet the LORD God of Heaven's Armies will have
mercy on the remnant of his people.*

16Therefore, this is what the Lord, the LORD God of Heaven's
Armies, says: "There will be crying in all the public squares

and mourning in every street.
Call for the farmers to weep with you,
and summon professional mourners to wail.

17There will be wailing in every vineyard, for I will destroy them
all,"
says the LORD.

WARNING OF COMING JUDGMENT

18What sorrow awaits you who say,

"If only the day of the LORD were here!"
You have no idea what you are wishing for.
That day will bring darkness, not light.

19In that day you will be like a man who runs from a lion— only to
meet a bear.
Escaping from the bear, he leans his hand against a wall in his
house— and he's bitten by a snake.

20Yes, the day of the LORD will be dark and hopeless, without a ray
of joy or hope.

21"I hate all your show and pretense— the hypocrisy of your
religious festivals and solemn assemblies.

22I will not accept your burnt offerings and grain offerings.
I won't even notice all your choice peace offerings.

23Away with your noisy hymns of praise!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.

24Instead, I want to see a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of
righteous living.

25“Was it to me you were bringing sacrifices and offerings during
the forty years in the wilderness, Israel? 26No, you served your
pagan gods—Sakkuth your king god and Kaiwan your star god—the
images you made for yourselves. 27So I will send you into exile, to a
land east of Damascus,*” says the LORD, whose name is the God of
Heaven’s Armies.

Amos 6

1What sorrow awaits you who lounge in luxury in Jerusalem,*
and you who feel secure in Samaria!
You are famous and popular in Israel,
and people go to you for help.

2But go over to Calneh and see what happened there.
Then go to the great city of Hamath
and down to the Philistine city of Gath.
You are no better than they were,
and look at how they were destroyed.

3You push away every thought of coming disaster, but your actions
only bring the day of judgment closer.

4How terrible for you who sprawl on ivory beds and lounge on your
couches,
eating the meat of tender lambs from the flock
and of choice calves fattened in the stall.

5You sing trivial songs to the sound of the harp and fancy
yourselves to be great musicians like David.

6You drink wine by the bowlful and perfume yourselves with
fragrant lotions.
You care nothing about the ruin of your nation.*

7Therefore, you will be the first to be led away as captives.
Suddenly, all your parties will end.

8The Sovereign LORD has sworn by his own name, and this is what
he, the LORD God of Heaven's Armies, says: "I despise the
arrogance of Israel,*

and I hate their fortresses.
I will give this city
and everything in it to their enemies."

9(If there are ten men left in one house, they will all die. 10And
when a relative who is responsible to dispose of the dead* goes into
the house to carry out the bodies, he will ask the last survivor, "Is
anyone else with you?" When the person begins to swear, "No, by .
. . ," he will interrupt and say, "Stop! Don't even mention the name
of the LORD.")

11When the LORD gives the command, homes both great and small
will be smashed to pieces.

12Can horses gallop over boulders?
Can oxen be used to plow them?
But that's how foolish you are when you turn justice into poison
and the sweet fruit of righteousness into bitterness.

13And you brag about your conquest of Lo-debar.*
You boast, "Didn't we take Karnaim* by our own strength?"

14"O people of Israel, I am about to bring an enemy nation against
you,"
says the LORD God of Heaven's Armies.
"They will oppress you throughout your land—
from Lebo-hamath in the north
to the Arabah Valley in the south."

Amos 7

A VISION OF LOCUSTS

1The Sovereign LORD showed me a vision. I saw him preparing to
send a vast swarm of locusts over the land. This was after the king's
share had been harvested from the fields and as the main crop was
coming up. 2In my vision the locusts ate every green plant in sight.
Then I said, "O Sovereign LORD, please forgive us or we will not

survive, for Israel* is so small."

3So the LORD relented from this plan. "I will not do it," he said.

A VISION OF FIRE

4Then the Sovereign LORD showed me another vision. I saw him preparing to punish his people with a great fire. The fire had burned up the depths of the sea and was devouring the entire land. 5Then I said, "O Sovereign LORD, please stop or we will not survive, for Israel is so small."

6Then the LORD relented from this plan, too. "I will not do that either," said the Sovereign LORD.

A VISION OF A PLUMB LINE

7Then he showed me another vision. I saw the Lord standing beside a wall that had been built using a plumb line. He was using a plumb line to see if it was still straight. 8And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

I answered, "A plumb line."

And the Lord replied, "I will test my people with this plumb line. I will no longer ignore all their sins. 9The pagan shrines of your ancestors* will be ruined, and the temples of Israel will be destroyed; I will bring the dynasty of King Jeroboam to a sudden end."

AMOS AND AMAZIAH

10Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent a message to Jeroboam, king of Israel: "Amos is hatching a plot against you right here on your very doorstep! What he is saying is intolerable. 11He is saying, 'Jeroboam will soon be killed, and the people of Israel will be sent away into exile.'"

12Then Amaziah sent orders to Amos: “Get out of here, you prophet! Go on back to the land of Judah, and earn your living by prophesying there! 13Don’t bother us with your prophecies here in Bethel. This is the king’s sanctuary and the national place of worship!”

14But Amos replied, “I’m not a professional prophet, and I was never trained to be one.* I’m just a shepherd, and I take care of sycamore-fig trees. 15But the LORD called me away from my flock and told me, ‘Go and prophesy to my people in Israel.’ 16Now then, listen to this message from the LORD: “You say,

‘Don’t prophesy against Israel.
Stop preaching against my people.*’

17But this is what the LORD says: ‘Your wife will become a prostitute in this city,
and your sons and daughters will be killed.
Your land will be divided up,
and you yourself will die in a foreign land.
And the people of Israel will certainly become captives in exile, far from their homeland.’”

Amos 8

A VISION OF RIPE FRUIT

1Then the Sovereign LORD showed me another vision. In it I saw a basket filled with ripe fruit. 2“What do you see, Amos?” he asked.

I replied, “A basket full of ripe fruit.”

Then the LORD said, “Like this fruit, Israel is ripe for punishment! I
will not delay their punishment again. 3In that day the singing in
the Temple will turn to wailing. Dead bodies will be scattered
everywhere. They will be carried out of the city in silence. I, the
Sovereign LORD, have spoken!”

4Listen to this, you who rob the poor and trample down the needy!

5You can’t wait for the Sabbath day to be over and the religious
festivals to end
so you can get back to cheating the helpless.
You measure out grain with dishonest measures
and cheat the buyer with dishonest scales.*

6And you mix the grain you sell with chaff swept from the floor.
Then you enslave poor people
for one piece of silver or a pair of sandals.

7Now the LORD has sworn this oath by his own name, the Pride of
Israel*: “I will never forget
the wicked things you have done!

8The earth will tremble for your deeds, and everyone will mourn.
The ground will rise like the Nile River at floodtime;
it will heave up, then sink again.

9“In that day,” says the Sovereign LORD, “I will make the sun go
down at noon
and darken the earth while it is still day.

10I will turn your celebrations into times of mourning and your

singing into weeping.
You will wear funeral clothes
and shave your heads to show your sorrow—
as if your only son had died.
How very bitter that day will be!

11“The time is surely coming,” says the Sovereign LORD, “when I
will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread or water
but of hearing the words of the LORD.

12People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from border to
border*
searching for the word of the LORD,
but they will not find it.

13Beautiful girls and strong young men will grow faint in that day,
thirsting for the LORD’s word.

14And those who swear by the shameful idols of Samaria— who
take oaths in the name of the god of Dan
and make vows in the name of the god of Beersheba*— they will all
fall down,
never to rise again.”

Amos 9

A VISION OF GOD AT THE ALTAR

1Then I saw a vision of the Lord standing beside the altar. He said,

“Strike the tops of the Temple columns,
so that the foundation will shake.
Bring down the roof
on the heads of the people below.
I will kill with the sword those who survive.
No one will escape!

2“Even if they dig down to the place of the dead,*

I will reach down and pull them up.
Even if they climb up into the heavens,
I will bring them down.

3Even if they hide at the very top of Mount Carmel, I will search them out and capture them.
Even if they hide at the bottom of the ocean,
I will send the sea serpent after them to bite them.

4Even if their enemies drive them into exile, I will command the sword to kill them there.
I am determined to bring disaster upon them
and not to help them."

5The Lord, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, touches the land and it melts,
and all its people mourn.
The ground rises like the Nile River at floodtime,
and then it sinks again.

6The LORD's home reaches up to the heavens, while its foundation is on the earth.
He draws up water from the oceans
and pours it down as rain on the land.
The LORD is his name!

7"Are you Israelites more important to me than the Ethiopians?*"
asks the LORD.
"I brought Israel out of Egypt,
but I also brought the Philistines from Crete*
and led the Arameans out of Kir.

8"I, the Sovereign LORD, am watching this sinful nation of Israel.
I will destroy it
from the face of the earth.
But I will never completely destroy the family of Israel,*"
says the LORD.

9"For I will give the command and will shake Israel along with the

other nations
as grain is shaken in a sieve,
yet not one true kernel will be lost.

10But all the sinners will die by the sword— all those who say,
‘Nothing bad will happen to us.’

A PROMISE OF RESTORATION

11“In that day I will restore the fallen house* of David.

I will repair its damaged walls.
From the ruins I will rebuild it
and restore its former glory.

12And Israel will possess what is left of Edom and all the nations I have called to be mine.*”
The LORD has spoken,
and he will do these things.

13“The time will come,” says the LORD, “when the grain and grapes will grow faster
than they can be harvested.
Then the terraced vineyards on the hills of Israel
will drip with sweet wine!

14I will bring my exiled people of Israel back from distant lands,
and they will rebuild their ruined cities
and live in them again.
They will plant vineyards and gardens;
they will eat their crops and drink their wine.

15I will firmly plant them there in their own land.
They will never again be uprooted
from the land I have given them,”
says the LORD your God.

Obadiah

Introduction 1

WELCOME TO

OBADIAH

The book of Obadiah is directed not at Israel, as most Old Testament prophecies are, but at the nation of Edom. The Edomites are descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob. Jacob and Esau became enemies when Jacob betrayed his brother. Although they eventually reconciled, their descendants—Israel and Edom—would often come into conflict with each other. When Jerusalem is destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC, Edom treacherously plunders the stricken city instead of aiding the people there. Edom's violence against Israel—brother against brother—is sharply condemned by God through his prophet Obadiah. As a God of justice, God will not let the enemies of his beloved nation go unpunished.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Although you don't need to touch down in this short book of prophecy, you may want to linger and quickly read through it. It can easily be read in one sitting. Your next stop is

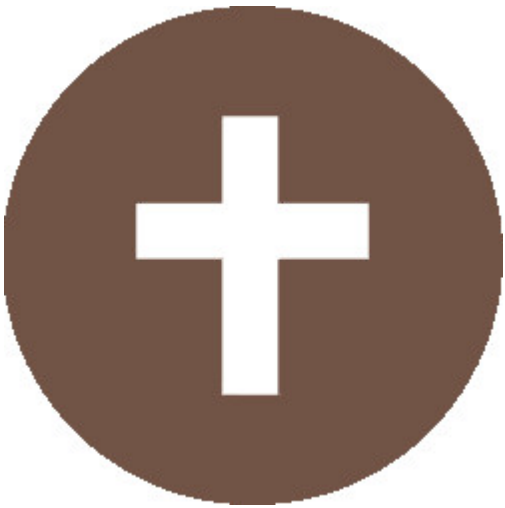
at Jonah 1:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You'll quickly stop to read God's harsh words for the nation that victimized his beloved people. Your next stop is at Obadiah 1:1.

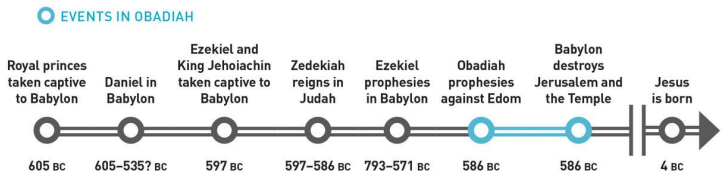
1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your reading in this book will enrich your understanding of God's holy justice and his boundless compassion for the plight of his people. Your next stop is at Obadiah 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN OBADIAH

We can see Jesus in the prophet Obadiah, who felt the sting of betrayal on behalf of God's people when Edom celebrated and profited from Jerusalem's downfall. Jesus also experienced this sting when Judas handed him over to the religious leaders. Like Judas, Edom would be judged for its betrayal. Obadiah spoke for the Lord, who promised to punish the injustices committed by Edom (1:15).



EDOM

1This is the vision that the Sovereign LORD revealed to Obadiah
concerning the land of Edom.

EDOM'S JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED

We have heard a message from the LORD

that an ambassador was sent to the nations to say, "Get ready, everyone!
Let's assemble our armies and attack Edom!"

2The LORD says to Edom, "I will cut you down to size among the nations; you will be greatly despised.

3You have been deceived by your own pride because you live in a rock fortress
and make your home high in the mountains.
'Who can ever reach us way up here?'

you ask boastfully.

4But even if you soar as high as eagles and build your nest among
the stars, I will bring you crashing down,"
says the LORD.

5"If thieves came at night and robbed you (what a disaster awaits
you!),
they would not take everything.
Those who harvest grapes
always leave a few for the poor.
But your enemies will wipe you out completely!

6Every nook and cranny of Edom*
will be searched and looted.
Every treasure will be found and taken.

7"All your allies will turn against you.
They will help to chase you from your land.
They will promise you peace
while plotting to deceive and destroy you.
Your trusted friends will set traps for you, and you won't even know
about it.

8At that time not a single wise person will be left in the whole land
of Edom,"
says the LORD.
"For on the mountains of Edom
I will destroy everyone who has understanding.

9The mightiest warriors of Teman will be terrified,
and everyone on the mountains of Edom
will be cut down in the slaughter.

REASONS FOR EDOM'S PUNISHMENT

10"Because of the violence you did

to your close relatives in Israel,*

you will be filled with shame
and destroyed forever.

11When they were invaded, you stood aloof, refusing to help them.
Foreign invaders carried off their wealth and cast lots to divide up
Jerusalem, but you acted like one of Israel's enemies.

12"You should not have gloated when they exiled your relatives to
distant lands.
You should not have rejoiced
when the people of Judah suffered such misfortune.
You should not have spoken arrogantly
in that terrible time of trouble.

13You should not have plundered the land of Israel when they were
suffering such calamity.
You should not have gloated over their destruction when they were
suffering such calamity.
You should not have seized their wealth when they were suffering
such calamity.

14You should not have stood at the crossroads, killing those who
tried to escape.
You should not have captured the survivors and handed them over
in their terrible time of trouble.

EDOM DESTROYED, ISRAEL RESTORED

15"The day is near when I, the LORD, will judge all godless nations!

As you have done to Israel,
so it will be done to you.
All your evil deeds
will fall back on your own heads.

16Just as you swallowed up my people on my holy mountain,
so you and the surrounding nations
will swallow the punishment I pour out on you.
Yes, all you nations will drink and stagger and disappear from

history.

17“But Jerusalem* will become a refuge for those who escape; it will
be a holy place.
And the people of Israel* will come back to reclaim their
inheritance.

18The people of Israel will be a raging fire, and Edom a field of dry
stubble.
The descendants of Joseph will be a flame roaring across the field,
devouring everything.
There will be no survivors in Edom.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

19“Then my people living in the Negev will occupy the mountains of
Edom.
Those living in the foothills of Judah*
will possess the Philistine plains
and take over the fields of Ephraim and Samaria.
And the people of Benjamin
will occupy the land of Gilead.

20The exiles of Israel will return to their land and occupy the
Phoenician coast as far north as Zarephath.
The captives from Jerusalem exiled in the north*
will return home and resettle the towns of the Negev.

21Those who have been rescued* will go up to* Mount Zion in
Jerusalem to rule over the mountains of Edom.
And the LORD himself will be king!”

Jonah

Introduction 1 2 3 4

WELCOME TO

JONAH

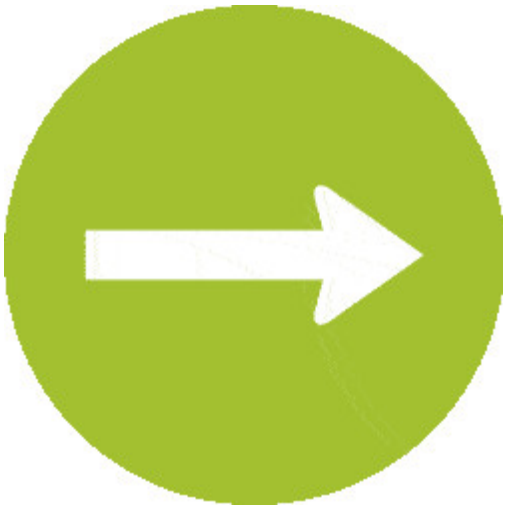
The book of Jonah contains the famous story of the man who is swallowed by a great fish and lives to tell about it. But the full story is greater than that. It is a story of God's love and compassion for all nations, not just his own people. God's graciousness extends beyond those who love him. He cares for every nation, every human, and every creature.

When God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh and call its people to repent of their sins, Jonah refuses. He doesn't want to give the wicked Assyrians a chance to repent and avoid God's judgment. He attempts to flee from God by ship, but God turns him around in dramatic fashion.

Finally, Jonah obeys God's command and goes to Nineveh to preach. What happens next, though, surprises and angers him.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: The best-known story of the book of Jonah is included in your reading stop. Your next stop is at Jonah 1:1.



1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The first half of Jonah's story is included

on your reading route. If you want to see how it ends, it won't take you long to read the second half too. Your next stop is at Jonah 1:1.

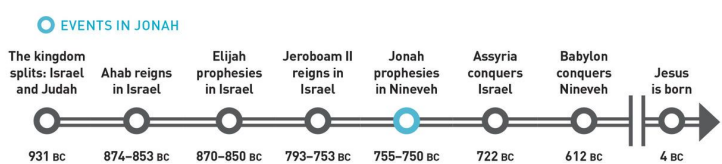
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll read the entire book of Jonah. Part one is the famous story of Jonah being swallowed by a fish. The second part reveals Jonah's response to God's call on his life. Your next stop is at Jonah 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN JONAH

Jesus can be seen in God's love for and readiness to forgive Israel's despised enemies, the Assyrians. Just as God showed compassion to the Ninevites, Jesus showed compassion to people such as the Samaritans, who were hated and avoided by the religious leaders of his day. The Good News—salvation through God's Son—is available to everyone.

In spite of some major differences between Jesus and Jonah, you can still see Jesus in parts of the prophet's life. Both men spent three days buried in death—Jonah (figuratively) in the belly of a fish, Jesus (literally) in a tomb—and when they emerged they preached of new life to those who heard their messages.



Jonah 1

JONAH RUNS FROM THE LORD

1The LORD gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: 2"Get up and
go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it
because I have seen how wicked its people are."

JOPPA

TARSHISH

3But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away
from the LORD. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he
found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on

board, hoping to escape from the LORD by sailing to Tarshish.

4But the LORD hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a
violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. 5Fearing for
their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and
threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship.

But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold. 6So the
captain went down after him. “How can you sleep at a time like
this?” he shouted. “Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay
attention to us and spare our lives.”

7Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods
and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots
identified Jonah as the culprit. 8“Why has this awful storm come
down on us?” they demanded. “Who are you? What is your line of
work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?”

9Jonah answered, “I am a Hebrew, and I worship the LORD, the
God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”

10The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already
told them he was running away from the LORD. “Oh, why did you
do it?” they groaned. 11And since the storm was getting worse all
the time, they asked him, “What should we do to you to stop this
storm?”

12“Throw me into the sea,” Jonah said, “and it will become calm
again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault.”

13Instead, the sailors rowed even harder to get the ship to the land.
But the stormy sea was too violent for them, and they couldn’t
make it. 14Then they cried out to the LORD, Jonah’s God. “O
LORD,” they pleaded, “don’t make us die for this man’s sin. And
don’t hold us responsible for his death. O LORD, you have sent this
storm upon him for your own good reasons.”

15Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging
sea, and the storm stopped at once! 16The sailors were awestruck by
the LORD's great power, and they offered him a sacrifice and vowed
to serve him.

17*Now the LORD had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah.
And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

Jonah 2

JONAH'S PRAYER

1*Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish. 2He
said,

"I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble,
and he answered me.
I called to you from the land of the dead,*
and LORD, you heard me!

3You threw me into the ocean depths,
and I sank down to the heart of the sea.
The mighty waters engulfed me;
I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves.

4Then I said, 'O LORD, you have driven me from your presence.
Yet I will look once more toward your holy Temple.'

5"I sank beneath the waves,
and the waters closed over me.
Seaweed wrapped itself around my head.

6I sank down to the very roots of the mountains.
I was imprisoned in the earth,
whose gates lock shut forever.
But you, O LORD my God,
snatched me from the jaws of death!

7As my life was slipping away,
I remembered the LORD.
And my earnest prayer went out to you
in your holy Temple.

8Those who worship false gods
turn their backs on all God's mercies.

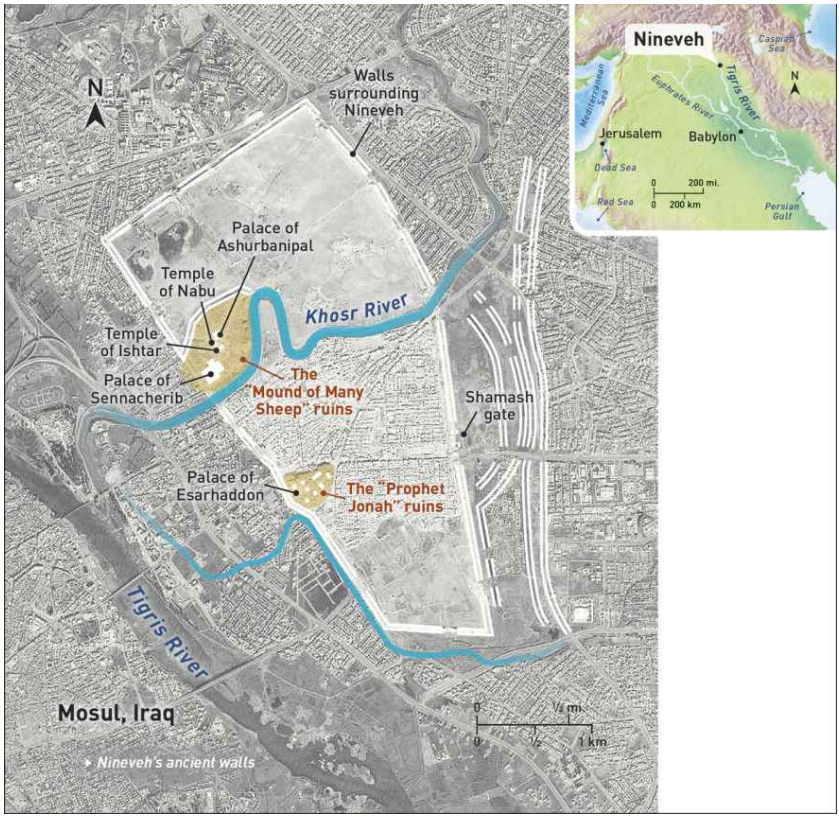
9But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise,
and I will fulfill all my vows.
For my salvation comes from the LORD alone."

10Then the LORD ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.

Jonah 3

JONAH GOES TO NINEVEH

1Then the LORD spoke to Jonah a second time: 2“Get up and go to
the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given
you.”



NINEVEH

3This time Jonah obeyed the LORD's command and went to
Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all.*4On the
day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: "Forty days
from now Nineveh will be destroyed!" 5The people of Nineveh
believed God's message, and from the greatest to the least, they
declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow.

6When the king of Nineveh heard what Jonah was saying, he
stepped down from his throne and took off his royal robes. He
dressed himself in burlap and sat on a heap of ashes. 7Then the king
and his nobles sent this decree throughout the city:

"No one, not even the animals from your herds and flocks, may eat

or drink anything at all. 8People and animals alike must wear
garments of mourning, and everyone must pray earnestly to God.
They must turn from their evil ways and stop all their violence.
9Who can tell? Perhaps even yet God will change his mind and hold
back his fierce anger from destroying us."

10When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop
to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the
destruction he had threatened.

Jonah 4

JONAH'S ANGER AT THE LORD'S MERCY

1This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very
angry. 2So he complained to the LORD about it: "Didn't I say before
I left home that you would do this, LORD? That is why I ran away
to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to
turn back from destroying people. 3Just kill me now, LORD! I'd
rather be dead than alive if what I predicted will not happen."

4The LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry about this?"

5Then Jonah went out to the east side of the city and made a shelter
to sit under as he waited to see what would happen to the city. 6And
the LORD God arranged for a leafy plant to grow there, and soon it
spread its broad leaves over Jonah's head, shading him from the
sun. This eased his discomfort, and Jonah was very grateful for the
plant.

7But God also arranged for a worm! The next morning at dawn the
worm ate through the stem of the plant so that it withered away.
8And as the sun grew hot, God arranged for a scorching east wind to
blow on Jonah. The sun beat down on his head until he grew faint
and wished to die. "Death is certainly better than living like this!"
he exclaimed.

9Then God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?”

“Yes,” Jonah retorted, “even angry enough to die!”

10Then the LORD said, “You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. It came quickly and died quickly. 11But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness,* not to mention all the animals. Shouldn’t I feel sorry for such a great city?”

Micah

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

WELCOME TO

MICAH

Micah’s message is simple: God will punish the people for their wickedness. A contemporary of Isaiah, Micah preaches to both Israel and Judah in the 700s BC. He lives in a small town south of Jerusalem called Moresheth, but he directs his messages to the capital cities of Jerusalem and Samaria. He denounces their oppression, pride, greed, corruption, and false godliness. Because of their disobedience, God will hold them responsible for their actions.

But Micah also announces some good news—a wonderful future awaits God’s people. A ruler will come from Bethlehem who will

bring peace and hope to the world.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll pass right over Micah en route to your next destination: the New Testament. Your next stop is at Matthew 3:13.

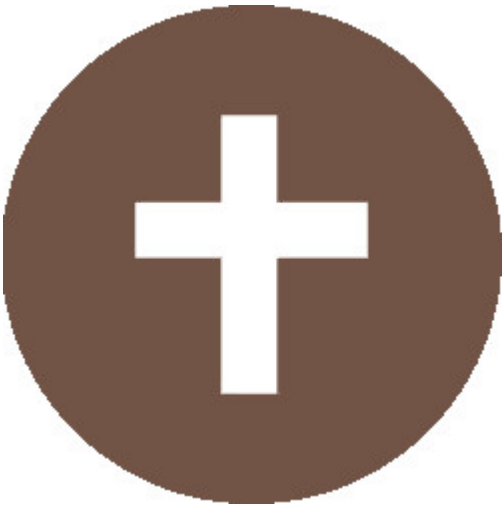
1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your one reading in this book will give you a glimpse of Micah's ultimate message to his audience: Misery will be turned to hope. Your next stop is at Micah 7:1.

2 STOPS

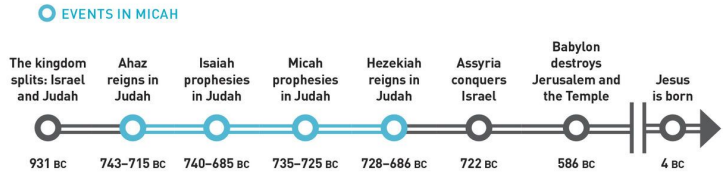
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Two stops in Micah will give you an idea

of the progression of Micah's prophecies, which begin with grief over the sins of God's people and end with a message of hope. Your next stop is at Micah 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN MICAH

Similarities to Jesus can be seen in the prophet Micah, who condemned corrupt leaders who benefited from their positions of power: "You false prophets are leading my people astray!" (Micah 3:1-12). Like Micah, Jesus confronted the religious leaders of his day, calling them children of hell who misled their followers (Matthew 23:15).
Additionally, Micah predicts that a ruler will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) who would "lead his flock" (5:4) as his ancestor King David had done. He will be held in high esteem throughout the world and will bring peace.



Micah 1

1The LORD gave this message to Micah of Moresheth during the
years when Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah. The
visions he saw concerned both Samaria and Jerusalem.

GRIEF OVER SAMARIA AND JERUSALEM

2Attention! Let all the people of the world listen!

Let the earth and everything in it hear.
The Sovereign LORD is making accusations against you; the Lord
speaks from his holy Temple.

3Look! The LORD is coming!
He leaves his throne in heaven
and tramples the heights of the earth.

4The mountains melt beneath his feet and flow into the valleys
like wax in a fire,
like water pouring down a hill.

THE FALL OF SAMARIA

5And why is this happening?
Because of the rebellion of Israel*— yes, the sins of the whole nation.
Who is to blame for Israel's rebellion?
Samaria, its capital city!
Where is the center of idolatry in Judah?
In Jerusalem, its capital!

6"So I, the LORD, will make the city of Samaria a heap of ruins.
Her streets will be plowed up
for planting vineyards.
I will roll the stones of her walls into the valley below,
exposing her foundations.

7All her carved images will be smashed.
All her sacred treasures will be burned.
These things were bought with the money
earned by her prostitution,
and they will now be carried away
to pay prostitutes elsewhere."

8Therefore, I will mourn and lament.
I will walk around barefoot and naked.
I will howl like a jackal
and moan like an owl.

9For my people's wound is too deep to heal.
It has reached into Judah,
even to the gates of Jerusalem.

10Don't tell our enemies in Gath*; don't weep at all.
You people in Beth-leaphrah,*
roll in the dust to show your despair.

11You people in Shaphir,*
go as captives into exile—naked and ashamed.
The people of Zaanan*
dare not come outside their walls.
The people of Beth-ezel* mourn, for their house has no support.

12The people of Maroth* anxiously wait for relief, but only
bitterness awaits them
as the LORD's judgment reaches
even to the gates of Jerusalem.

13Harness your chariot horses and flee, you people of Lachish.*
You were the first city in Judah
to follow Israel in her rebellion,
and you led Jerusalem* into sin.

14Send farewell gifts to Moresheth-gath*; there is no hope of saving it.
The town of Aczib*
has deceived the kings of Israel.

15O people of Mareshah,*
I will bring a conqueror to capture your town.
And the leaders* of Israel will go to Adullam.

16Oh, people of Judah, shave your heads in sorrow, for the children you love will be snatched away.

Make yourselves as bald as a vulture,
for your little ones will be exiled to distant lands.

Micah 2

JUDGMENT AGAINST WEALTHY OPPRESSORS

1What sorrow awaits you who lie awake at night, thinking up evil plans.
You rise at dawn and hurry to carry them out,
simply because you have the power to do so.

2When you want a piece of land, you find a way to seize it.
When you want someone's house,
you take it by fraud and violence.
You cheat a man of his property,
stealing his family's inheritance.

3But this is what the LORD says: "I will reward your evil with evil;
you won't be able to pull your neck out of the noose.
You will no longer walk around proudly,
for it will be a terrible time."

4In that day your enemies will make fun of you by singing this song of despair about you:
"We are finished,
completely ruined!
God has confiscated our land,
taking it from us.
He has given our fields
to those who betrayed us.*"

5Others will set your boundaries then, and the LORD's people will
have no say in how the land is divided.

TRUE AND FALSE PROPHETS

6"Don't say such things,"

the people respond.*
"Don't prophesy like that.
Such disasters will never come our way!"

7Should you talk that way, O family of Israel?*
Will the LORD's Spirit have patience with such behavior?
If you would do what is right,
you would find my words comforting.

8Yet to this very hour my people rise against me like an enemy!
You steal the shirts right off the backs
of those who trusted you,
making them as ragged as men
returning from battle.

9You have evicted women from their pleasant homes and forever
stripped their children of all that God would give them.

10Up! Begone!
This is no longer your land and home,
for you have filled it with sin
and ruined it completely.

11Suppose a prophet full of lies would say to you, "I'll preach to you
the joys of wine and alcohol!"
That's just the kind of prophet you would like!

HOPE FOR RESTORATION

12"Someday, O Israel, I will gather you;

I will gather the remnant who are left.
I will bring you together again like sheep in a pen,

like a flock in its pasture.
Yes, your land will again
be filled with noisy crowds!

13Your leader will break out and lead you out of exile,
out through the gates of the enemy cities,
back to your own land.
Your king will lead you;
the LORD himself will guide you.”

Micah 3

JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL’S LEADERS

1I said, “Listen, you leaders of Israel!
You are supposed to know right from wrong,

2but you are the very ones who hate good and love evil.
You skin my people alive
and tear the flesh from their bones.

3Yes, you eat my people’s flesh, strip off their skin,
and break their bones.
You chop them up
like meat for the cooking pot.

4Then you beg the LORD for help in times of trouble!
Do you really expect him to answer?
After all the evil you have done,
he won’t even look at you!”

5This is what the LORD says: “You false prophets are leading my people astray!
You promise peace for those who give you food,
but you declare war on those who refuse to feed you.

6Now the night will close around you, cutting off all your visions.
Darkness will cover you,
putting an end to your predictions.

The sun will set for you prophets,
and your day will come to an end.

7Then you seers will be put to shame, and you fortune-tellers will be disgraced.
And you will cover your faces
because there is no answer from God.”

8But as for me, I am filled with power— with the Spirit of the LORD.
I am filled with justice and strength
to boldly declare Israel’s sin and rebellion.

9Listen to me, you leaders of Israel!
You hate justice and twist all that is right.

10You are building Jerusalem on a foundation of murder and corruption.

11You rulers make decisions based on bribes; you priests teach God’s laws only for a price;
you prophets won’t prophesy unless you are paid.
Yet all of you claim to depend on the LORD.
“No harm can come to us,” you say,
“for the LORD is here among us.”

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

12Because of you, Mount Zion will be plowed like an open field;
Jerusalem will be reduced to ruins!
A thicket will grow on the heights
where the Temple now stands.

Micah 4

THE LORD’S FUTURE REIGN

1In the last days, the mountain of the LORD's house will be the
highest of all— the most important place on earth.
It will be raised above the other hills,
and people from all over the world will stream there to worship.

2People from many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up
to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of Jacob's God.
There he will teach us his ways,
and we will walk in his paths."
For the LORD's teaching will go out from Zion; his word will go out
from Jerusalem.

3The LORD will mediate between peoples and will settle disputes
between strong nations far away.
They will hammer their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will no longer fight against nation,
nor train for war anymore.

4Everyone will live in peace and prosperity, enjoying their own
grapevines and fig trees,
for there will be nothing to fear.
The LORD of Heaven's Armies
has made this promise!

5Though the nations around us follow their idols, we will follow the
LORD our God forever and ever.

ISRAEL'S RETURN FROM EXILE

6"In that coming day," says the LORD,

"I will gather together those who are lame,
those who have been exiles,
and those whom I have filled with grief.

7Those who are weak will survive as a remnant; those who were
exiles will become a strong nation.
Then I, the LORD, will rule from Jerusalem*

as their king forever.”

8As for you, Jerusalem, the citadel of God’s people,*
your royal might and power
will come back to you again.
The kingship will be restored
to my precious Jerusalem.

9But why are you now screaming in terror?
Have you no king to lead you?
Have your wise people all died?
Pain has gripped you like a woman in childbirth.

10Writhe and groan like a woman in labor, you people of Jerusalem,*
for now you must leave this city
to live in the open country.
You will soon be sent in exile
to distant Babylon.
But the LORD will rescue you there;
he will redeem you from the grip of your enemies.

11Now many nations have gathered against you.
“Let her be desecrated,” they say.
“Let us see the destruction of Jerusalem.*”

12But they do not know the LORD’s thoughts or understand his plan.
These nations don’t know
that he is gathering them together
to be beaten and trampled
like sheaves of grain on a threshing floor.

13“Rise up and crush the nations, O Jerusalem!”*
says the LORD.
“For I will give you iron horns and bronze hooves,
so you can trample many nations to pieces.
You will present their stolen riches to the LORD, their wealth to the

Lord of all the earth.”

Micah 5

1*Mobilize! Marshal your troops!
The enemy is laying siege to Jerusalem.
They will strike Israel’s leader
in the face with a rod.

THE MESSIAH MICAH 5:2-5

A RULER FROM BETHLEHEM

2*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among
all the people of Judah.

Yet a ruler of Israel,
whose origins are in the distant past,
will come from you on my behalf.

3The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the
woman in labor gives birth.
Then at last his fellow countrymen
will return from exile to their own land.

4And he will stand to lead his flock with the LORD’s strength, in the
majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
Then his people will live there undisturbed,

for he will be highly honored around the world.

5And he will be the source of peace.
When the Assyrians invade our land
and break through our defenses,
we will appoint seven rulers to watch over us,
eight princes to lead us.

6They will rule Assyria with drawn swords and enter the gates of the land of Nimrod.
He will rescue us from the Assyrians
when they pour over the borders to invade our land.

THE REMNANT PURIFIED

7Then the remnant left in Israel*

will take their place among the nations.
They will be like dew sent by the LORD
or like rain falling on the grass,
which no one can hold back
and no one can restrain.

8The remnant left in Israel will take their place among the nations.
They will be like a lion among the animals of the forest,
like a strong young lion among flocks of sheep and goats,
pouncing and tearing as they go
with no rescuer in sight.

9The people of Israel will stand up to their foes, and all their enemies will be wiped out.

10"In that day," says the LORD, "I will slaughter your horses
and destroy your chariots.

11I will tear down your walls and demolish your defenses.

12I will put an end to all witchcraft, and there will be no more fortune-tellers.

13I will destroy all your idols and sacred pillars, so you will never

again worship the work of your own hands.

14I will abolish your idol shrines with their Asherah poles and
destroy your pagan cities.

15I will pour out my vengeance on all the nations that refuse to
obey me.”

Micah 6

THE LORD’S CASE AGAINST ISRAEL

1Listen to what the LORD is saying:

“Stand up and state your case against me.
Let the mountains and hills be called to witness your complaints.

2And now, O mountains, listen to the LORD’s complaint!
He has a case against his people.
He will bring charges against Israel.

3“O my people, what have I done to you?
What have I done to make you tired of me?
Answer me!

4For I brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from slavery.
I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to help you.

5Don’t you remember, my people, how King Balak of Moab tried to
have you cursed
and how Balaam son of Beor blessed you instead?
And remember your journey from Acacia Grove* to Gilgal, when I,
the LORD, did everything I could to teach you about my
faithfulness.”

6What can we bring to the LORD?
Should we bring him burnt offerings?
Should we bow before God Most High
with offerings of yearling calves?

7Should we offer him thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Should we sacrifice our firstborn children
to pay for our sins?

8No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you:
to do what is right, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God.

ISRAEL'S GUILT AND PUNISHMENT

9Fear the LORD if you are wise!

His voice calls to everyone in Jerusalem:
"The armies of destruction are coming;
the LORD is sending them.*

10What shall I say about the homes of the wicked filled with treasures gained by cheating?
What about the disgusting practice
of measuring out grain with dishonest measures?*

11How can I tolerate your merchants who use dishonest scales and weights?

12The rich among you have become wealthy through extortion and violence.
Your citizens are so used to lying
that their tongues can no longer tell the truth.

13"Therefore, I will wound you!
I will bring you to ruin for all your sins.

14You will eat but never have enough.
Your hunger pangs and emptiness will remain.
And though you try to save your money,
it will come to nothing in the end.

You will save a little,
but I will give it to those who conquer you.

15You will plant crops but not harvest them.
You will press your olives
but not get enough oil to anoint yourselves.
You will trample the grapes
but get no juice to make your wine.

16You keep only the laws of evil King Omri; you follow only the
example of wicked King Ahab!
Therefore, I will make an example of you,
bringing you to complete ruin.
You will be treated with contempt,
mocked by all who see you.”

Micah 7

MISERY TURNED TO HOPE

1How miserable I am!
I feel like the fruit picker after the harvest
who can find nothing to eat.
Not a cluster of grapes or a single early fig
can be found to satisfy my hunger.

2The godly people have all disappeared; not one honest person is left on the earth.
They are all murderers,
setting traps even for their own brothers.

3Both their hands are equally skilled at doing evil!
Officials and judges alike demand bribes.
The people with influence get what they want,
and together they scheme to twist justice.

4Even the best of them is like a brier; the most honest is as dangerous as a hedge of thorns.
But your judgment day is coming swiftly now.
Your time of punishment is here, a time of confusion.

5Don’t trust anyone— not your best friend or even your wife!

6For the son despises his father.
The daughter defies her mother.
The daughter-in-law defies her mother-in-law.
Your enemies are right in your own household!

7As for me, I look to the LORD for help.
I wait confidently for God to save me,
and my God will certainly hear me.

8Do not gloat over me, my enemies!
For though I fall, I will rise again.
Though I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be my light.

9I will be patient as the LORD punishes me, for I have sinned against him.
But after that, he will take up my case
and give me justice for all I have suffered from my enemies.
The LORD will bring me into the light, and I will see his righteousness.

10Then my enemies will see that the LORD is on my side.
They will be ashamed that they taunted me, saying,
“So where is the LORD—
that God of yours?”
With my own eyes I will see their downfall;
they will be trampled like mud in the streets.

11In that day, Israel, your cities will be rebuilt, and your borders will be extended.

12People from many lands will come and honor you— from Assyria all the way to the towns of Egypt,
from Egypt all the way to the Euphrates River,*
and from distant seas and mountains.

13But the land* will become empty and desolate because of the

wickedness of those who live there.

THE LORD'S COMPASSION ON ISRAEL

14O LORD, protect your people with your shepherd's staff; lead your
flock, your special possession.

Though they live alone in a thicket
on the heights of Mount Carmel,*
let them graze in the fertile pastures of Bashan and Gilead
as they did long ago.

15"Yes," says the LORD, "I will do mighty miracles for you,
like those I did when I rescued you
from slavery in Egypt."

16All the nations of the world will stand amazed at what the LORD
will do for you.
They will be embarrassed
at their feeble power.
They will cover their mouths in silent awe,
deaf to everything around them.

17Like snakes crawling from their holes, they will come out to meet
the LORD our God.
They will fear him greatly,
trembling in terror at his presence.

18Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the
remnant,
overlooking the sins of his special people?
You will not stay angry with your people forever,
because you delight in showing unfailing love.

19Once again you will have compassion on us.
You will trample our sins under your feet
and throw them into the depths of the ocean!

20You will show us your faithfulness and unfailing love as you
promised to our ancestors Abraham and Jacob long ago.

Nahum

Introduction 1 2 3

WELCOME TO

NAHUM

Nahum preaches to the kingdom of Judah several decades after the northern kingdom, Israel, is conquered by the Assyrians. His goal is to bring comfort to the people of Judah, who are now being threatened by that same enemy. Nahum assures the people of Judah that God is in control and will save them from destruction. God is going to destroy the city of Nineveh, the capital of the cruel Assyrians, for their idolatry, murder, lies, and injustice. This message comforts the people of Judah, reminding them that God is in control of the nations. The world is subject to his justice.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly by Nahum and continue on your journey without making a stop. Your next stop is at Matthew 3:13.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your reading will show you God's might,

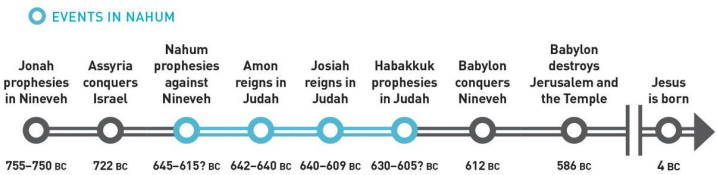
holy judgment, and desire to protect his people. Your next stop is at Nahum 1:1.

1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The stop on your route will show you what consequences await the Assyrians for provoking God's anger and judgment. Your next stop is at Nahum 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN NAHUM

You will catch a glimpse of Jesus in the prophet Nahum, whose name means “comfort.” Jesus is the great Comforter who is close to us and is our refuge when trouble comes (1:7). Jesus also can be seen in the prophet’s descriptions of God as a powerful warrior who tramples down Nineveh for its sins and brings justice to those it has oppressed. In the book of Revelation, Jesus is described with similar imagery. The God of Nahum is Jesus, the Messiah, King of all kings.



Nahum 1

1This message concerning Nineveh came as a vision to Nahum, who
lived in Elkosh.

THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST NINEVEH

2The LORD is a jealous God,

filled with vengeance and rage.
He takes revenge on all who oppose him
and continues to rage against his enemies!

3The LORD is slow to get angry, but his power is great, and he
never lets the guilty go unpunished.
He displays his power in the whirlwind and the storm.
The billowing clouds are the dust beneath his feet.

4At his command the oceans dry up, and the rivers disappear.
The lush pastures of Bashan and Carmel fade,
and the green forests of Lebanon wither.

5In his presence the mountains quake, and the hills melt away;
the earth trembles,
and its people are destroyed.

6Who can stand before his fierce anger?
Who can survive his burning fury?
His rage blazes forth like fire,
and the mountains crumble to dust in his presence.

7The LORD is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes.
He is close to those who trust in him.

8But he will sweep away his enemies*
in an overwhelming flood.
He will pursue his foes
into the darkness of night.

9Why are you scheming against the LORD?
He will destroy you with one blow;
he won't need to strike twice!

10His enemies, tangled like thornbushes and staggering like drunks,
will be burned up like dry stubble in a field.

11Who is this wicked counselor of yours who plots evil against the

LORD?

12This is what the LORD says: “Though the Assyrians have many allies,
they will be destroyed and disappear.
O my people, I have punished you before,
but I will not punish you again.

13Now I will break the yoke of bondage from your neck and tear off the chains of Assyrian oppression.”

14And this is what the LORD says concerning the Assyrians in Nineveh: “You will have no more children to carry on your name.
I will destroy all the idols in the temples of your gods.
I am preparing a grave for you
because you are despicable!”

15*Look! A messenger is coming over the mountains with good news!
He is bringing a message of peace.
Celebrate your festivals, O people of Judah,
and fulfill all your vows,
for your wicked enemies will never invade your land again.
They will be completely destroyed!

Nahum 2

THE FALL OF NINEVEH

1*Your enemy is coming to crush you, Nineveh.
Man the ramparts! Watch the roads!
Prepare your defenses! Call out your forces!

2Even though the destroyer has destroyed Judah, the LORD will restore its honor.
Israel's vine has been stripped of branches,
but he will restore its splendor.

3Shields flash red in the sunlight!
See the scarlet uniforms of the valiant troops!
Watch as their glittering chariots move into position, with a forest of spears waving above them.*

4The chariots race recklessly along the streets and rush wildly through the squares.
They flash like firelight
and move as swiftly as lightning.

5The king shouts to his officers; they stumble in their haste,
rushing to the walls to set up their defenses.

6The river gates have been torn open!
The palace is about to collapse!

7Nineveh's exile has been decreed, and all the servant girls mourn its capture.
They moan like doves
and beat their breasts in sorrow.

8Nineveh is like a leaking water reservoir!
The people are slipping away.
"Stop, stop!" someone shouts,
but no one even looks back.

9Loot the silver!
Plunder the gold!
There's no end to Nineveh's treasures—
its vast, uncounted wealth.

10Soon the city is plundered, empty, and ruined.
Hearts melt and knees shake.
The people stand aghast,
their faces pale and trembling.

11Where now is that great Nineveh, that den filled with young lions?
It was a place where people—like lions and their cubs— walked freely and without fear.

12The lion tore up meat for his cubs and strangled prey for his mate.
He filled his den with prey,
his caverns with his plunder.

13“I am your enemy!”
says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.
“Your chariots will soon go up in smoke.
Your young men* will be killed in battle.
Never again will you plunder conquered nations.
The voices of your proud messengers will be heard no more.”

Nahum 3

THE LORD’S JUDGMENT AGAINST NINEVEH

1What sorrow awaits Nineveh, the city of murder and lies!
She is crammed with wealth
and is never without victims.

2Hear the crack of whips, the rumble of wheels!
Horses’ hooves pound,
and chariots clatter wildly.

3See the flashing swords and glittering spears as the charioteers charge past!
There are countless casualties,
heaps of bodies—

so many bodies that
people stumble over them.

4All this because Nineveh, the beautiful and faithless city,
mistress of deadly charms,
enticed the nations with her beauty.
She taught them all her magic,
enchanting people everywhere.

5“I am your enemy!”
says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.
“And now I will lift your skirts
and show all the earth your nakedness and shame.

6I will cover you with filth and show the world how vile you really are.

7All who see you will shrink back and say, ‘Nineveh lies in ruins.
Where are the mourners?’
Does anyone regret your destruction?”

8Are you any better than the city of Thebes,*
situated on the Nile River, surrounded by water?
She was protected by the river on all sides,
walled in by water.

9Ethiopia* and the land of Egypt gave unlimited assistance.
The nations of Put and Libya
were among her allies.

10Yet Thebes fell, and her people were led away as captives.
Her babies were dashed to death
against the stones of the streets.
Soldiers threw dice* to get Egyptian officers as servants.
All their leaders were bound in chains.

11And you, Nineveh, will also stagger like a drunkard.
You will hide for fear of the attacking enemy.

12All your fortresses will fall.
They will be devoured like the ripe figs
that fall into the mouths
of those who shake the trees.

13Your troops will be as weak and helpless as women.
The gates of your land will be opened wide to the enemy and set on fire and burned.

14Get ready for the siege!
Store up water!
Strengthen the defenses!
Go into the pits to trample clay,
and pack it into molds,
making bricks to repair the walls.

15But the fire will devour you; the sword will cut you down.
The enemy will consume you like locusts,
devouring everything they see.
There will be no escape,
even if you multiply like swarming locusts.

16Your merchants have multiplied until they outnumber the stars.
But like a swarm of locusts,
they strip the land and fly away.

17Your guards* and officials are also like swarming locusts that crowd together in the hedges on a cold day.
But like locusts that fly away when the sun comes up, all of them will fly away and disappear.

18Your shepherds are asleep, O Assyrian king; your princes lie dead in the dust.
Your people are scattered across the mountains
with no one to gather them together.

NINEVEH

19There is no healing for your wound; your injury is fatal.
All who hear of your destruction
will clap their hands for joy.
Where can anyone be found
who has not suffered from your continual cruelty?

Habakkuk

Introduction 1 2 3

WELCOME TO

HABAKKUK

God has chosen the people of Judah as his own, but all Habakkuk sees around him in Judah is wickedness and violence. He cries out to God, complaining about this state of affairs, and receives a very unexpected answer. God is intent on punishing the people of Judah for their sins, and he will use the notoriously brutal Babylonians as the instruments of his judgment. This leaves Habakkuk more baffled than before.

Habakkuk receives far more than he asks for in the visions that God gives him in response. For Habakkuk, seeing these new pictures of God gives him the courage to live through dark days with determination and strength. Habakkuk's closing prayer is a beautiful testimony of his renewed faith in God.

0 STOPS

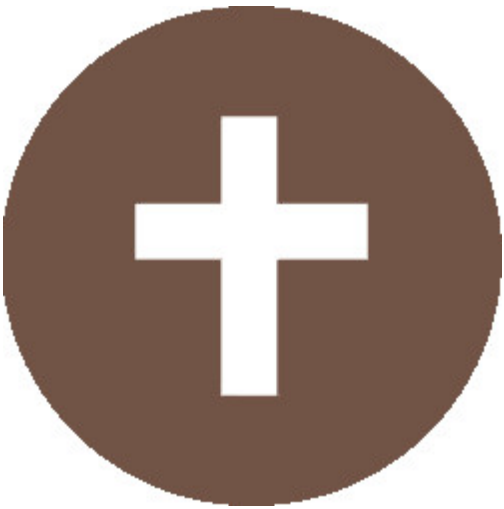
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly over Habakkuk on your way to your next stop, but you may want to take a few minutes to read chapter 3—Habakkuk's closing prayer. Your next stop is at Matthew 3:13.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Habakkuk's closing prayer of awe and worship is the focus of your stop in this book. Your next stop is at Habakkuk 3:1.

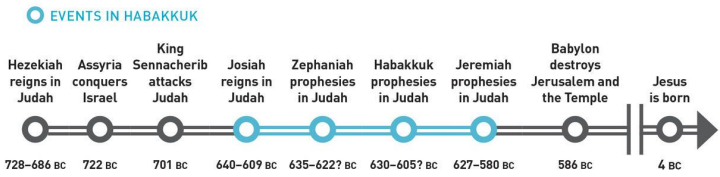
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Beginning with Habakkuk's complaints and ending with his prayer of praise to God, your route through this book will give you a marvelous picture of the complex yet boundless love God has for his people. Your next stop is at Habakkuk 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN HABAKKUK

You can see Jesus in God's responding to Habakkuk in a personal and intimate way. When the prophet came to God with a heartfelt cry of anguish over the injustice he saw around him, God answered him by providing a wider perspective. Similarly, Jesus came to earth and dealt directly and personally with humanity. Habakkuk responded to God with praise and joy; we should respond to Jesus in the same way.



Habakkuk 1

1This is the message that the prophet Habakkuk received in a vision.

HABAKKUK'S COMPLAINT

2How long, O LORD, must I call for help?

But you do not listen!
"Violence is everywhere!" I cry,
but you do not come to save.

3Must I forever see these evil deeds?
Why must I watch all this misery?
Wherever I look,
I see destruction and violence.
I am surrounded by people
who love to argue and fight.

4The law has become paralyzed, and there is no justice in the courts.
The wicked far outnumber the righteous,
so that justice has become perverted.

THE LORD'S REPLY

5The LORD replied,

"Look around at the nations;
look and be amazed!*
For I am doing something in your own day,
something you wouldn't believe
even if someone told you about it.

6I am raising up the Babylonians,*
a cruel and violent people.
They will march across the world
and conquer other lands.

7They are notorious for their cruelty and do whatever they like.

8Their horses are swifter than cheetahs*
and fiercer than wolves at dusk.
Their charioteers charge from far away.
Like eagles, they swoop down to devour their prey.

9"On they come, all bent on violence.
Their hordes advance like a desert wind,
sweeping captives ahead of them like sand.

10They scoff at kings and princes and scorn all their fortresses.
They simply pile ramps of earth
against their walls and capture them!

11They sweep past like the wind and are gone.
But they are deeply guilty,
for their own strength is their god."

HABAKKUK'S SECOND COMPLAINT

12O LORD my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal— surely you do not plan to wipe us out?

O LORD, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins.

13But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil.
Will you wink at their treachery?
Should you be silent while the wicked
swallow up people more righteous than they?

14Are we only fish to be caught and killed?
Are we only sea creatures that have no leader?

15Must we be strung up on their hooks and caught in their nets while they rejoice and celebrate?

16Then they will worship their nets and burn incense in front of them.
"These nets are the gods who have made us rich!"
they will claim.

17Will you let them get away with this forever?
Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests?

Habakkuk 2

1I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost.
There I will wait to see what the LORD says and how he* will
answer my complaint.

THE LORD'S SECOND REPLY

2Then the LORD said to me,

"Write my answer plainly on tablets,
so that a runner can carry the correct message to others.

3This vision is for a future time.
It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled.
If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently,
for it will surely take place.
It will not be delayed.

4"Look at the proud!
They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked.
But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God.*

5Wealth* is treacherous, and the arrogant are never at rest.
They open their mouths as wide as the grave,*
and like death, they are never satisfied.
In their greed they have gathered up many nations
and swallowed many peoples.

6"But soon their captives will taunt them.
They will mock them, saying,
'What sorrow awaits you thieves!
Now you will get what you deserve!
You've become rich by extortion,

but how much longer can this go on?’

7Suddenly, your debtors will take action.
They will turn on you and take all you have,
while you stand trembling and helpless.

8Because you have plundered many nations, now all the survivors will plunder you.
You committed murder throughout the countryside
and filled the towns with violence.

9“What sorrow awaits you who build big houses with money gained dishonestly!
You believe your wealth will buy security,
putting your family’s nest beyond the reach of danger.

10But by the murders you committed, you have shamed your name and forfeited your lives.

11The very stones in the walls cry out against you, and the beams in the ceilings echo the complaint.

12“What sorrow awaits you who build cities with money gained through murder and corruption!

13Has not the LORD of Heaven’s Armies promised that the wealth of nations will turn to ashes?
They work so hard,
but all in vain!

14For as the waters fill the sea, the earth will be filled with an awareness
of the glory of the LORD.

15“What sorrow awaits you who make your neighbors drunk!
You force your cup on them
so you can gloat over their shameful nakedness.

16But soon it will be your turn to be disgraced.
Come, drink and be exposed!*
Drink from the cup of the LORD’s judgment, and all your glory will

be turned to shame.

17You cut down the forests of Lebanon.
Now you will be cut down.
You destroyed the wild animals,
so now their terror will be yours.
You committed murder throughout the countryside
and filled the towns with violence.

18“What good is an idol carved by man, or a cast image that deceives you?
How foolish to trust in your own creation—
a god that can’t even talk!

19What sorrow awaits you who say to wooden idols, ‘Wake up and save us!’
To speechless stone images you say,
‘Rise up and teach us!’
Can an idol tell you what to do?
They may be overlaid with gold and silver,
but they are lifeless inside.

20But the LORD is in his holy Temple.
Let all the earth be silent before him.”

PRAYERS HABAKKUK 3:1-19

Habakkuk 3

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

1This prayer was sung by the prophet Habakkuk*:

2I have heard all about you, LORD.
I am filled with awe by your amazing works.
In this time of our deep need,
help us again as you did in years gone by.

And in your anger,
remember your mercy.

3I see God moving across the deserts from Edom,*
the Holy One coming from Mount Paran.*
His brilliant splendor fills the heavens,
and the earth is filled with his praise.

4His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise.
Rays of light flash from his hands,
where his awesome power is hidden.

5Pestilence marches before him; plague follows close behind.

6When he stops, the earth shakes.
When he looks, the nations tremble.
He shatters the everlasting mountains
and levels the eternal hills.
He is the Eternal One!*

7I see the people of Cushan in distress, and the nation of Midian
trembling in terror.

8Was it in anger, LORD, that you struck the rivers and parted the
sea?
Were you displeased with them?
No, you were sending your chariots of salvation!

9You brandished your bow and your quiver of arrows.
You split open the earth with flowing rivers.

10The mountains watched and trembled.
Onward swept the raging waters.
The mighty deep cried out,
lifting its hands in submission.

11The sun and moon stood still in the sky as your brilliant arrows
flew

and your glittering spear flashed.

12You marched across the land in anger and trampled the nations in
your fury.

13You went out to rescue your chosen people, to save your anointed
ones.
You crushed the heads of the wicked
and stripped their bones from head to toe.

14With his own weapons, you destroyed the chief of those
who rushed out like a whirlwind,
thinking Israel would be easy prey.

15You trampled the sea with your horses, and the mighty waters
piled high.

16I trembled inside when I heard this; my lips quivered with fear.
My legs gave way beneath me,*
and I shook in terror.
I will wait quietly for the coming day
when disaster will strike the people who invade us.

17Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no
grapes on the vines;
even though the olive crop fails,
and the fields lie empty and barren;
even though the flocks die in the fields,
and the cattle barns are empty,

18yet I will rejoice in the LORD!
I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!

19The Sovereign LORD is my strength!
He makes me as surefooted as a deer,*
able to tread upon the heights.

(For the choir director: This prayer is to be accompanied by

stringed instruments.)

Zephaniah

Introduction 1 2 3

WELCOME TO

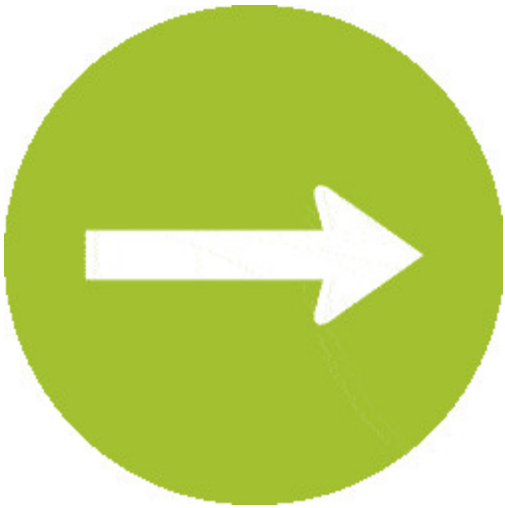
ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah is a prophet to the nation of Judah. He declares that a day of judgment is coming—the Day of the Lord. On this day the Lord will judge all the kingdoms and nations of the world. The prophet declares judgment on Judah's enemies—Philistia, Moab, Ammon, Ethiopia, and Assyria—but he also proclaims a coming judgment against the city of Jerusalem itself. Stirred by Zephaniah's message, King Josiah institutes sweeping reforms, though they don't last.

Zephaniah's message is a stern one, based on the righteous judgment of God; but it also leaves the people with hope and a promise. Some day the Lord will live among his people, and they will be glad and rejoice.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: There are no stops in Zephaniah. Keep on moving toward the New Testament! Your next stop is at Matthew 3:13.



1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your one reading will show you God's

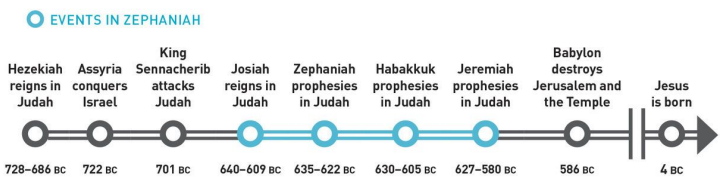
great plans for his people: first punishment for their sins, then cleansing and restoration. Your next stop is at Zephaniah 3:1.

1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll stop at a key reading in the book of Zephaniah, in which God relates his plans for bringing his people back to himself and restoring their fortunes. Your next stop is at Zephaniah 3:1.

FINDING JESUS IN ZEPHANIAH

Jesus' time on earth was the fulfillment of what Zephaniah had promised, that "the LORD himself . . . will live among you" (3:15). Jesus spent his life and ministry teaching people how to live rightly by loving God and loving others. Love was part of God's plan for bringing justice. Jesus also died so that people could live with God and love him forever.



Zephaniah 1

1The LORD gave this message to Zephaniah when Josiah son of

Amon was king of Judah. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah.

COMING JUDGMENT AGAINST JUDAH

2"I will sweep away everything

from the face of the earth," says the LORD.

3"I will sweep away people and animals alike.
I will sweep away the birds of the sky and the fish in the sea.
I will reduce the wicked to heaps of rubble,*
and I will wipe humanity from the face of the earth," says the LORD.

4"I will crush Judah and Jerusalem with my fist and destroy every last trace of their Baal worship.
I will put an end to all the idolatrous priests,
so that even the memory of them will disappear.

5For they go up to their roofs and bow down to the sun, moon, and stars.
They claim to follow the LORD,
but then they worship Molech,* too.

6And I will destroy those who used to worship me but now no longer do.
They no longer ask for the LORD's guidance or seek my blessings."

7Stand in silence in the presence of the Sovereign LORD, for the awesome day of the LORD's judgment is near.
The LORD has prepared his people for a great slaughter and has chosen their executioners.*

8"On that day of judgment,"
says the LORD,
"I will punish the leaders and princes of Judah
and all those following pagan customs.

9Yes, I will punish those who participate in pagan worship
ceremonies, and those who fill their masters' houses with violence
and deceit.

10"On that day," says the LORD, "a cry of alarm will come from the
Fish Gate
and echo throughout the New Quarter of the city.*
And a great crash will sound from the hills.

11Wail in sorrow, all you who live in the market area,*
for all the merchants and traders will be destroyed.

12"I will search with lanterns in Jerusalem's darkest corners to
punish those who sit complacent in their sins.
They think the LORD will do nothing to them, either good or bad.

13So their property will be plundered, their homes will be
ransacked.
They will build new homes
but never live in them.
They will plant vineyards
but never drink wine from them.

14"That terrible day of the LORD is near.
Swiftly it comes—
a day of bitter tears,
a day when even strong men will cry out.

15It will be a day when the LORD's anger is poured out— a day of
terrible distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and desolation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness,

16a day of trumpet calls and battle cries.
Down go the walled cities
and the strongest battlements!

17“Because you have sinned against the LORD, I will make you
grope around like the blind.
Your blood will be poured into the dust,
and your bodies will lie rotting on the ground.”

18Your silver and gold will not save you on that day of the LORD’s
anger.
For the whole land will be devoured
by the fire of his jealousy.
He will make a terrifying end
of all the people on earth.*

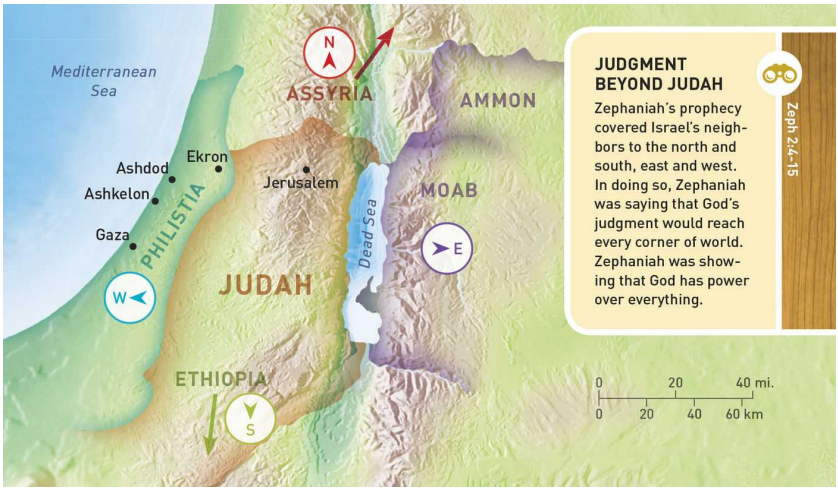
Zephaniah 2

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

1Gather together—yes, gather together, you shameless nation.

2Gather before judgment begins, before your time to repent is
blown away like chaff.
Act now, before the fierce fury of the LORD falls and the terrible
day of the LORD’s anger begins.

3Seek the LORD, all who are humble, and follow his commands.
Seek to do what is right
and to live humbly.
Perhaps even yet the LORD will protect you— protect you from his
anger on that day of destruction.



JUDGMENT BEYOND JUDAH

JUDGMENT AGAINST PHILISTIA

4Gaza and Ashkelon will be abandoned,

Ashdod and Ekron torn down.

5And what sorrow awaits you Philistines*
who live along the coast and in the land of Canaan,
for this judgment is against you, too!
The LORD will destroy you
until not one of you is left.

6The Philistine coast will become a wilderness pasture, a place of shepherd camps
and enclosures for sheep and goats.

7The remnant of the tribe of Judah will pasture there.
They will rest at night in the abandoned houses in Ashkelon.
For the LORD their God will visit his people in kindness and restore their prosperity again.

JUDGMENT AGAINST MOAB AND AMMON

8“I have heard the taunts of the Moabites

and the insults of the Ammonites,
mocking my people
and invading their borders.

9Now, as surely as I live,”
says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, “Moab and Ammon will be destroyed— destroyed as completely as Sodom and Gomorrah.
Their land will become a place of stinging nettles,
salt pits, and eternal desolation.
The remnant of my people will plunder them
and take their land.”

10They will receive the wages of their pride, for they have scoffed at the people of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

11The LORD will terrify them as he destroys all the gods in the land. Then nations around the world will worship the LORD, each in their own land.

JUDGMENT AGAINST ETHIOPIA AND ASSYRIA

12“You Ethiopians* will also be slaughtered by my sword,” says the LORD.

13And the LORD will strike the lands of the north with his fist, destroying the land of Assyria.
He will make its great capital, Nineveh, a desolate wasteland, parched like a desert.

14The proud city will become a pasture for flocks and herds, and all sorts of wild animals will settle there.
The desert owl and screech owl will roost on its ruined columns, their calls echoing through the gaping windows.
Rubble will block all the doorways,
and the cedar paneling will be exposed to the weather.

15This is the boisterous city, once so secure.
“I am the greatest!” it boasted.
“No other city can compare with me!”
But now, look how it has become an utter ruin,
a haven for wild animals.
Everyone passing by will laugh in derision
and shake a defiant fist.

Zephaniah 3

JERUSALEM'S REBELLION AND REDEMPTION

1What sorrow awaits rebellious, polluted Jerusalem, the city of
violence and crime!

2No one can tell it anything; it refuses all correction.
It does not trust in the LORD
or draw near to its God.

3Its leaders are like roaring lions hunting for their victims.
Its judges are like ravenous wolves at evening time,
who by dawn have left no trace of their prey.

4Its prophets are arrogant liars seeking their own gain.
Its priests defile the Temple by disobeying God's instructions.

5But the LORD is still there in the city, and he does no wrong.
Day by day he hands down justice,
and he does not fail.
But the wicked know no shame.

6"I have wiped out many nations, devastating their fortress walls
and towers.
Their streets are now deserted;
their cities lie in silent ruin.
There are no survivors—
none at all.

7I thought, 'Surely they will have reverence for me now!
Surely they will listen to my warnings.
Then I won't need to strike again,
destroying their homes.'
But no, they get up early
to continue their evil deeds.

8Therefore, be patient," says the LORD.
"Soon I will stand and accuse these evil nations.
For I have decided to gather the kingdoms of the earth
and pour out my fiercest anger and fury on them.
All the earth will be devoured
by the fire of my jealousy.

GOD LOVES YOU ZEPHANIAH 3:9-20

9“Then I will purify the speech of all people, so that everyone can
worship the LORD together.

10My scattered people who live beyond the rivers of Ethiopia*
will come to present their offerings.

11On that day you will no longer need to be ashamed, for you will
no longer be rebels against me.
I will remove all proud and arrogant people from among you.
There will be no more haughtiness on my holy mountain.

12Those who are left will be the lowly and humble, for it is they
who trust in the name of the LORD.

13The remnant of Israel will do no wrong; they will never tell lies or
deceive one another.
They will eat and sleep in safety,
and no one will make them afraid.”

14Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!

15For the LORD will remove his hand of judgment and will disperse
the armies of your enemy.

And the LORD himself, the King of Israel, will live among you!
At last your troubles will be over,
and you will never again fear disaster.

16On that day the announcement to Jerusalem will be, “Cheer up,
Zion! Don’t be afraid!

17For the LORD your God is living among you.
He is a mighty savior.
He will take delight in you with gladness.
With his love, he will calm all your fears.*
He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.”

18“I will gather you who mourn for the appointed festivals; you will
be disgraced no more.*

19And I will deal severely with all who have oppressed you.
I will save the weak and helpless ones;
I will bring together
those who were chased away.
I will give glory and fame to my former exiles,
wherever they have been mocked and shamed.

20On that day I will gather you together and bring you home again.
I will give you a good name, a name of distinction,
among all the nations of the earth,
as I restore your fortunes before their very eyes.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Haggai

WELCOME TO

HAGGAI

Haggai is sent by God to preach to the people who have returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. Soon after returning to Jerusalem, the people become discouraged and are distracted from their first priority: rebuilding God's Temple. Haggai encourages the restored community to finish the project.

Haggai's messages are directed to the two leaders of the people, Zerubbabel the governor and Jeshua the priest. Through Haggai, God tells the people that they have selfishly forgotten that the house of the Lord is still unfinished while they live in comfort. Haggai's prophecies are designed to speed the work along. His message has the desired effect, and the Temple is completed and rededicated in 516 BC.

0 STOPS

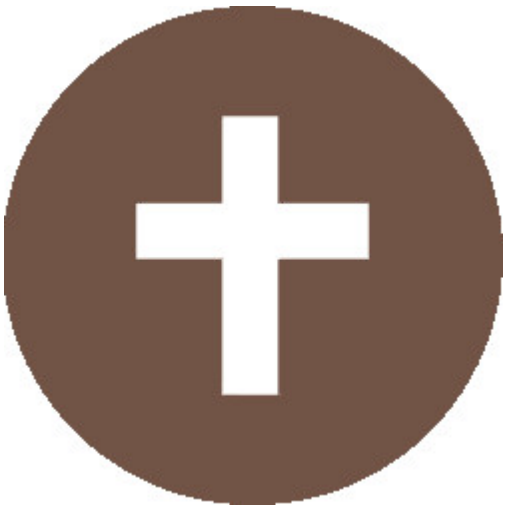
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over Haggai, never touching down. Your next stop is at Matthew 3:13.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your reading will focus on Haggai's first message to his fellow Jews: Be faithful and obey God's call to finish rebuilding the Temple. Your next stop is at Haggai 1:1.

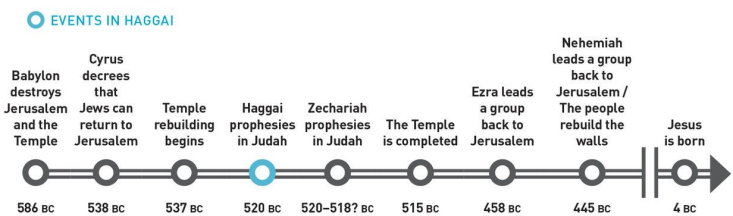
1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your route will cover the entirety of this book, exploring not only the need for the Temple to be completed but also the rewards God has planned for those who are obedient to him. Your next stop is at Haggai 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN HAGGAI

This book gives us a glimpse of Jesus in chapter 2, where Haggai assures the Jews that the glory of the Temple will be restored. Jesus himself would be the Temple in a way that the physical building could never duplicate. Jerusalem's Temple was the place where God met with his people. The building's destruction reflected the broken relationship between God and his people. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Temple's purpose: to connect God with humanity. We no longer need a building to meet with God because we have Jesus.



Haggai 1

A CALL TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

1On August 29* of the second year of King Darius's reign, the LORD
gave a message through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of
Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Jeshua* son of Jehozadak, the
high priest.

2"This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: The people are
saying, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the
LORD.'"

3Then the LORD sent this message through the prophet Haggai:
4"Why are you living in luxurious houses while my house lies in
ruins? 5This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: Look at
what's happening to you! 6You have planted much but harvest little.
You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put
on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though
you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!

7“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: Look at what’s
happening to you! 8Now go up into the hills, bring down timber,
and rebuild my house. Then I will take pleasure in it and be
honored, says the LORD. 9You hoped for rich harvests, but they
were poor. And when you brought your harvest home, I blew it
away. Why? Because my house lies in ruins, says the LORD of
Heaven’s Armies, while all of you are busy building your own fine
houses. 10It’s because of you that the heavens withhold the dew and
the earth produces no crops. 11I have called for a drought on your
fields and hills—a drought to wither the grain and grapes and olive
trees and all your other crops, a drought to starve you and your
livestock and to ruin everything you have worked so hard to get.”

OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S CALL

12Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua son of Jehozadak,
the high priest, and the whole remnant of God’s people began to
obey the message from the LORD their God. When they heard the
words of the prophet Haggai, whom the LORD their God had sent,
the people feared the LORD. 13Then Haggai, the LORD’s messenger,
gave the people this message from the LORD: “I am with you, says
the LORD!”

14So the LORD sparked the enthusiasm of Zerubbabel son of
Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the enthusiasm of Jeshua son of
Jehozadak, the high priest, and the enthusiasm of the whole
remnant of God’s people. They began to work on the house of their
God, the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, 15on September 21* of the
second year of King Darius’s reign.

Haggai 2

THE NEW TEMPLE'S DIMINISHED SPLENDOR

1Then on October 17 of that same year,* the LORD sent another
message through the prophet Haggai. 2"Say this to Zerubbabel son
of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Jeshua* son of Jehozadak,
the high priest, and to the remnant of God's people there in the
land: 3'Does anyone remember this house—this Temple—in its
former splendor? How, in comparison, does it look to you now? It
must seem like nothing at all! 4But now the LORD says: Be strong,
Zerubbabel. Be strong, Jeshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be
strong, all you people still left in the land. And now get to work, for
I am with you, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 5My Spirit
remains among you, just as I promised when you came out of
Egypt. So do not be afraid.'

6"For this is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: In just a little
while I will again shake the heavens and the earth, the oceans and
the dry land. 7I will shake all the nations, and the treasures of all
the nations will be brought to this Temple. I will fill this place with
glory, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 8The silver is mine, and
the gold is mine, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 9The future
glory of this Temple will be greater than its past glory, says the
LORD of Heaven's Armies. And in this place I will bring peace. I,
the LORD of Heaven's Armies, have spoken!"

BLESSINGS PROMISED FOR OBEDIENCE

10On December 18* of the second year of King Darius's reign, the
LORD sent this message to the prophet Haggai: 11"This is what the
LORD of Heaven's Armies says. Ask the priests this question about
the law: 12'If one of you is carrying some meat from a holy sacrifice
in his robes and his robe happens to brush against some bread or
stew, wine or olive oil, or any other kind of food, will it also
become holy?'"

The priests replied, “No.”

13Then Haggai asked, “If someone becomes ceremonially unclean by
touching a dead person and then touches any of these foods, will
the food be defiled?”

And the priests answered, “Yes.”

14Then Haggai responded, “That is how it is with this people and
this nation, says the LORD. Everything they do and everything they
offer is defiled by their sin. 15Look at what was happening to you
before you began to lay the foundation of the LORD’s Temple.
16When you hoped for a twenty-bushel crop, you harvested only
ten. When you expected to draw fifty gallons from the winepress,
you found only twenty. 17I sent blight and mildew and hail to
destroy everything you worked so hard to produce. Even so, you
refused to return to me, says the LORD.

18“Think about this eighteenth day of December, the day* when the
foundation of the LORD’s Temple was laid. Think carefully. 19I am
giving you a promise now while the seed is still in the barn.* You
have not yet harvested your grain, and your grapevines, fig trees,
pomegranates, and olive trees have not yet produced their crops.
But from this day onward I will bless you.”

PROMISES FOR ZERUBBABEL

20On that same day, December 18,* the LORD sent this second
message to Haggai: 21“Tell Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, that I
am about to shake the heavens and the earth. 22I will overthrow
royal thrones and destroy the power of foreign kingdoms. I will
overturn their chariots and riders. The horses will fall, and their
riders will kill each other.

23“But when this happens, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, I will

honor you, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, my servant. I will make you like a signet ring on my finger, says the LORD, for I have chosen you. I, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, have spoken!"

Zechariah

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

WELCOME TO

ZECHARIAH

Like Haggai, Zechariah preaches to the Israelites who have returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with Zerubbabel. Zechariah encourages the people to serve God without fear, rallies them to focus on rebuilding God's Temple, and inspires them to renew their devotion to God through repentance. During a difficult time, he brings hope by reminding the people that God was in control of every event in history.

This book has two parts. It begins with a series of eight visions that depict in highly descriptive language the power of God, God's control over human affairs, the importance of spiritual strength, God's judgment on sin, and the promise of blessings to come. These visions are followed by a series of messages about the judgment to come.

0 STOPS

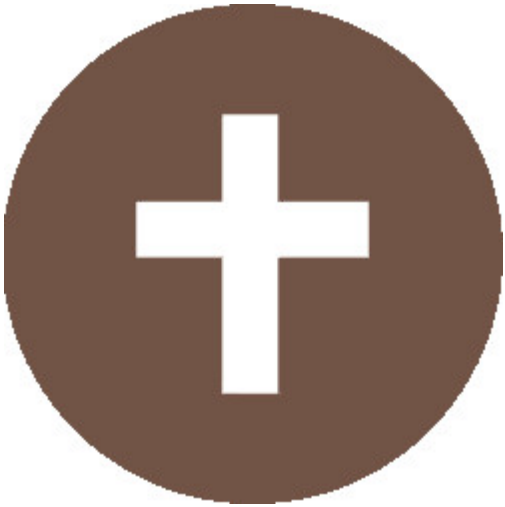
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You won't need to land here. However, you may want to glance at the section headings to get a sense of the kinds of events that Zechariah predicts in his visions. Your next stop is at Matthew 3:13.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your reading in Zechariah will show you the first of the prophet's visions, which highlights both God's power over world affairs and his great compassion for his people. Your next stop is at Zechariah 1:1.

3 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your route will take you through some passages of Zechariah that highlight God's sovereignty over all creation and foreshadow the blessings to come. Your next stop is at Zechariah 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN ZECHARIAH

Zechariah said much about the coming Messiah: He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey and bring peace (9:9), he would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (11:12-13), and he would be "pierced" by his own people (12:10). In the end, Jesus will be the triumphant King (14:17).
You will also recognize Jesus in Zechariah's reference to "the Branch" who will "receive royal honor," "rule as king," and "serve as priest" (6:12-13).

Zechariah 1

A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LORD

1 In November* of the second year of King Darius's reign, the LORD
gave this message to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah and
grandson of Iddo:

2 "I, the LORD, was very angry with your ancestors. 3 Therefore, say

to the people, ‘This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says:
Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of Heaven’s
Armies.’ 4Don’t be like your ancestors who would not listen or pay
attention when the earlier prophets said to them, ‘This is what the
LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: Turn from your evil ways, and stop
all your evil practices.’

5“Where are your ancestors now? They and the prophets are long
dead. 6But everything I said through my servants the prophets
happened to your ancestors, just as I said. As a result, they repented
and said, ‘We have received what we deserved from the LORD of
Heaven’s Armies. He has done what he said he would do.’”

A MAN AMONG THE MYRTLE TREES

7Three months later, on February 15,* the LORD sent another
message to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah and grandson of
Iddo.

8In a vision during the night, I saw a man sitting on a red horse that
was standing among some myrtle trees in a small valley. Behind
him were riders on red, brown, and white horses. 9I asked the angel
who was talking with me, “My lord, what do these horses mean?”

“I will show you,” the angel replied.

10The rider standing among the myrtle trees then explained, “They
are the ones the LORD has sent out to patrol the earth.”

11Then the other riders reported to the angel of the LORD, who was
standing among the myrtle trees, “We have been patrolling the
earth, and the whole earth is at peace.”

12Upon hearing this, the angel of the LORD prayed this prayer: “O
LORD of Heaven’s Armies, for seventy years now you have been

angry with Jerusalem and the towns of Judah. How long until you again show mercy to them?” 13And the LORD spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me.

14Then the angel said to me, “Shout this message for all to hear: ‘This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: My love for Jerusalem and Mount Zion is passionate and strong. 15But I am very angry with the other nations that are now enjoying peace and security. I was only a little angry with my people, but the nations inflicted harm on them far beyond my intentions.

16“‘Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I have returned to show mercy to Jerusalem. My Temple will be rebuilt, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, and measurements will be taken for the reconstruction of Jerusalem.*’

17“Say this also: ‘This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: The towns of Israel will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem as his own.’”

FOUR HORNS AND FOUR BLACKSMITHS

18*Then I looked up and saw four animal horns. 19“What are these?” I asked the angel who was talking with me.

He replied, “These horns represent the nations that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”

20Then the LORD showed me four blacksmiths. 21“What are these men coming to do?” I asked.

The angel replied, “These four horns—these nations—scattered and humbled Judah. Now these blacksmiths have come to terrify those nations and throw them down and destroy them.”

Zechariah 2

FUTURE PROSPERITY OF JERUSALEM

1 * When I looked again, I saw a man with a measuring line in his
hand. 2 "Where are you going?" I asked.

He replied, "I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and
how long it is."

3 Then the angel who was with me went to meet a second angel who
was coming toward him. 4 The other angel said, "Hurry, and say to
that young man, 'Jerusalem will someday be so full of people and
livestock that there won't be room enough for everyone! Many will
live outside the city walls. 5 Then I, myself, will be a protective wall
of fire around Jerusalem, says the LORD. And I will be the glory
inside the city!'"

THE EXILES ARE CALLED HOME

6 The LORD says, "Come away! Flee from Babylon in the land of the
north, for I have scattered you to the four winds. 7 Come away,
people of Zion, you who are exiled in Babylon!"

8 After a period of glory, the LORD of Heaven's Armies sent me *
against the nations who plundered you. For he said, "Anyone who
harms you harms my most precious possession. * 9 I will raise my fist
to crush them, and their own slaves will plunder them." Then you

will know that the LORD of Heaven's Armies has sent me.

10The LORD says, "Shout and rejoice, O beautiful Jerusalem,* for I
am coming to live among you. 11Many nations will join themselves
to the LORD on that day, and they, too, will be my people. I will
live among you, and you will know that the LORD of Heaven's
Armies sent me to you. 12The land of Judah will be the LORD's
special possession in the holy land, and he will once again choose
Jerusalem to be his own city. 13Be silent before the LORD, all
humanity, for he is springing into action from his holy dwelling."

ANGELS ZECHARIAH 3:1-10

Zechariah 3

CLEANSING FOR THE HIGH PRIEST

1Then the angel showed me Jeshua* the high priest standing before
the angel of the LORD. The Accuser, Satan,* was there at the angel's
right hand, making accusations against Jeshua. 2And the LORD said
to Satan, "I, the LORD, reject your accusations, Satan. Yes, the
LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebukes you. This man is like a
burning stick that has been snatched from the fire."

3Jeshua's clothing was filthy as he stood there before the angel. 4So
the angel said to the others standing there, "Take off his filthy

clothes.” And turning to Jeshua he said, “See, I have taken away your sins, and now I am giving you these fine new clothes.”

5Then I said, “They should also place a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean priestly turban on his head and dressed him in new clothes while the angel of the LORD stood by.

6Then the angel of the LORD spoke very solemnly to Jeshua and said, 7“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: If you follow my ways and carefully serve me, then you will be given authority over my Temple and its courtyards. I will let you walk among these others standing here.

8“Listen to me, O Jeshua the high priest, and all you other priests. You are symbols of things to come. Soon I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. 9Now look at the jewel I have set before Jeshua, a single stone with seven facets.* I will engrave an inscription on it, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, and I will remove the sins of this land in a single day.

10“And on that day, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, each of you will invite your neighbor to sit with you peacefully under your own grapevine and fig tree.”

VISIONS ZECHARIAH 4:1-14

Zechariah 4

A LAMPSTAND AND TWO OLIVE TREES

1Then the angel who had been talking with me returned and woke
me, as though I had been asleep. 2"What do you see now?" he
asked.

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl of oil on top
of it. Around the bowl are seven lamps, each having seven spouts
with wicks. 3And I see two olive trees, one on each side of the
bowl." 4Then I asked the angel, "What are these, my lord? What do
they mean?"

5"Don't you know?" the angel asked.

"No, my lord," I replied.

6Then he said to me, "This is what the LORD says to Zerubbabel: It
is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of
Heaven's Armies. 7Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand
in Zerubbabel's way; it will become a level plain before him! And
when Zerubbabel sets the final stone of the Temple in place, the
people will shout: 'May God bless it! May God bless it!'*"

8Then another message came to me from the LORD: 9"Zerubbabel is
the one who laid the foundation of this Temple, and he will
complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of Heaven's Armies
has sent me. 10Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD
rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's
hand."

(The seven lamps* represent the eyes of the LORD that search all
around the world.)

11Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on each
side of the lampstand, 12and what are the two olive branches that
pour out golden oil through two gold tubes?"

13“Don’t you know?” he asked.

“No, my lord,” I replied.

14Then he said to me, “They represent the two anointed ones* who stand in the court of the Lord of all the earth.”

Zechariah 5

A FLYING SCROLL

1I looked up again and saw a scroll flying through the air.

2“What do you see?” the angel asked.

“I see a flying scroll,” I replied. “It appears to be about 30 feet long and 15 feet wide.*”

3Then he said to me, “This scroll contains the curse that is going out over the entire land. One side of the scroll says that those who steal will be banished from the land; the other side says that those who swear falsely will be banished from the land. 4And this is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: I am sending this curse into the house of every thief and into the house of everyone who swears falsely using my name. And my curse will remain in that house and completely destroy it—even its timbers and stones.”

A WOMAN IN A BASKET

5Then the angel who was talking with me came forward and said, “Look up and see what’s coming.”

6“What is it?” I asked.

He replied, “It is a basket for measuring grain,* and it’s filled with the sins* of everyone throughout the land.”

7Then the heavy lead cover was lifted off the basket, and there was a woman sitting inside it. 8The angel said, “The woman’s name is Wickedness,” and he pushed her back into the basket and closed the heavy lid again.

9Then I looked up and saw two women flying toward us, gliding on the wind. They had wings like a stork, and they picked up the basket and flew into the sky.

10“Where are they taking the basket?” I asked the angel.

11He replied, “To the land of Babylonia,* where they will build a temple for the basket. And when the temple is ready, they will set the basket there on its pedestal.”

Zechariah 6

FOUR CHARIOTS

1Then I looked up again and saw four chariots coming from between two bronze mountains. 2The first chariot was pulled by red horses, the second by black horses, 3the third by white horses, and the fourth by powerful dappled-gray horses. 4“And what are these, my lord?” I asked the angel who was talking with me.

5The angel replied, “These are the four spirits* of heaven who stand before the Lord of all the earth. They are going out to do his work. 6The chariot with black horses is going north, the chariot with

white horses is going west,* and the chariot with dappled-gray horses is going south."

7The powerful horses were eager to set out to patrol the earth. And the LORD said, "Go and patrol the earth!" So they left at once on their patrol.

8Then the LORD summoned me and said, "Look, those who went north have vented the anger of my Spirit* there in the land of the north."

THE CROWNING OF JESHUA

9Then I received another message from the LORD: 10"Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah will bring gifts of silver and gold from the Jews exiled in Babylon. As soon as they arrive, meet them at the home of Josiah son of Zephaniah. 11Accept their gifts, and make a crown from the silver and gold. Then put the crown on the head of Jeshua* son of Jehozadak, the high priest. 12Tell him, 'This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: Here is the man called the Branch. He will branch out from where he is and build the Temple of the LORD. 13Yes, he will build the Temple of the LORD. Then he will receive royal honor and will rule as king from his throne. He will also serve as priest from his throne,* and there will be perfect harmony between his two roles.'

14"The crown will be a memorial in the Temple of the LORD to honor those who gave it—Heldai,* Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Josiah* son of Zephaniah."

15People will come from distant lands to rebuild the Temple of the LORD. And when this happens, you will know that my messages have been from the LORD of Heaven's Armies. All this will happen if you carefully obey what the LORD your God says.

Zechariah 7

A CALL TO JUSTICE AND MERCY

1On December 7* of the fourth year of King Darius's reign, another
message came to Zechariah from the LORD. 2The people of Bethel
had sent Sharezer and Regemmelech,* along with their attendants,
to seek the LORD's favor. 3They were to ask this question of the
prophets and the priests at the Temple of the LORD of Heaven's
Armies: "Should we continue to mourn and fast each summer on
the anniversary of the Temple's destruction,* as we have done for so
many years?"

4The LORD of Heaven's Armies sent me this message in reply: 5"Say
to all your people and your priests, 'During these seventy years of
exile, when you fasted and mourned in the summer and in early
autumn,* was it really for me that you were fasting? 6And even now
in your holy festivals, aren't you eating and drinking just to please
yourselves? 7Isn't this the same message the LORD proclaimed
through the prophets in years past when Jerusalem and the towns
of Judah were bustling with people, and the Negev and the foothills
of Judah* were well populated?'"

8Then this message came to Zechariah from the LORD: 9"This is
what the LORD of Heaven's Armies says: Judge fairly, and show
mercy and kindness to one another. 10Do not oppress widows,
orphans, foreigners, and the poor. And do not scheme against each
other.

11"Your ancestors refused to listen to this message. They stubbornly
turned away and put their fingers in their ears to keep from
hearing. 12They made their hearts as hard as stone, so they could
not hear the instructions or the messages that the LORD of Heaven's
Armies had sent them by his Spirit through the earlier prophets.
That is why the LORD of Heaven's Armies was so angry with them.

13“Since they refused to listen when I called to them, I would not
listen when they called to me, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.
14As with a whirlwind, I scattered them among the distant nations,
where they lived as strangers. Their land became so desolate that
no one even traveled through it. They turned their pleasant land
into a desert.”

Zechariah 8

PROMISED BLESSINGS FOR JERUSALEM

1Then another message came to me from the LORD of Heaven’s
Armies: 2“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: My love
for Mount Zion is passionate and strong; I am consumed with
passion for Jerusalem!

3“And now the LORD says: I am returning to Mount Zion, and I will
live in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City;
the mountain of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will be called the
Holy Mountain.

4“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: Once again old
men and women will walk Jerusalem’s streets with their canes and
will sit together in the city squares. 5And the streets of the city will
be filled with boys and girls at play.

6“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: All this may seem
impossible to you now, a small remnant of God’s people. But is it
impossible for me? says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

7“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: You can be sure
that I will rescue my people from the east and from the west. 8I will
bring them home again to live safely in Jerusalem. They will be my
people, and I will be faithful and just toward them as their God.

9“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: Be strong and
finish the task! Ever since the laying of the foundation of the
Temple of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, you have heard what the
prophets have been saying about completing the building. 10Before
the work on the Temple began, there were no jobs and no money to
hire people or animals. No traveler was safe from the enemy, for
there were enemies on all sides. I had turned everyone against each
other.

11“But now I will not treat the remnant of my people as I treated
them before, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. 12For I am planting
seeds of peace and prosperity among you. The grapevines will be
heavy with fruit. The earth will produce its crops, and the heavens
will release the dew. Once more I will cause the remnant in Judah
and Israel to inherit these blessings. 13Among the other nations,
Judah and Israel became symbols of a cursed nation. But no longer!
Now I will rescue you and make you both a symbol and a source of
blessing. So don’t be afraid. Be strong, and get on with rebuilding
the Temple!

14“For this is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: I was
determined to punish you when your ancestors angered me, and I
did not change my mind, says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. 15But
now I am determined to bless Jerusalem and the people of Judah.
So don’t be afraid. 16But this is what you must do: Tell the truth to
each other. Render verdicts in your courts that are just and that
lead to peace. 17Don’t scheme against each other. Stop your love of
telling lies that you swear are the truth. I hate all these things, says
the LORD.”

18Here is another message that came to me from the LORD of
Heaven’s Armies. 19“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says:
The traditional fasts and times of mourning you have kept in early
summer, midsummer, autumn, and winter* are now ended. They
will become festivals of joy and celebration for the people of Judah.
So love truth and peace.

20“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: People from
nations and cities around the world will travel to Jerusalem. 21The
people of one city will say to the people of another, ‘Come with us
to Jerusalem to ask the LORD to bless us. Let’s worship the LORD of
Heaven’s Armies. I’m determined to go.’ 22Many peoples and
powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD of
Heaven’s Armies and to ask for his blessing.

23“This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies says: In those days ten
men from different nations and languages of the world will clutch
at the sleeve of one Jew. And they will say, ‘Please let us walk with
you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”

Zechariah 9

JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL’S ENEMIES

1This is the message* from the LORD against the land of Aram* and
the city of Damascus, for the eyes of humanity, including all the
tribes of Israel, are on the LORD.

2Doom is certain for Hamath, near Damascus, and for the cities of
Tyre and Sidon, though they are so clever.

3Tyre has built a strong fortress and has made silver and gold as
plentiful as dust in the streets!

4But now the Lord will strip away Tyre’s possessions and hurl its
fortifications into the sea, and it will be burned to the ground.

5The city of Ashkelon will see Tyre fall and will be filled with fear.
Gaza will shake with terror, as will Ekron, for their hopes will be
dashed.
Gaza’s king will be killed, and Ashkelon will be deserted.

6Foreigners will occupy the city of Ashdod.
I will destroy the pride of the Philistines.

7I will grab the bloody meat from their mouths and snatch the detestable sacrifices from their teeth.
Then the surviving Philistines will worship our God and become like a clan in Judah.*
The Philistines of Ekron will join my people, as the ancient Jebusites once did.

8I will guard my Temple and protect it from invading armies.
I am watching closely to ensure that no more foreign oppressors overrun my people's land.

THE MESSIAH ZECHARIAH 9:9-17

ZION'S COMING KING

9 Rejoice, O people of Zion!*

Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem!
Look, your king is coming to you.
He is righteous and victorious,*
yet he is humble, riding on a donkey— riding on a donkey's colt.

10 I will remove the battle chariots from Israel*
and the warhorses from Jerusalem.
I will destroy all the weapons used in battle, and your king will bring peace to the nations.
His realm will stretch from sea to sea and from the Euphrates River*
to the ends of the earth.*

11 Because of the covenant I made with you, sealed with blood, I will free your prisoners from death in a waterless dungeon.

12 Come back to the place of safety, all you prisoners who still have hope!
I promise this very day that I will repay two blessings for each of your troubles.

13 Judah is my bow, and Israel is my arrow.
Jerusalem* is my sword, and like a warrior, I will brandish it against the Greeks.*

14 The LORD will appear above his people; his arrows will fly like lightning!
The Sovereign LORD will sound the ram's horn and attack like a whirlwind from the southern desert.

15 The LORD of Heaven's Armies will protect his people, and they will defeat their enemies by hurling great stones.
They will shout in battle as though drunk with wine.
They will be filled with blood like a bowl, drenched with blood like the corners of the altar.

16On that day the LORD their God will rescue his people, just as a shepherd rescues his sheep.
They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown.

17How wonderful and beautiful they will be!
The young men will thrive on abundant grain, and the young women will flourish on new wine.

Zechariah 10

THE LORD WILL RESTORE HIS PEOPLE

1Ask the LORD for rain in the spring, for he makes the storm clouds.
And he will send showers of rain so every field becomes a lush pasture.

2Household gods give worthless advice, fortune-tellers predict only lies, and interpreters of dreams pronounce falsehoods that give no comfort.
So my people are wandering like lost sheep; they are attacked because they have no shepherd.

3"My anger burns against your shepherds, and I will punish these leaders.*
For the LORD of Heaven's Armies has arrived to look after Judah, his flock.
He will make them strong and glorious, like a proud warhorse in battle.

4From Judah will come the cornerstone, the tent peg, the bow for battle, and all the rulers.

5They will be like mighty warriors in battle, trampling their enemies in the mud under their feet.
Since the LORD is with them as they fight, they will overthrow even the enemy's horsemen.

6"I will strengthen Judah and save Israel*; I will restore them

because of my compassion.
It will be as though I had never rejected them, for I am the LORD
their God, who will hear their cries.

7The people of Israel* will become like mighty warriors, and their
hearts will be made happy as if by wine.
Their children, too, will see it and be glad; their hearts will rejoice
in the LORD.

8When I whistle to them, they will come running, for I have
redeemed them.
From the few who are left, they will grow as numerous as they were
before.

9Though I have scattered them like seeds among the nations, they
will still remember me in distant lands.
They and their children will survive and return again to Israel.

GILEAD

LEBANON

10I will bring them back from Egypt and gather them from Assyria.
I will resettle them in Gilead and Lebanon until there is no more
room for them all.

11They will pass safely through the sea of distress,*
for the waves of the sea will be held back, and the waters of the
Nile will dry up.
The pride of Assyria will be crushed, and the rule of Egypt will end.

12By my power* I will make my people strong, and by my authority
they will go wherever they wish.
I, the LORD, have spoken!”

Zechariah 11

1Open your doors, Lebanon, so that fire may devour your cedar
forests.

2Weep, you cypress trees, for all the ruined cedars; the most
majestic ones have fallen.
Weep, you oaks of Bashan, for the thick forests have been cut down.

3Listen to the wailing of the shepherds, for their rich pastures are
destroyed.
Hear the young lions roaring, for their thickets in the Jordan Valley
are ruined.

THE GOOD AND EVIL SHEPHERDS

4This is what the LORD my God says: “Go and care for the flock that
is intended for slaughter. 5The buyers slaughter their sheep without
remorse. The sellers say, ‘Praise the LORD! Now I’m rich!’ Even the
shepherds have no compassion for them. 6Likewise, I will no longer
have pity on the people of the land,” says the LORD. “I will let them
fall into each other’s hands and into the hands of their king. They
will turn the land into a wilderness, and I will not rescue them.”

7So I cared for the flock intended for slaughter—the flock that was
oppressed. Then I took two shepherd’s staffs and named one Favor
and the other Union. 8I got rid of their three evil shepherds in a
single month.

But I became impatient with these sheep, and they hated me, too.
9So I told them, “I won’t be your shepherd any longer. If you die,
you die. If you are killed, you are killed. And let those who remain
devour each other!”

10Then I took my staff called Favor and cut it in two, showing that I
had revoked the covenant I had made with all the nations. 11That
was the end of my covenant with them. The suffering flock was
watching me, and they knew that the LORD was speaking through
my actions.

12And I said to them, “If you like, give me my wages, whatever I am
worth; but only if you want to.” So they counted out for my wages
thirty pieces of silver.

13And the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter*”—this
magnificent sum at which they valued me! So I took the thirty coins
and threw them to the potter in the Temple of the LORD.

14Then I took my other staff, Union, and cut it in two, showing that
the bond of unity between Judah and Israel was broken.

15Then the LORD said to me, “Go again and play the part of a
worthless shepherd. 16This illustrates how I will give this nation a
shepherd who will not care for those who are dying, nor look after
the young, nor heal the injured, nor feed the healthy. Instead, this
shepherd will eat the meat of the fattest sheep and tear off their
hooves.

17“What sorrow awaits this worthless shepherd who abandons the
flock!
The sword will cut his arm and pierce his right eye.
His arm will become useless, and his right eye completely blind.”

Zechariah 12

FUTURE DELIVERANCE FOR JERUSALEM

1This* message concerning the fate of Israel came from the LORD:
“This message is from the LORD, who stretched out the heavens,
laid the foundations of the earth, and formed the human spirit. 2I
will make Jerusalem like an intoxicating drink that makes the
nearby nations stagger when they send their armies to besiege
Jerusalem and Judah. 3On that day I will make Jerusalem an
immovable rock. All the nations will gather against it to try to move
it, but they will only hurt themselves.

4“On that day,” says the LORD, “I will cause every horse to panic
and every rider to lose his nerve. I will watch over the people of
Judah, but I will blind all the horses of their enemies. 5And the
clans of Judah will say to themselves, ‘The people of Jerusalem
have found strength in the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, their God.’

6“On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a flame that sets a
woodpile ablaze or like a burning torch among sheaves of grain.
They will burn up all the neighboring nations right and left, while
the people living in Jerusalem remain secure.

7“The LORD will give victory to the rest of Judah first, before
Jerusalem, so that the people of Jerusalem and the royal line of
David will not have greater honor than the rest of Judah. 8On that
day the LORD will defend the people of Jerusalem; the weakest
among them will be as mighty as King David! And the royal
descendants will be like God, like the angel of the LORD who goes
before them! 9For on that day I will begin to destroy all the nations
that come against Jerusalem.

10“Then I will pour out a spirit* of grace and prayer on the family of
David and on the people of Jerusalem. They will look on me whom
they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son. They will
grieve bitterly for him as for a firstborn son who has died. 11The

sorrow and mourning in Jerusalem on that day will be like the great mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddo.

12“All Israel will mourn, each clan by itself, and with the husbands separate from their wives. The clan of David will mourn alone, as will the clan of Nathan, 13the clan of Levi, and the clan of Shimei. 14Each of the surviving clans from Judah will mourn separately, and with the husbands separate from their wives.

Zechariah 13

A FOUNTAIN OF CLEANSING

1“On that day a fountain will be opened for the dynasty of David and for the people of Jerusalem, a fountain to cleanse them from all their sins and impurity.

2“And on that day,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies, “I will erase idol worship throughout the land, so that even the names of the idols will be forgotten. I will remove from the land both the false prophets and the spirit of impurity that came with them. 3If anyone continues to prophesy, his own father and mother will tell him, ‘You must die, for you have prophesied lies in the name of the LORD.’ And as he prophesies, his own father and mother will stab him.

4“On that day people will be ashamed to claim the prophetic gift. No one will pretend to be a prophet by wearing prophet’s clothes. 5He will say, ‘I’m no prophet; I’m a farmer. I began working for a farmer as a boy.’ 6And if someone asks, ‘Then what about those wounds on your chest?*’ he will say, ‘I was wounded at my friends’ house!’

THE SCATTERING OF THE SHEEP

7“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, the man who is my
partner,”

says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.
“Strike down the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I
will turn against the lambs.

8Two-thirds of the people in the land will be cut off and die,” says
the LORD.
“But one-third will be left in the land.

9I will bring that group through the fire and make them pure.
I will refine them like silver and purify them like gold.
They will call on my name, and I will answer them.
I will say, ‘These are my people,’
and they will say, ‘The LORD is our God.’”

Zechariah 14

THE LORD WILL RULE THE EARTH

1Watch, for the day of the LORD is coming when your possessions
will be plundered right in front of you! 2I will gather all the nations
to fight against Jerusalem. The city will be taken, the houses looted,

and the women raped. Half the population will be taken into captivity, and the rest will be left among the ruins of the city.

3Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations, as he has fought in times past. 4On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. And the Mount of Olives will split apart, making a wide valley running from east to west. Half the mountain will move toward the north and half toward the south. 5You will flee through this valley, for it will reach across to Azal.* Yes, you will flee as you did from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all his holy ones with him.*

6On that day the sources of light will no longer shine,*7yet there will be continuous day! Only the LORD knows how this could happen. There will be no normal day and night, for at evening time it will still be light.

8On that day life-giving waters will flow out from Jerusalem, half toward the Dead Sea and half toward the Mediterranean,* flowing continuously in both summer and winter.

9And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be one LORD—his name alone will be worshiped.

10All the land from Geba, north of Judah, to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become one vast plain. But Jerusalem will be raised up in its original place and will be inhabited all the way from the Benjamin Gate over to the site of the old gate, then to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. 11And Jerusalem will be filled, safe at last, never again to be cursed and destroyed.

12And the LORD will send a plague on all the nations that fought

against Jerusalem. Their people will become like walking corpses,
their flesh rotting away. Their eyes will rot in their sockets, and
their tongues will rot in their mouths. 13On that day they will be
terrified, stricken by the LORD with great panic. They will fight
their neighbors hand to hand. 14Judah, too, will be fighting at
Jerusalem. The wealth of all the neighboring nations will be
captured—great quantities of gold and silver and fine clothing.
15This same plague will strike the horses, mules, camels, donkeys,
and all the other animals in the enemy camps.

16In the end, the enemies of Jerusalem who survive the plague will
go up to Jerusalem each year to worship the King, the LORD of
Heaven's Armies, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. 17Any
nation in the world that refuses to come to Jerusalem to worship
the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies, will have no rain. 18If the
people of Egypt refuse to attend the festival, the LORD will punish*
them with the same plague that he sends on the other nations who
refuse to go. 19Egypt and the other nations will all be punished if
they don't go to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

20On that day even the harness bells of the horses will be inscribed
with these words: HOLY TO THE LORD. And the cooking pots in the
Temple of the LORD will be as sacred as the basins used beside the
altar. 21In fact, every cooking pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be
holy to the LORD of Heaven's Armies. All who come to worship will
be free to use any of these pots to boil their sacrifices. And on that
day there will no longer be traders* in the Temple of the LORD of
Heaven's Armies.

Malachi

WELCOME TO

MALACHI

Malachi ministers around the time when Nehemiah is governor of Jerusalem. God sends Malachi to prophesy when the people's spiritual zeal is dangerously low. While Ezra and Nehemiah undertake some necessary religious and political reforms, Malachi directs the people's attention to their spiritual problems. He points out the corruption of the priests, the neglect of God's Temple, and the people's personal sins. He condemns these sins and calls the people to recommit themselves to the Lord, who has been faithful to them through many generations. He reminds them that a rededication to God's way will provide the people with abundant blessings.

The book of Malachi includes a prophecy concerning the coming Messiah and his forerunner, John the Baptist (called Elijah here). Thus the Old Testament ends, looking forward to what God will do in the future.

0 STOPS

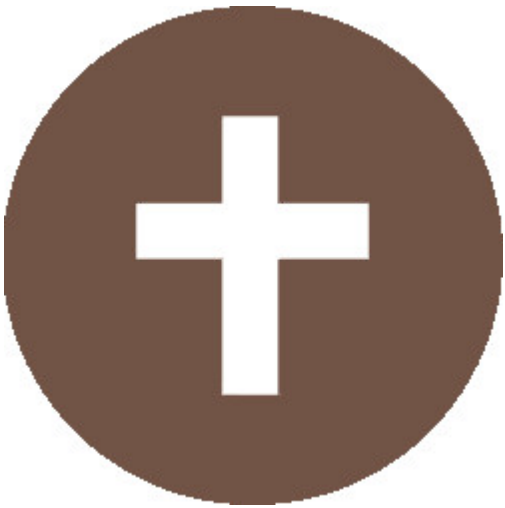
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over Malachi on your way to the New Testament. Your next stop will be at Matthew 3:13.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: In this short reading you'll see Malachi drawing the people's attention to the many ways in which they have fallen short in obeying the God who loves them. Your next stop will be at Malachi 1:1.

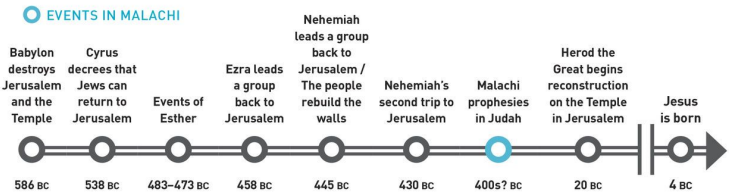
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: As you travel through this book, you'll witness Malachi calling God's people to prepare themselves for God's coming judgment. Your next stop will be at Malachi 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN MALACHI

Malachi proclaimed that the Lord would send a messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah (3:1). He also announced that a prophet would come before the Messiah. This person, recognized by the Gospel writers as John the Baptist, would resemble the great prophet Elijah (4:5). Malachi also stated that Jesus, the "messenger of the covenant," would appear in the Temple.
You will also glimpse Jesus in the statement that calls him the "Sun of Righteousness" who "will rise with healing in his wings" (4:2).



Malachi 1

1This is the message* that the LORD gave to Israel through the prophet Malachi.*

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

2"I have always loved you," says the LORD.

But you retort, "Really? How have you loved us?"

And the LORD replies, "This is how I showed my love for you: I loved your ancestor Jacob, 3but I rejected his brother, Esau, and devastated his hill country. I turned Esau's inheritance into a desert for jackals."

THE FALL OF EDOM

4Esau's descendants in Edom may say, "We have been shattered, but we will rebuild the ruins."

But the LORD of Heaven's Armies replies, "They may try to rebuild, but I will demolish them again. Their country will be known as 'The Land of Wickedness,' and their people will be called 'The People with Whom the LORD Is Forever Angry.' 5When you see the destruction for yourselves, you will say, 'Truly, the LORD's greatness reaches far beyond Israel's borders!'"

UNWORTHY SACRIFICES

6The LORD of Heaven's Armies says to the priests: "A son honors his father, and a servant respects his master. If I am your father and master, where are the honor and respect I deserve? You have shown contempt for my name!

"But you ask, 'How have we ever shown contempt for your name?'

7"You have shown contempt by offering defiled sacrifices on my altar.

"Then you ask, 'How have we defiled the sacrifices?*'

"You defile them by saying the altar of the LORD deserves no respect. 8When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn't that wrong? And isn't it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor, and see how pleased he is!" says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

9"Go ahead, beg God to be merciful to you! But when you bring that kind of offering, why should he show you any favor at all?" asks the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

10"How I wish one of you would shut the Temple doors so that these worthless sacrifices could not be offered! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "and I will not accept

your offerings. 11But my name is honored* by people of other nations from morning till night. All around the world they offer* sweet incense and pure offerings in honor of my name. For my name is great among the nations," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

12"But you dishonor my name with your actions. By bringing contemptible food, you are saying it's all right to defile the Lord's table. 13You say, 'It's too hard to serve the LORD,' and you turn up your noses at my commands," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "Think of it! Animals that are stolen and crippled and sick are being presented as offerings! Should I accept from you such offerings as these?" asks the LORD.

14"Cursed is the cheat who promises to give a fine ram from his flock but then sacrifices a defective one to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "and my name is feared among the nations!

Malachi 2

A WARNING TO THE PRIESTS

1"Listen, you priests—this command is for you! 2Listen to me and make up your minds to honor my name," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "or I will bring a terrible curse against you. I will curse even the blessings you receive. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you have not taken my warning to heart. 3I will punish your descendants and splatter your faces with the manure from your festival sacrifices, and I will throw you on the manure

pile. 4Then at last you will know it was I who sent you this warning
so that my covenant with the Levites can continue," says the LORD
of Heaven's Armies.

5"The purpose of my covenant with the Levites was to bring life and
peace, and that is what I gave them. This required reverence from
them, and they greatly revered me and stood in awe of my name.
6They passed on to the people the truth of the instructions they
received from me. They did not lie or cheat; they walked with me,
living good and righteous lives, and they turned many from lives of
sin.

7"The words of a priest's lips should preserve knowledge of God,
and people should go to him for instruction, for the priest is the
messenger of the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 8But you priests have
left God's paths. Your instructions have caused many to stumble
into sin. You have corrupted the covenant I made with the Levites,"
says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 9"So I have made you despised
and humiliated in the eyes of all the people. For you have not
obeyed me but have shown favoritism in the way you carry out my
instructions."

A CALL TO FAITHFULNESS

10Are we not all children of the same Father? Are we not all created
by the same God? Then why do we betray each other, violating the
covenant of our ancestors?

11Judah has been unfaithful, and a detestable thing has been done
in Israel and in Jerusalem. The men of Judah have defiled the
LORD's beloved sanctuary by marrying women who worship idols.
12May the LORD cut off from the nation of Israel* every last man
who has done this and yet brings an offering to the LORD of
Heaven's Armies.

13Here is another thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with
tears, weeping and groaning because he pays no attention to your

offerings and doesn't accept them with pleasure. 14You cry out,
"Why doesn't the LORD accept my worship?" I'll tell you why!
Because the LORD witnessed the vows you and your wife made
when you were young. But you have been unfaithful to her, though
she remained your faithful partner, the wife of your marriage vows.

15Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? In body and spirit
you are his.* And what does he want? Godly children from your
union. So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth.
16"For I hate divorce!"* says the LORD, the God of Israel. "To
divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty,*" says the
LORD of Heaven's Armies. "So guard your heart; do not be
unfaithful to your wife."

17You have wearied the LORD with your words.

"How have we wearied him?" you ask.

You have wearied him by saying that all who do evil are good in
the LORD's sight, and he is pleased with them. You have wearied
him by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

THE MESSIAH MALACHI 3:1-5

Malachi 3

THE COMING DAY OF JUDGMENT

1"Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way
before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his
Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so
eagerly, is surely coming," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

2"But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be
able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a
blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches
clothes. 3He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross.
He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that
they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the LORD. 4Then
once more the LORD will accept the offerings brought to him by the
people of Judah and Jerusalem, as he did in the past.

5"At that time I will put you on trial. I am eager to witness against
all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who
cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans,
or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these
people do not fear me," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

6"I am the LORD, and I do not change. That is why you descendants
of Jacob are not already destroyed. 7Ever since the days of your
ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them.
Now return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of
Heaven's Armies.

"But you ask, 'How can we return when we have never gone away?'

8"Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me!

"But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?'

"You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. 9You
are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me.
10Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough
food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies,
"I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a
blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it!
Put me to the test! 11Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard
them from insects and disease.* Your grapes will not fall from the
vine before they are ripe," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.
12"Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such
a delight," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

13"You have said terrible things about me," says the LORD.

"But you say, 'What do you mean? What have we said against you?'

14"You have said, 'What's the use of serving God? What have we
gained by obeying his commands or by trying to show the LORD of
Heaven's Armies that we are sorry for our sins? 15From now on we
will call the arrogant blessed. For those who do evil get rich, and
those who dare God to punish them suffer no harm.'"

THE LORD'S PROMISE OF MERCY

16Then those who feared the LORD spoke with each other, and the
LORD listened to what they said. In his presence, a scroll of
remembrance was written to record the names of those who feared
him and always thought about the honor of his name.

17"They will be my people," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "On
the day when I act in judgment, they will be my own special
treasure. I will spare them as a father spares an obedient child.
18Then you will again see the difference between the righteous and
the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not."

Malachi 4

THE COMING DAY OF JUDGMENT

1*The LORD of Heaven's Armies says, "The day of judgment is
coming, burning like a furnace. On that day the arrogant and the
wicked will be burned up like straw. They will be consumed—roots,
branches, and all.

2"But for you who fear my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise
with healing in his wings.* And you will go free, leaping with joy
like calves let out to pasture. 3On the day when I act, you will tread
upon the wicked as if they were dust under your feet," says the
LORD of Heaven's Armies.

4"Remember to obey the Law of Moses, my servant—all the decrees
and regulations that I gave him on Mount Sinai* for all Israel.

5"Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and
dreadful day of the LORD arrives. 6His preaching will turn the
hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their
fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse."

Matthew

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

WELCOME TO

MATTHEW

Matthew is a Jewish tax collector who becomes one of Jesus' followers. He witnesses most of Jesus' public ministry and writes it down so that others can know about Jesus. This book—written for the Jews, by a Jew, about the Jewish Jesus—clearly emphasizes that Jesus was the long-awaited King of the Jews.

Jesus comes to earth to preach the Kingdom of God, and those who enter this Kingdom will inherit eternal life. This is the focus of Matthew's Gospel. His book begins with some detailed stories about Jesus' birth and childhood that are found in no other Gospel, thus providing special insight into Jesus' role as the long-awaited Jewish Messiah. Matthew quotes selected passages from the Old Testament and carefully records Jesus' claims to be the Messiah.

2 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll touch down twice on your route through Matthew, reading about two of the most famous episodes in Jesus' early ministry. Your next stop is at Matthew 3:13.

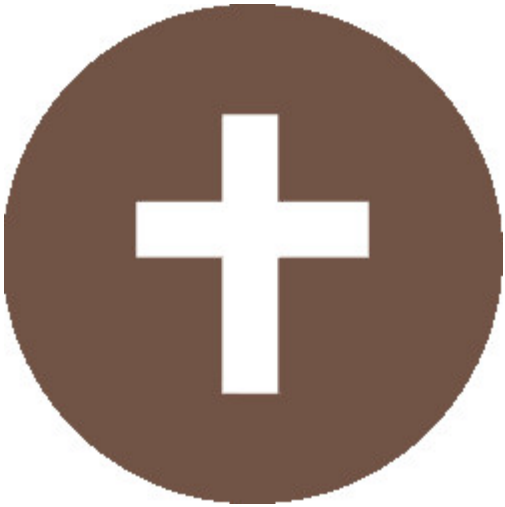
9 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your readings in Matthew will give you a

glimpse of Jesus' life and ministry: his early life and baptism, his teachings and miracles, and his Transfiguration. Your next stop is at Matthew 1:18.

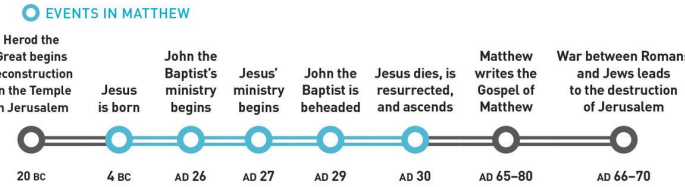
14 STOPS

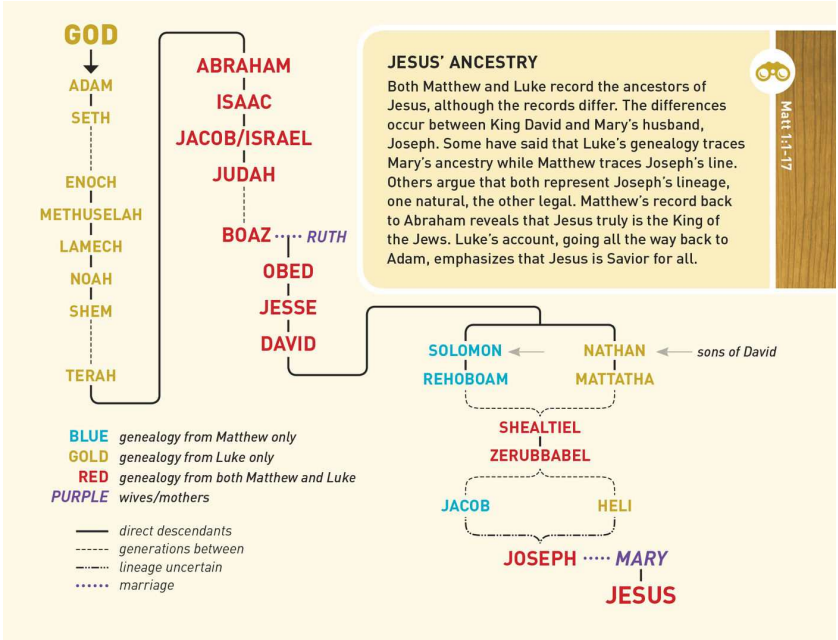
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: In addition to taking you through the major events of Jesus' life, your route will highlight many of Jesus' teachings and parables. Your next stop is at Matthew 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN MATTHEW

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is revealed as the Savior whom God had promised in the Old Testament. Matthew records the angel's command to Joseph: "You are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (1:21). Jesus' arrival showed that God keeps his promises. Matthew quotes numerous Old Testament passages to show how Jesus fulfilled each of them. He was born of a virgin in Bethlehem, the city of David (Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2). He was a light to all people (Isaiah 9:1-2). He understood and fulfilled the purpose of the law of Moses (Matthew 5–7). He taught by using parables to both obscure and reveal his message (Isaiah 6:9-10). He entered Jerusalem as a humble king riding on a donkey while people praised him (Psalm 118:26; Zechariah 9:9). Using these passages, Matthew shows that Jesus is indeed the Savior that God had promised and Israel had been waiting for.


EVENTS IN MATTHEW
Herod the Great begins reconstruction on the Temple in Jerusalem
Jesus is born
John the Baptist's ministry begins
Jesus' ministry begins
John the Baptist is beheaded
Jesus dies, is resurrected, and ascends
Matthew writes the Gospel of Matthew
War between Romans and Jews leads to the destruction of Jerusalem
20 BC
4 BC
AD 26
AD 27
AD 29
AD 30
AD 65–80
AD 66–70



JESUS' ANCESTRY

Matthew 1

THE ANCESTORS OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

1This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant
of David and of Abraham*:

2Abraham was the father of Isaac.
Isaac was the father of Jacob.
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

3Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was
Tamar).
Perez was the father of Hezron.
Hezron was the father of Ram.*

4Ram was the father of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

5Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab).
Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth).
Obed was the father of Jesse.

6Jesse was the father of King David.
David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah).

7Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.
Abijah was the father of Asa.*

8Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.
Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram.*
Jehoram was the father* of Uzziah.

9Uzziah was the father of Jotham.
Jotham was the father of Ahaz.
Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

10Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.
Manasseh was the father of Amon.*
Amon was the father of Josiah.

11Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin* and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon).

12After the Babylonian exile: Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

13Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.
Abiud was the father of Eliakim.

Eliakim was the father of Azor.

14Azor was the father of Zadok.
Zadok was the father of Akim.
Akim was the father of Eliud.

15Eliud was the father of Eleazar.
Eleazar was the father of Matthan.
Matthan was the father of Jacob.

16Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

17All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

18This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. 19Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the

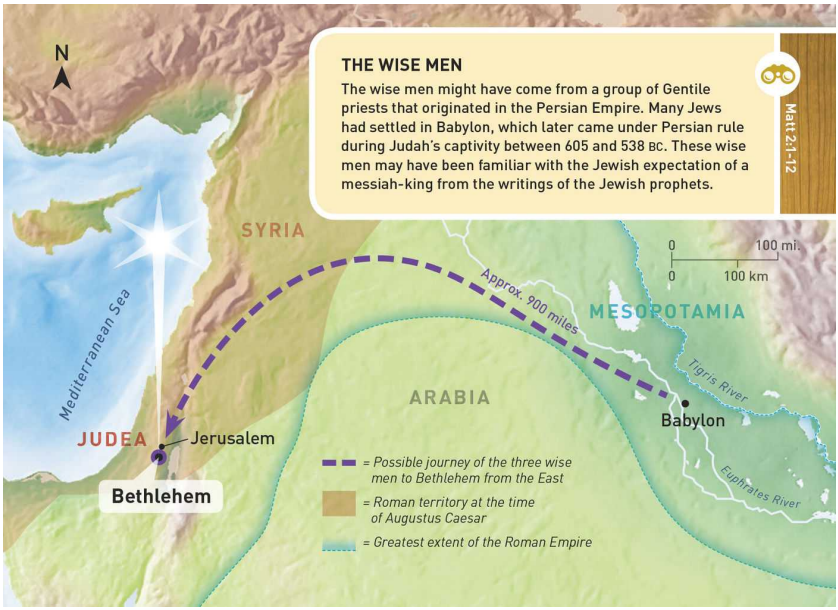
engagement* quietly.

20As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a
dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to
take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by
the Holy Spirit. 21And she will have a son, and you are to name him
Jesus,* for he will save his people from their sins.”

22All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his
prophet:

23“Look! The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel,*
which means ‘God is with us.’”

24When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord
commanded and took Mary as his wife. 25But he did not have sexual
relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him
Jesus.



THE WISE MEN

Matthew 2

VISITORS FROM THE EAST

1 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King
Herod. About that time some wise men* from eastern lands arrived
in Jerusalem, asking, 2 "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We
saw his star as it rose,* and we have come to worship him."

3 King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was
everyone in Jerusalem. 4 He called a meeting of the leading priests
and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah
supposed to be born?"

5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet
wrote:

6‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among
the ruling cities* of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will
be the shepherd for my people Israel.’*”

7Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he
learned from them the time when the star first appeared. 8Then he
told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And
when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and
worship him, too!”

9After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star
they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead
of them and stopped over the place where the child was. 10When
they saw the star, they were filled with joy! 11They entered the
house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed
down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests
and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

12When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by
another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to
Herod.

THE ESCAPE TO EGYPT

13After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to
Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his
mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return,
because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

14That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his
mother, 15and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled
what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son
out of Egypt.”*

16Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had

outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance. 17Herod's brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

18"A cry was heard in Ramah— weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted,
for they are dead."*

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

19When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. 20"Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead."

NAZARETH

21So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. 22But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod's son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. 23So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: "He will be called a Nazarene."

Matthew 3

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

1In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and
began preaching. His message was, 2"Repent of your sins and turn
to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*" 3The prophet Isaiah
was speaking about John when he said, "He is a voice shouting in
the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the LORD's coming!

Clear the road for him!'"*

4John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a
leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild
honey. 5People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over
the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. 6And when they
confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

7But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch
him baptize,* he denounced them. "You brood of snakes!" he
exclaimed. "Who warned you to flee God's coming wrath? 8Prove by
the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to

God. 9Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. 10Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

11"I baptize with* water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*12He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire."

BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN RIVER

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

13Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized
by John. 14But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who
needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to
me?”

15But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that
God requires.*” So John agreed to baptize him.

16After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens
were opened* and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove
and settling on him. 17And a voice from heaven said, “This is my
dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

JESUS' TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

Matthew 4

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

1Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted
there by the devil. 2For forty days and forty nights he fasted and
became very hungry.

3During that time the devil* came and said to him, "If you are the
Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

4But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by
bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of
God.'*"

5Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest
point of the Temple, 6and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off!
For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect you.

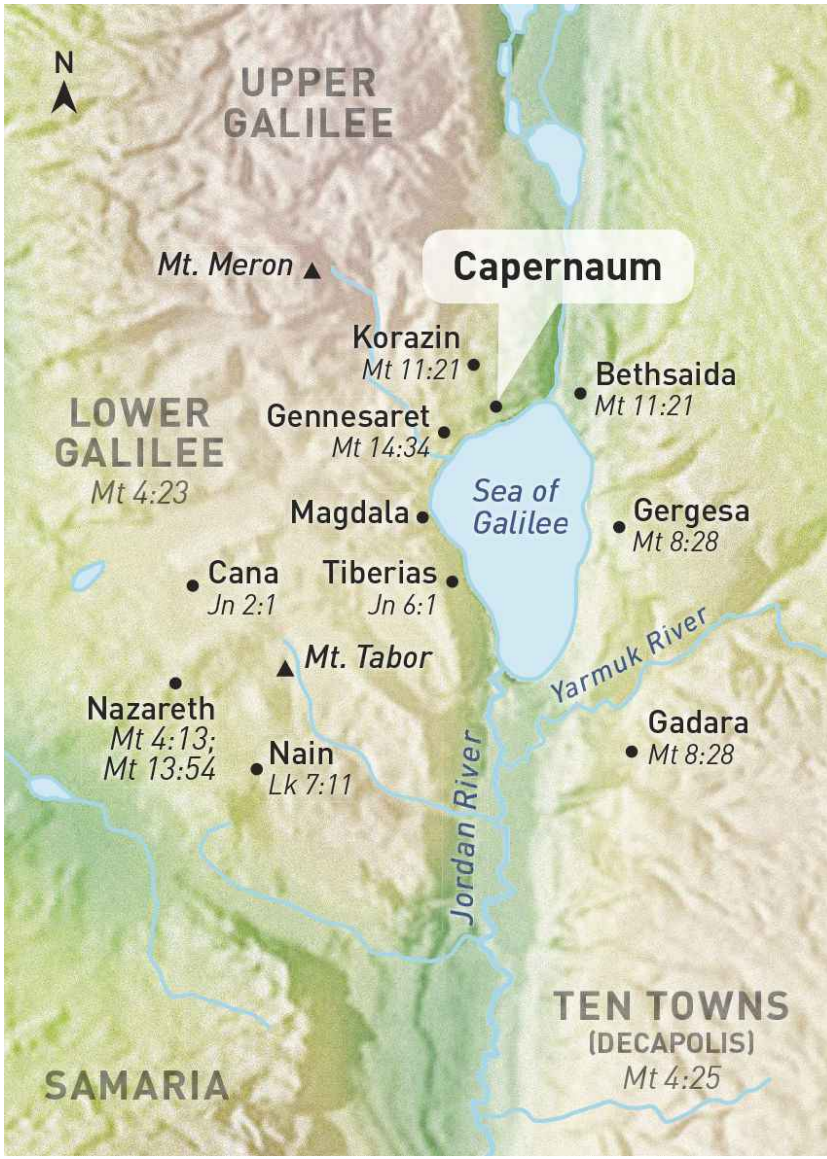
And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt
your foot on a stone.’*”

7Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the
LORD your God.’*”

8Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and
showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9“I will
give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship
me.”

10“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say,
‘You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.’*”

11Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of
Jesus.



JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE

CAPERNAUM AND NAZARETH

THE MINISTRY OF JESUS BEGINS

12When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and
returned to Galilee. 13He went first to Nazareth, then left there and
moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee, in the region of
Zebulun and Naphtali. 14This fulfilled what God said through the
prophet Isaiah:

15"In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, beside the sea, beyond
the Jordan River, in Galilee where so many Gentiles live,

16the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light.
And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a
light has shined."*

17From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent of your sins and
turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*"

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

18One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of
Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew
—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. 19Jesus
called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to
fish for people!" 20And they left their nets at once and followed him.

21A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and
John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their
nets. And he called them to come, too. 22They immediately followed
him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

THE TEN TOWNS

CROWDS FOLLOW JESUS

23Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the
synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom.
And he healed every kind of disease and illness. 24News about him
spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all
who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they
were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them
all. 25Large crowds followed him wherever he went—people from
Galilee, the Ten Towns,* Jerusalem, from all over Judea, and from
east of the Jordan River.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

1One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the
mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him,
2and he began to teach them.

THE BEATITUDES

3"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,*

for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

4God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole
earth.

6God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice,*
for they will be satisfied.

7God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

9God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the
children of God.

10God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the
Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

11"God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and
lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because
you are my followers. 12Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great
reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets
were persecuted in the same way.

TEACHING ABOUT SALT AND LIGHT

13"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost
its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and
trampled underfoot as worthless.

14"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that
cannot be hidden. 15No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a
basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to
everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your good deeds shine
out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

TEACHING ABOUT THE LAW

17"Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish
the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to
accomplish their purpose. 18I tell you the truth, until heaven and
earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will
disappear until its purpose is achieved. 19So if you ignore the least
commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called
the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's
laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of
Heaven.

20"But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the
righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you
will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

TEACHING ABOUT ANGER

21"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not
murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.'* 22But
I say, if you are even angry with someone,* you are subject to
judgment! If you call someone an idiot,* you are in danger of being

brought before the court. And if you curse someone,* you are in danger of the fires of hell.*

23“So if you are presenting a sacrifice* at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, 24leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

25“When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. 26And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.*

TEACHING ABOUT ADULTERY

27“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’* 28But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29So if your eye—even your good eye*—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30And if your hand —even your stronger hand*—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

TEACHING ABOUT DIVORCE

31"You have heard the law that says, 'A man can divorce his wife by
merely giving her a written notice of divorce.'* 32But I say that a
man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes
her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced
woman also commits adultery.

TEACHING ABOUT VOWS

33"You have also heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not
break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the
LORD.'* 34But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, 'By heaven!'
because heaven is God's throne. 35And do not say, 'By the earth!'
because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, 'By Jerusalem!'
for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. 36Do not even say, 'By my
head!' for you can't turn one hair white or black. 37Just say a
simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from
the evil one.

TEACHING ABOUT REVENGE

38"You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the
injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'* 39But I say, do
not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek,
offer the other cheek also. 40If you are sued in court and your shirt
is taken from you, give your coat, too. 41If a soldier demands that
you carry his gear for a mile,* carry it two miles. 42Give to those
who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

TEACHING ABOUT LOVE FOR ENEMIES

43"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor'* and hate
your enemy. 44But I say, love your enemies!* Pray for those who
persecute you! 45In that way, you will be acting as true children of
your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and

the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. 46If you
love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even
corrupt tax collectors do that much. 47If you are kind only to your
friends,* how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do
that. 48But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is
perfect.

Matthew 6

TEACHING ABOUT GIVING TO THE NEEDY

1"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by
others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.
2When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do
—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention

to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. 3But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. 4Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

PRAYERS MATTHEW 6:5-15

TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER AND FASTING

5"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. 6But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

7"When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. 8Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! 9Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.

10May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

11Give us today the food we need,*

12and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

13And don't let us yield to temptation,*
but rescue us from the evil one.*

14"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. 15But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

16"And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. 17But when you fast, comb your hair* and wash your face. 18Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

TEACHING ABOUT MONEY AND POSSESSIONS

19"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. 20Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. 21Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

22"Your eye is a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. 23But when your eye is bad, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

24"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

25"That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether

you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? 26Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? 27Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

28"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, 29yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. 30And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

31"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' 32These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. 33Seek the Kingdom of God* above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

34"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Matthew 7

DO NOT JUDGE OTHERS

1 “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. 2 For you will be
treated as you treat others.* The standard you use in judging is the
standard by which you will be judged.*

3 “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye* when you
have a log in your own? 4 How can you think of saying to your
friend,* ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when
you can’t see past the log in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First get rid
of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal
with the speck in your friend’s eye.

6 “Don’t waste what is holy on people who are unholy.* Don’t throw
your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and
attack you.

EFFECTIVE PRAYER

7"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on
seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be
opened to you. 8For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who
seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

9"You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give
them a stone instead? 10Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a
snake? Of course not! 11So if you sinful people know how to give
good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly
Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

THE GOLDEN RULE

12"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is
the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

THE NARROW GATE

13"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The
highway to hell* is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who
choose that way. 14But the gateway to life is very narrow and the
road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

THE TREE AND ITS FRUIT

15"Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep
but are really vicious wolves. 16You can identify them by their fruit,
that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes,
or figs from thistles? 17A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad
tree produces bad fruit. 18A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a
bad tree can't produce good fruit. 19So every tree that does not
produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. 20Yes,
just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people
by their actions.

TRUE DISCIPLES

21“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the
Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my
Father in heaven will enter. 22On judgment day many will say to
me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons
in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ 23But I
will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break
God’s laws.’

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

24“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a
person who builds a house on solid rock. 25Though the rain comes
in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that
house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. 26But anyone
who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person
who builds a house on sand. 27When the rains and floods come and
the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty
crash.”

28When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were
amazed at his teaching, 29for he taught with real authority—quite
unlike their teachers of religious law.

Matthew 8

JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH LEPROSY

1Large crowds followed Jesus as he came down the mountainside.
2Suddenly, a man with leprosy approached him and knelt before
him. “Lord,” the man said, “if you are willing, you can heal me and
make me clean.”

3Jesus reached out and touched him. “I am willing,” he said. “Be
healed!” And instantly the leprosy disappeared. 4Then Jesus said to
him, “Don’t tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let
him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of
Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy.* This will be a
public testimony that you have been cleansed.”

THE FAITH OF A ROMAN OFFICER

5When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a Roman officer* came and
pleaded with him, 6“Lord, my young servant* lies in bed, paralyzed
and in terrible pain.”

7Jesus said, “I will come and heal him.”

8But the officer said, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into
my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant
will be healed. 9I know this because I am under the authority of my
superior officers, and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need
to say, ‘Go,’ and they go, or ‘Come,’ and they come. And if I say to
my slaves, ‘Do this,’ they do it.”

10When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to those who
were following him, he said, “I tell you the truth, I haven’t seen
faith like this in all Israel! 11And I tell you this, that many Gentiles
will come from all over the world—from east and west—and sit
down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom
of Heaven. 12But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was
prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be

weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

13Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, “Go back home. Because you believed, it has happened.” And the young servant was healed that same hour.

JESUS HEALS MANY PEOPLE

14When Jesus arrived at Peter’s house, Peter’s mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. 15But when Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her. Then she got up and prepared a meal for him.

16That evening many demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. He cast out the evil spirits with a simple command, and he healed all the sick. 17This fulfilled the word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, who said, “He took our sicknesses

and removed our diseases.”*

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

18When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he instructed his disciples to cross to the other side of the lake.

19Then one of the teachers of religious law said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”

20But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man* has no place even to lay his head.”

21Another of his disciples said, “Lord, first let me return home and bury my father.”

22But Jesus told him, “Follow me now. Let the spiritually dead bury
their own dead.*”

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

23Then Jesus got into the boat and started across the lake with his
disciples. 24Suddenly, a fierce storm struck the lake, with waves
breaking into the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25The disciples went
and woke him up, shouting, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

26Jesus responded, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!”
Then he got up and rebuked the wind and waves, and suddenly
there was a great calm.

27The disciples were amazed. “Who is this man?” they asked. “Even
the winds and waves obey him!”

JESUS HEALS TWO DEMON-POSSESSED MEN

28When Jesus arrived on the other side of the lake, in the region of
the Gadarenes,* two men who were possessed by demons met him.
They lived in a cemetery and were so violent that no one could go
through that area.

29They began screaming at him, “Why are you interfering with us,
Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before God’s
appointed time?”

30There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding in the distance.
31So the demons begged, “If you cast us out, send us into that herd
of pigs.”

32“All right, go!” Jesus commanded them. So the demons came out
of the men and entered the pigs, and the whole herd plunged down
the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

33The herdsmen fled to the nearby town, telling everyone what
happened to the demon-possessed men. 34Then the entire town
came out to meet Jesus, but they begged him to go away and leave
them alone.

FORGIVENESS MATTHEW 9:1-8

Matthew 9

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

1Jesus climbed into a boat and went back across the lake to his own
town. 2Some people brought to him a paralyzed man on a mat.
Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Be encouraged,
my child! Your sins are forgiven.”

3But some of the teachers of religious law said to themselves,
“That’s blasphemy! Does he think he’s God?”

4Jesus knew* what they were thinking, so he asked them, “Why do
you have such evil thoughts in your hearts? 5Is it easier to say ‘Your
sins are forgiven,’ or ‘Stand up and walk’? 6So I will prove to you
that the Son of Man* has the authority on earth to forgive sins.”
Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, “Stand up, pick
up your mat, and go home!”

7And the man jumped up and went home! 8Fear swept through the crowd as they saw this happen. And they praised God for sending a man with such great authority.*

JESUS CALLS MATTHEW

9As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

10Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. 11But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?*"

12When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." 13Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.'* For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

A DISCUSSION ABOUT FASTING

14One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, “Why don’t your disciples fast* like we do and the Pharisees do?”

15Jesus replied, “Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

16“Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.

17“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved.”

JESUS HEALS IN RESPONSE TO FAITH

18As Jesus was saying this, the leader of a synagogue came and knelt before him. “My daughter has just died,” he said, “but you can bring her back to life again if you just come and lay your hand on her.”

19So Jesus and his disciples got up and went with him. 20Just then a woman who had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding came up behind him. She touched the fringe of his robe, 21for she thought, “If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed.”

22Jesus turned around, and when he saw her he said, “Daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has made you well.” And the woman was healed at that moment.

23When Jesus arrived at the official's home, he saw the noisy crowd
and heard the funeral music. 24"Get out!" he told them. "The girl
isn't dead; she's only asleep." But the crowd laughed at him. 25After
the crowd was put outside, however, Jesus went in and took the girl
by the hand, and she stood up! 26The report of this miracle swept
through the entire countryside.

JESUS HEALS THE BLIND

27After Jesus left the girl's home, two blind men followed along
behind him, shouting, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

28They went right into the house where he was staying, and Jesus
asked them, "Do you believe I can make you see?"

"Yes, Lord," they told him, "we do."

29Then he touched their eyes and said, "Because of your faith, it
will happen." 30Then their eyes were opened, and they could see!
Jesus sternly warned them, "Don't tell anyone about this." 31But
instead, they went out and spread his fame all over the region.

32When they left, a demon-possessed man who couldn't speak was
brought to Jesus. 33So Jesus cast out the demon, and then the man
began to speak. The crowds were amazed. "Nothing like this has
ever happened in Israel!" they exclaimed.

34But the Pharisees said, "He can cast out demons because he is
empowered by the prince of demons."

THE NEED FOR WORKERS

35Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area,
teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about
the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness.
36When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because
they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
37He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are
few. 38So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him
to send more workers into his fields.”

Matthew 10

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE APOSTLES

1Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority
to cast out evil* spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness.
2Here are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (also called
Peter), then Andrew (Peter’s brother),

James (son of Zebedee),
John (James’s brother),

3Philip, Bartholomew,
Thomas,
Matthew (the tax collector),
James (son of Alphaeus),
Thaddaeus,*

4Simon (the zealot*), Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).

5Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: “Don’t
go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, 6but only to the people of
Israel—God’s lost sheep. 7Go and announce to them that the
Kingdom of Heaven is near.* 8Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure
those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have

received!

9“Don’t take any money in your money belts—no gold, silver, or
even copper coins. 10Don’t carry a traveler’s bag with a change of
clothes and sandals or even a walking stick. Don’t hesitate to accept
hospitality, because those who work deserve to be fed.

11“Whenever you enter a city or village, search for a worthy person
and stay in his home until you leave town. 12When you enter the
home, give it your blessing. 13If it turns out to be a worthy home, let
your blessing stand; if it is not, take back the blessing. 14If any
household or town refuses to welcome you or listen to your
message, shake its dust from your feet as you leave. 15I tell you the
truth, the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will be better off
than such a town on the judgment day.

16“Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as
shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. 17But beware! For you will
be handed over to the courts and will be flogged with whips in the
synagogues. 18You will stand trial before governors and kings
because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to
tell the rulers and other unbelievers about me.* 19When you are
arrested, don’t worry about how to respond or what to say. God will
give you the right words at the right time. 20For it is not you who
will be speaking—it will be the Spirit of your Father speaking
through you.

21“A brother will betray his brother to death, a father will betray his
own child, and children will rebel against their parents and cause
them to be killed. 22And all nations will hate you because you are
my followers.* But everyone who endures to the end will be saved.
23When you are persecuted in one town, flee to the next. I tell you
the truth, the Son of Man* will return before you have reached all
the towns of Israel.

24“Students* are not greater than their teacher, and slaves are not

greater than their master. 25Students are to be like their teacher,
and slaves are to be like their master. And since I, the master of the
household, have been called the prince of demons,* the members of
my household will be called by even worse names!

26"But don't be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is
coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all
that is secret will be made known to all. 27What I tell you now in
the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper
in your ear, shout from the housetops for all to hear!

28"Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot
touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and
body in hell.* 29What is the price of two sparrows—one copper
coin*? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your
Father knowing it. 30And the very hairs on your head are all
numbered. 31So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than
a whole flock of sparrows.

32"Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will
also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. 33But everyone who
denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in
heaven.

34"Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not
to bring peace, but a sword.

35'I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against
her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36Your enemies will be right in your own household!'*

37"If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you
are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter
more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. 38If you refuse to

take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being
mine. 39If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up
your life for me, you will find it.

40"Anyone who receives you receives me, and anyone who receives
me receives the Father who sent me. 41If you receive a prophet as
one who speaks for God,* you will be given the same reward as a
prophet. And if you receive righteous people because of their
righteousness, you will be given a reward like theirs. 42And if you
give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers,
you will surely be rewarded."

Matthew 11

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

1When Jesus had finished giving these instructions to his twelve
disciples, he went out to teach and preach in towns throughout the
region.

2John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the
Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, 3"Are you
the Messiah we've been expecting,* or should we keep looking for
someone else?"

4Jesus told them, "Go back to John and tell him what you have
heard and seen—5the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured,
the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is
being preached to the poor. 6And tell him, 'God blesses those who
do not turn away because of me.*'"

7As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking about him to
the crowds. "What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to
see? Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? 8Or
were you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No,
people with expensive clothes live in palaces. 9Were you looking for

a prophet? Yes, and he is more than a prophet. 10John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when they say, ‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way before you.’*

11“I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is! 12And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing,* and violent people are attacking it. 13For before John came, all the prophets and the law of Moses looked forward to this present time. 14And if you are willing to accept what I say, he is Elijah, the one the prophets said would come.* 15Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

16“To what can I compare this generation? It is like children playing a game in the public square. They complain to their friends,

17‘We played wedding songs, and you didn’t dance, so we played funeral songs, and you didn’t mourn.’

18For John didn’t spend his time eating and drinking, and you say, ‘He’s possessed by a demon.’ 19The Son of Man,* on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, ‘He’s a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!’ But wisdom is shown to be right by its results.”

JUDGMENT FOR THE UNBELIEVERS

20Then Jesus began to denounce the towns where he had done so many of his miracles, because they hadn’t repented of their sins and turned to God. 21“What sorrow awaits you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their people would have repented of their sins long ago, clothing themselves in burlap and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse. 22I tell you, Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment day than you.

23“And you people of Capernaum, will you be honored in heaven?
No, you will go down to the place of the dead.* For if the miracles I
did for you had been done in wicked Sodom, it would still be here
today. 24I tell you, even Sodom will be better off on judgment day
than you.”

JESUS’ PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

25At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: “O Father, Lord of heaven
and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think
themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike.
26Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!

27“My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows
the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except
the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

28Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry
heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you.
Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and
you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy to bear, and
the burden I give you is light.”

Matthew 12

A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SABBATH

1At about that time Jesus was walking through some grainfields on
the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, so they began breaking off
some heads of grain and eating them. 2But some Pharisees saw them
do it and protested, “Look, your disciples are breaking the law by
harvesting grain on the Sabbath.”

3Jesus said to them, “Haven’t you read in the Scriptures what David
did when he and his companions were hungry? 4He went into the

house of God, and he and his companions broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests are allowed to eat. 5And haven't you read in the law of Moses that the priests on duty in the Temple may work on the Sabbath? 6I tell you, there is one here who is even greater than the Temple! 7But you would not have condemned my innocent disciples if you knew the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.'* 8For the Son of Man* is Lord, even over the Sabbath!"

JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH

9Then Jesus went over to their synagogue, 10where he noticed a man with a deformed hand. The Pharisees asked Jesus, "Does the law permit a person to work by healing on the Sabbath?" (They were hoping he would say yes, so they could bring charges against him.)

11And he answered, "If you had a sheep that fell into a well on the Sabbath, wouldn't you work to pull it out? Of course you would. 12And how much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Yes, the law permits a person to do good on the Sabbath."

13Then he said to the man, "Hold out your hand." So the man held out his hand, and it was restored, just like the other one! 14Then the Pharisees called a meeting to plot how to kill Jesus.

JESUS, GOD'S CHOSEN SERVANT

15But Jesus knew what they were planning. So he left that area, and many people followed him. He healed all the sick among them, 16but he warned them not to reveal who he was. 17This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah concerning him:

18"Look at my Servant, whom I have chosen.
He is my Beloved, who pleases me.
I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the

nations.

19He will not fight or shout or raise his voice in public.

20He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle.
Finally he will cause justice to be victorious.

21And his name will be the hope of all the world."*

JESUS AND THE PRINCE OF DEMONS

22Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn't speak,
was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both
speak and see. 23The crowd was amazed and asked, "Could it be
that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?"

24But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, "No
wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan,* the
prince of demons."

25Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, "Any kingdom divided by
civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall
apart. 26And if Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided and fighting
against himself. His own kingdom will not survive. 27And if I am
empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out
demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said.
28But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the
Kingdom of God has arrived among you. 29For who is powerful
enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder
his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie
him up and then plunder his house.

30"Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't
working with me is actually working against me.

31"So I tell you, every sin and blasphemy can be forgiven—except
blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven.

32Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come.

33"A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. 34You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. 35A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. 36And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. 37The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you."

THE SIGN OF JONAH

38One day some teachers of religious law and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove your authority."

39But Jesus replied, "Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

41"The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent. 42The queen of Sheba* will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen.

43"When an evil* spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none. 44Then it says, 'I will return to the

person I came from.' So it returns and finds its former home empty, swept, and in order. 45Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before. That will be the experience of this evil generation."

THE TRUE FAMILY OF JESUS

46As Jesus was speaking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. 47Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, and they want to speak to you."*

48Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" 49Then he pointed to his disciples and said, "Look, these are my mother and brothers. 50Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!"

Matthew 13

PARABLE OF THE FARMER SCATTERING SEED

1Later that same day Jesus left the house and sat beside the lake. 2A large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat there and taught as the people stood on the shore. 3He told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. 4As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. 5Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. 6But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn’t have deep roots, they died. 7Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. 8Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! 9Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”

10His disciples came and asked him, “Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?”

11He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secrets* of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. 12To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. 13That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don’t really see.

They hear, but they don’t really listen or understand.

14This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says, ‘When you hear what I say, you will not understand.

When you see what I do, you will not comprehend.

15For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and

they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.'*

16"But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. 17I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but they didn't see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn't hear it.

18"Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds: 19The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. 20The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. 21But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. 22The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. 23The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

THE FUTURE MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43

PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND WEEDS

24Here is another story Jesus told: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a
farmer who planted good seed in his field. 25But that night as the
workers slept, his enemy came and planted weeds among the
wheat, then slipped away. 26When the crop began to grow and
produce grain, the weeds also grew.

27“The farmer’s workers went to him and said, ‘Sir, the field where
you planted that good seed is full of weeds! Where did they come
from?’

28“‘An enemy has done this!’ the farmer exclaimed.

“‘Should we pull out the weeds?’ they asked.

29“‘No,’ he replied, ‘you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. 30Let both
grow together until the harvest. Then I will tell the harvesters to
sort out the weeds, tie them into bundles, and burn them, and to
put the wheat in the barn.’”

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

31Here is another illustration Jesus used: “The Kingdom of Heaven
is like a mustard seed planted in a field. 32It is the smallest of all
seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a
tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.”

PARABLE OF THE YEAST

33Jesus also used this illustration: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like
the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only
a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of
the dough.”

34Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when
speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without
using such parables. 35This fulfilled what God had spoken through

the prophet: “I will speak to you in parables.

I will explain things hidden since the creation of the world.*”

PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND WEEDS EXPLAINED

36Then, leaving the crowds outside, Jesus went into the house. His disciples said, “Please explain to us the story of the weeds in the field.”

37Jesus replied, “The Son of Man* is the farmer who plants the good seed. 38The field is the world, and the good seed represents the people of the Kingdom. The weeds are the people who belong to the evil one. 39The enemy who planted the weeds among the wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world,* and the harvesters are the angels.

40“Just as the weeds are sorted out and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. 41The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will remove from his Kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. 42And the angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father’s Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

PARABLES OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE PEARL

44“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

45“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. 46When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!

PARABLE OF THE FISHING NET

47"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was
thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind. 48When the net
was full, they dragged it up onto the shore, sat down, and sorted
the good fish into crates, but threw the bad ones away. 49That is the
way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and
separate the wicked people from the righteous, 50throwing the
wicked into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and
gnashing of teeth. 51Do you understand all these things?"

"Yes," they said, "we do."

52Then he added, "Every teacher of religious law who becomes a
disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a homeowner who brings
from his storeroom new gems of truth as well as old."

JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

53When Jesus had finished telling these stories and illustrations, he
left that part of the country. 54He returned to Nazareth, his
hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was
amazed and said, "Where does he get this wisdom and the power to
do miracles?" 55Then they scoffed, "He's just the carpenter's son,
and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph,*
Simon, and Judas. 56All his sisters live right here among us. Where
did he learn all these things?" 57And they were deeply offended and
refused to believe in him.

Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in
his own hometown and among his own family." 58And so he did
only a few miracles there because of their unbelief.

Matthew 14

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

1When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee,* heard about Jesus, 2he said to his advisers, “This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead! That is why he can do such miracles.”

3For Herod had arrested and imprisoned John as a favor to his wife Herodias (the former wife of Herod’s brother Philip). 4John had been telling Herod, “It is against God’s law for you to marry her.” 5Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of a riot, because all the people believed John was a prophet.

6But at a birthday party for Herod, Herodias's daughter performed a
dance that greatly pleased him, 7so he promised with a vow to give
her anything she wanted. 8At her mother's urging, the girl said, "I
want the head of John the Baptist on a tray!" 9Then the king
regretted what he had said; but because of the vow he had made in
front of his guests, he issued the necessary orders. 10So John was
beheaded in the prison, 11and his head was brought on a tray and
given to the girl, who took it to her mother. 12Later, John's disciples
came for his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus
what had happened.

THE SEA OF GALILEE

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

13As soon as Jesus heard the news, he left in a boat to a remote area
to be alone. But the crowds heard where he was headed and
followed on foot from many towns. 14Jesus saw the huge crowd as
he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them and
healed their sick.

15That evening the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote
place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they
can go to the villages and buy food for themselves."

16But Jesus said, "That isn't necessary—you feed them."

17"But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!" they
answered.

18"Bring them here," he said. 19Then he told the people to sit down

on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he gave the bread to the disciples, who distributed it to the people. 20They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers. 21About 5,000 men were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children!

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

22Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. 23After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

24Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. 25About three o'clock in the morning* Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. 26When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!"

27But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take

courage. I am here!*”

28Then Peter called to him, “Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come
to you, walking on the water.”

29“Yes, come,” Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water
toward Jesus. 30But when he saw the strong* wind and the waves,
he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted.

31Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so
little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?”

32When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. 33Then
the disciples worshiped him. “You really are the Son of God!” they
exclaimed.

34After they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret.
35When the people recognized Jesus, the news of his arrival spread
quickly throughout the whole area, and soon people were bringing
all their sick to be healed. 36They begged him to let the sick touch at
least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.

Matthew 15

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT INNER PURITY

1Some Pharisees and teachers of religious law now arrived from
Jerusalem to see Jesus. They asked him, 2“Why do your disciples
disobey our age-old tradition? For they ignore our tradition of
ceremonial hand washing before they eat.”

3Jesus replied, “And why do you, by your traditions, violate the
direct commandments of God? 4For instance, God says, ‘Honor your
father and mother,’* and ‘Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of
father or mother must be put to death.’* 5But you say it is all right
for people to say to their parents, ‘Sorry, I can’t help you. For I have
vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.’ 6In this way,
you say they don’t need to honor their parents.* And so you cancel
the word of God for the sake of your own tradition. 7You
hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he
wrote,

8‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far
from me.

9Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as
commands from God.’*”

10Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “Listen,” he
said, “and try to understand. 11It’s not what goes into your mouth
that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your
mouth.”

12Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you realize you
offended the Pharisees by what you just said?”

13Jesus replied, “Every plant not planted by my heavenly Father
will be uprooted, 14so ignore them. They are blind guides leading
the blind, and if one blind person guides another, they will both fall
into a ditch.”

15Then Peter said to Jesus, “Explain to us the parable that says

people aren't defiled by what they eat."

16"Don't you understand yet?" Jesus asked. 17"Anything you eat
passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer. 18But the
words you speak come from the heart—that's what defiles you.
19For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all
sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. 20These are what defile
you. Eating with unwashed hands will never defile you."

THE FAITH OF A GENTILE WOMAN

21Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre and
Sidon. 22A Gentile* woman who lived there came to him, pleading,
"Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For my daughter is
possessed by a demon that torments her severely."

23But Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word. Then his disciples
urged him to send her away. "Tell her to go away," they said. "She
is bothering us with all her begging."

24Then Jesus said to the woman, "I was sent only to help God's lost
sheep—the people of Israel."

25But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, "Lord, help
me!"

26Jesus responded, "It isn't right to take food from the children and
throw it to the dogs."

27She replied, "That's true, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat
the scraps that fall beneath their masters' table."

28"Dear woman," Jesus said to her, "your faith is great. Your
request is granted." And her daughter was instantly healed.

JESUS HEALS MANY PEOPLE

29Jesus returned to the Sea of Galilee and climbed a hill and sat
down. 30A vast crowd brought to him people who were lame, blind,
crippled, those who couldn't speak, and many others. They laid
them before Jesus, and he healed them all. 31The crowd was
amazed! Those who hadn't been able to speak were talking, the
crippled were made well, the lame were walking, and the blind
could see again! And they praised the God of Israel.

JESUS FEEDS FOUR THOUSAND

32Then Jesus called his disciples and told them, "I feel sorry for
these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they
have nothing left to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry, or
they will faint along the way."

33The disciples replied, "Where would we get enough food here in
the wilderness for such a huge crowd?"

34Jesus asked, "How much bread do you have?"

They replied, "Seven loaves, and a few small fish."

35So Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. 36Then he
took the seven loaves and the fish, thanked God for them, and
broke them into pieces. He gave them to the disciples, who
distributed the food to the crowd.

37They all ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples
picked up seven large baskets of leftover food. 38There were 4,000
men who were fed that day, in addition to all the women and
children. 39Then Jesus sent the people home, and he got into a boat
and crossed over to the region of Magadan.

Matthew 16

LEADERS DEMAND A MIRACULOUS SIGN

1One day the Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus,
demanding that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to
prove his authority.

2He replied, “You know the saying, ‘Red sky at night means fair
weather tomorrow; 3red sky in the morning means foul weather all
day.’ You know how to interpret the weather signs in the sky, but
you don’t know how to interpret the signs of the times!* 4Only an
evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign, but
the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah.*”
Then Jesus left them and went away.

YEAST OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

5Later, after they crossed to the other side of the lake, the disciples
discovered they had forgotten to bring any bread. 6“Watch out!”
Jesus warned them. “Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and
Sadducees.”

7At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn’t
brought any bread. 8Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said,
“You have so little faith! Why are you arguing with each other
about having no bread? 9Don’t you understand even yet? Don’t you
remember the 5,000 I fed with five loaves, and the baskets of
leftovers you picked up? 10Or the 4,000 I fed with seven loaves, and
the large baskets of leftovers you picked up? 11Why can’t you
understand that I’m not talking about bread? So again I say,
‘Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.’”

12Then at last they understood that he wasn’t speaking about the
yeast in bread, but about the deceptive teaching of the Pharisees
and Sadducees.

PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

13When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"*

14"Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

15Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

16Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah,* the Son of the
living God.”

17Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John,* because my
Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this
from any human being. 18Now I say to you that you are Peter
(which means ‘rock’),* and upon this rock I will build my church,
and all the powers of hell* will not conquer it. 19And I will give you
the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid* on earth
will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit* on earth will
be permitted in heaven.”

20Then he sternly warned the disciples not to tell anyone that he
was the Messiah.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

21From then on Jesus* began to tell his disciples plainly that it was
necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer
many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests,
and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the
third day he would be raised from the dead.

22But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him* for saying
such things. “Heaven forbid, Lord,” he said. “This will never happen
to you!”

23Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get away from me, Satan! You
are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a
human point of view, not from God’s.”

24Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my
follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross,
and follow me. 25If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it.
But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26And what
do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?*
Is anything worth more than your soul? 27For the Son of Man will
come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all
people according to their deeds. 28And I tell you the truth, some
standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man
coming in his Kingdom.”

THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 17

THE TRANSFIGURATION

1Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and
John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. 2As the men
watched, Jesus' appearance was transformed so that his face shone
like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. 3Suddenly,
Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.

4Peter exclaimed, "Lord, it's wonderful for us to be here! If you
want, I'll make three shelters as memorials*—one for you, one for
Moses, and one for Elijah."

5But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a

voice from the cloud said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him.” 6The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.

7Then Jesus came over and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” 8And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.

9As they went back down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen until the Son of Man* has been raised from the dead.”

10Then his disciples asked him, “Why do the teachers of religious law insist that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes?*”

11Jesus replied, “Elijah is indeed coming first to get everything ready. 12But I tell you, Elijah has already come, but he wasn’t recognized, and they chose to abuse him. And in the same way they will also make the Son of Man suffer.” 13Then the disciples realized he was talking about John the Baptist.

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED BOY

14At the foot of the mountain, a large crowd was waiting for them. A man came and knelt before Jesus and said, 15“Lord, have mercy on my son. He has seizures and suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. 16So I brought him to your disciples, but

they couldn't heal him."

17Jesus said, "You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be
with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy here to
me." 18Then Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and it left him.
From that moment the boy was well.

19Afterward the disciples asked Jesus privately, "Why couldn't we
cast out that demon?"

20"You don't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I tell you the
truth, if you had faith even as small as a mustard seed, you could
say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move.
Nothing would be impossible.*"

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH

22After they gathered again in Galilee, Jesus told them, "The Son of
Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. 23He will
be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead." And
the disciples were filled with grief.

PAYMENT OF THE TEMPLE TAX

24On their arrival in Capernaum, the collectors of the Temple tax*
came to Peter and asked him, "Doesn't your teacher pay the Temple
tax?"

25“Yes, he does,” Peter replied. Then he went into the house.

But before he had a chance to speak, Jesus asked him, “What do you think, Peter?* Do kings tax their own people or the people they have conquered?*”

26“They tax the people they have conquered,” Peter replied.

“Well, then,” Jesus said, “the citizens are free! 27However, we don’t want to offend them, so go down to the lake and throw in a line. Open the mouth of the first fish you catch, and you will find a large silver coin.* Take it and pay the tax for both of us.”

Matthew 18

THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM

1About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?”

2Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. 3Then he said, “I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. 4So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

5“And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf* is welcoming me. 6But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

7“What sorrow awaits the world, because it tempts people to sin.
Temptations are inevitable, but what sorrow awaits the person who
does the tempting. 8So if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it
off and throw it away. It’s better to enter eternal life with only one
hand or one foot than to be thrown into eternal fire with both of
your hands and feet. 9And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out
and throw it away. It’s better to enter eternal life with only one eye
than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.*

10“Beware that you don’t look down on any of these little ones. For
I tell you that in heaven their angels are always in the presence of
my heavenly Father.*

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

12“If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away,
what will he do? Won’t he leave the ninety-nine others on the hills
and go out to search for the one that is lost? 13And if he finds it, I
tell you the truth, he will rejoice over it more than over the ninety-
nine that didn’t wander away! 14In the same way, it is not my
heavenly Father’s will that even one of these little ones should
perish.

CORRECTING ANOTHER BELIEVER

15“If another believer* sins against you,* go privately and point out
the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have
won that person back. 16But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two
others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may
be confirmed by two or three witnesses. 17If the person still refuses
to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t
accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a
corrupt tax collector.

18“I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid* on earth will be

forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit* on earth will be permitted in heaven.

19"I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. 20For where two or three gather together as my followers,* I am there among them."

PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING DEBTOR

21Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone* who sins against me? Seven times?"

22"No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!*

23"Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. 24In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars.* 25He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.

26"But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' 27Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

28"But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars.* He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

29"His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little

more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. 30But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

31“When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. 32Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. 33Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ 34Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

35“That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters* from your heart.”

Matthew 19

DISCUSSION ABOUT DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE

1When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went down to the region of Judea east of the Jordan River. 2Large crowds followed him there, and he healed their sick.

3Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: “Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?”

4“Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’*” 5And he said, “‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’* 6Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.”

7"Then why did Moses say in the law that a man could give his wife
a written notice of divorce and send her away?"* they asked.

8Jesus replied, "Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to
your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended.
9And I tell you this, whoever divorces his wife and marries someone
else commits adultery—unless his wife has been unfaithful.*"

10Jesus' disciples then said to him, "If this is the case, it is better not
to marry!"

11"Not everyone can accept this statement," Jesus said. "Only those
whom God helps. 12Some are born as eunuchs, some have been
made eunuchs by others, and some choose not to marry* for the
sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

13One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could
lay his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples scolded
the parents for bothering him.

14But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For
the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these
children." 15And he placed his hands on their heads and blessed
them before he left.

THE RICH MAN

16Someone came to Jesus with this question: "Teacher,* what good
deed must I do to have eternal life?"

17"Why ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only
One who is good. But to answer your question—if you want to

receive eternal life, keep* the commandments."

18"Which ones?" the man asked.

And Jesus replied: "'You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. 19Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.'*"

20"I've obeyed all these commandments," the young man replied. "What else must I do?"

21Jesus told him, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

22But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

23Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. 24I'll say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"

25The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked.

26Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."

27Then Peter said to him, "We've given up everything to follow you. What will we get?"

28Jesus replied, “I assure you that when the world is made new* and
the Son of Man* sits upon his glorious throne, you who have been
my followers will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve
tribes of Israel. 29And everyone who has given up houses or brothers
or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake,
will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit
eternal life. 30But many who are the greatest now will be least
important then, and those who seem least important now will be
the greatest then.*

Matthew 20

PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD WORKERS

1“For the Kingdom of Heaven is like the landowner who went out
early one morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2He agreed to
pay the normal daily wage* and sent them out to work.

3“At nine o’clock in the morning he was passing through the
marketplace and saw some people standing around doing nothing.
4So he hired them, telling them he would pay them whatever was
right at the end of the day. 5So they went to work in the vineyard.
At noon and again at three o’clock he did the same thing.

6“At five o’clock that afternoon he was in town again and saw some
more people standing around. He asked them, ‘Why haven’t you
been working today?’

7“They replied, ‘Because no one hired us.’

“The landowner told them, ‘Then go out and join the others in my
vineyard.’

8“That evening he told the foreman to call the workers in and pay
them, beginning with the last workers first. 9When those hired at
five o’clock were paid, each received a full day’s wage. 10When

those hired first came to get their pay, they assumed they would receive more. But they, too, were paid a day's wage. 11When they received their pay, they protested to the owner, 12'Those people worked only one hour, and yet you've paid them just as much as you paid us who worked all day in the scorching heat.'

13"He answered one of them, 'Friend, I haven't been unfair! Didn't you agree to work all day for the usual wage? 14Take your money and go. I wanted to pay this last worker the same as you. 15Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?'

16"So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last."

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH

17As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside privately and told them what was going to happen to him. 18"Listen," he said, "we're going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man* will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die. 19Then they will hand him over to the Romans* to be mocked, flogged with a whip, and crucified. But on the third day he will be raised from the dead."

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT SERVING OTHERS

20Then the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt respectfully to ask a favor. 21"What is your request?" he asked.

She replied, "In your Kingdom, please let my two sons sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left."

22But Jesus answered by saying to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?"

“Oh yes,” they replied, “we are able!”

23Jesus told them, “You will indeed drink from my bitter cup. But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. My Father has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen.”

24When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. 25But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 26But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 27and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. 28For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

JESUS HEALS TWO BLIND MEN

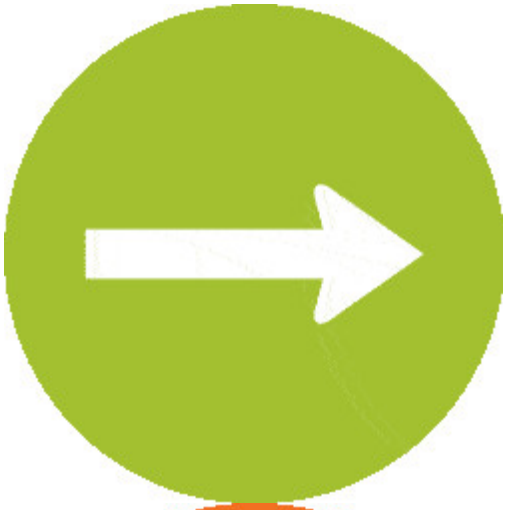
29As Jesus and the disciples left the town of Jericho, a large crowd followed behind. 30Two blind men were sitting beside the road. When they heard that Jesus was coming that way, they began shouting, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

31“Be quiet!” the crowd yelled at them.

But they only shouted louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!”

32When Jesus heard them, he stopped and called, “What do you want me to do for you?”

33“Lord,” they said, “we want to see!” 34Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Instantly they could see! Then they followed him.



EASTER MATTHEW 21:1-11

Matthew 21

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

1As Jesus and the disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the
town of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two of them
on ahead. 2"Go into the village over there," he said. "As soon as you
enter it, you will see a donkey tied there, with its colt beside it.
Untie them and bring them to me. 3If anyone asks what you are
doing, just say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will immediately let
you take them."

4This took place to fulfill the prophecy that said,

5"Tell the people of Jerusalem,*
'Look, your King is coming to you.
He is humble, riding on a donkey—
riding on a donkey's colt.'"*

6The two disciples did as Jesus commanded. 7They brought the
donkey and the colt to him and threw their garments over the colt,
and he sat on it.*

8Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him,
and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the
road. 9Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all
around him were shouting, "Praise God* for the Son of David!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!
Praise God in highest heaven!"*

10The entire city of Jerusalem was in an uproar as he entered. "Who
is this?" they asked.

11And the crowds replied, “It’s Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

12Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out all the people buying and selling animals for sacrifice. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves. 13He said to them, “The Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves!”*

14The blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. 15The leading priests and the teachers of religious law saw these wonderful miracles and heard even the children in the Temple shouting, “Praise God for the Son of David.”

But the leaders were indignant. 16They asked Jesus, “Do you hear what these children are saying?”

“Yes,” Jesus replied. “Haven’t you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, ‘You have taught children and infants to give you praise.’*” 17Then he returned to Bethany, where he stayed overnight.

JESUS CURSES THE FIG TREE

18In the morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry, 19and he noticed a fig tree beside the road. He went over to see if there were any figs, but there were only leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” And immediately the fig tree withered up.

20The disciples were amazed when they saw this and asked, “How
did the fig tree wither so quickly?”

21Then Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and
don’t doubt, you can do things like this and much more. You can
even say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and thrown into
the sea,’ and it will happen. 22You can pray for anything, and if you
have faith, you will receive it.”

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED

23When Jesus returned to the Temple and began teaching, the
leading priests and elders came up to him. They demanded, “By
what authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the
right?”

24“I’ll tell you by what authority I do these things if you answer one
question,” Jesus replied. 25“Did John’s authority to baptize come
from heaven, or was it merely human?”

They talked it over among themselves. “If we say it was from
heaven, he will ask us why we didn’t believe John. 26But if we say it
was merely human, we’ll be mobbed because the people believe
John was a prophet.” 27So they finally replied, “We don’t know.”

And Jesus responded, “Then I won’t tell you by what authority I do
these things.

PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

28“But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the
older boy, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ 29The son
answered, ‘No, I won’t go,’ but later he changed his mind and went
anyway. 30Then the father told the other son, ‘You go,’ and he said,
‘Yes, sir, I will.’ But he didn’t go.

31“Which of the two obeyed his father?”

They replied, “The first.”*

Then Jesus explained his meaning: “I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. 32For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn’t believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.

PARABLE OF THE EVIL FARMERS

33“Now listen to another story. A certain landowner planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to another country. 34At the time of the grape harvest, he sent his servants to collect his share of the crop. 35But the farmers grabbed his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36So the landowner sent a larger group of his servants to collect for him, but the results were the same.

37“Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking, ‘Surely they will respect my son.’

38“But when the tenant farmers saw his son coming, they said to one another, ‘Here comes the heir to this estate. Come on, let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!’ 39So they grabbed him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and murdered him.

40“When the owner of the vineyard returns,” Jesus asked, “what do you think he will do to those farmers?”

41The religious leaders replied, “He will put the wicked men to a horrible death and lease the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the crop after each harvest.”

42Then Jesus asked them, “Didn’t you ever read this in the Scriptures?

‘The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.
This is the LORD’s doing, and it is wonderful to see.’*

43I tell you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit. 44Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on.*”

45When the leading priests and Pharisees heard this parable, they realized he was telling the story against them—they were the wicked farmers. 46They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds, who considered Jesus to be a prophet.

Matthew 22

PARABLE OF THE GREAT FEAST

1Jesus also told them other parables. He said, 2“The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. 3When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come!

4“So he sent other servants to tell them, ‘The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!’ 5But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. 6Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them.

7“The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their town. 8And he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren’t worthy of the

honor. 9Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you
see.' 10So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good
and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests.

11"But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man
who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. 12'Friend,' he
asked, 'how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?' But
the man had no reply. 13Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind his
hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness, where there
will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14"For many are called, but few are chosen."

TAXES FOR CAESAR

15Then the Pharisees met together to plot how to trap Jesus into
saying something for which he could be arrested. 16They sent some
of their disciples, along with the supporters of Herod, to meet with
him. "Teacher," they said, "we know how honest you are. You teach
the way of God truthfully. You are impartial and don't play
favorites. 17Now tell us what you think about this: Is it right to pay
taxes to Caesar or not?"

18But Jesus knew their evil motives. "You hypocrites!" he said.
"Why are you trying to trap me? 19Here, show me the coin used for
the tax." When they handed him a Roman coin,*20he asked, "Whose
picture and title are stamped on it?"

21"Caesar's," they replied.

"Well, then," he said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and
give to God what belongs to God."

22His reply amazed them, and they went away.

DISCUSSION ABOUT RESURRECTION

23That same day Jesus was approached by some Sadducees—
religious leaders who say there is no resurrection from the dead.
They posed this question: 24"Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies
without children, his brother should marry the widow and have a
child who will carry on the brother's name.'* 25Well, suppose there
were seven brothers. The oldest one married and then died without
children, so his brother married the widow. 26But the second
brother also died, and the third brother married her. This continued
with all seven of them. 27Last of all, the woman also died. 28So tell
us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were
married to her."

29Jesus replied, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures,
and you don't know the power of God. 30For when the dead rise,
they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect
they will be like the angels in heaven.

31"But now, as to whether there will be a resurrection of the dead—
haven't you ever read about this in the Scriptures? Long after
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said,* 32'I am the God of
Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'* So he is the God
of the living, not the dead."

33When the crowds heard him, they were astounded at his teaching.

THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT

34But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees
with his reply, they met together to question him again. 35One of
them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this
question: 36"Teacher, which is the most important commandment in
the law of Moses?"

37Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your
heart, all your soul, and all your mind.'* 38This is the first and

greatest commandment. 39A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’* 40The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

WHOSE SON IS THE MESSIAH?

41Then, surrounded by the Pharisees, Jesus asked them a question: 42“What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

They replied, “He is the son of David.”

43Jesus responded, “Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit, call the Messiah ‘my Lord’? For David said,

44‘The LORD said to my Lord, Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies beneath your feet.’*

45Since David called the Messiah ‘my Lord,’ how can the Messiah be his son?”

46No one could answer him. And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Matthew 23

JESUS CRITICIZES THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

1Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2“The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses.* 3So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don’t follow their example. For they don’t practice what they teach. 4They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden.

5“Everything they do is for show. On their arms they wear extra
wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear robes
with extra long tassels.* 6And they love to sit at the head table at
banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues. 7They love to
receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces, and to
be called ‘Rabbi.’*

8“Don’t let anyone call you ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one teacher,
and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters.* 9And don’t address
anyone here on earth as ‘Father,’ for only God in heaven is your
spiritual Father. 10And don’t let anyone call you ‘Teacher,’ for you
have only one teacher, the Messiah. 11The greatest among you must
be a servant. 12But those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and
those who humble themselves will be exalted.

13“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you
Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of
Heaven in people’s faces. You won’t go in yourselves, and you don’t
let others enter either.*

15“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you
Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you cross land and sea to make one
convert, and then you turn that person into twice the child of hell*
you yourselves are!

16“Blind guides! What sorrow awaits you! For you say that it means
nothing to swear ‘by God’s Temple,’ but that it is binding to swear
‘by the gold in the Temple.’ 17Blind fools! Which is more important
—the gold or the Temple that makes the gold sacred? 18And you say
that to swear ‘by the altar’ is not binding, but to swear ‘by the gifts
on the altar’ is binding. 19How blind! For which is more important—
the gift on the altar or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20When
you swear ‘by the altar,’ you are swearing by it and by everything
on it. 21And when you swear ‘by the Temple,’ you are swearing by it

and by God, who lives in it. 22And when you swear ‘by heaven,’ you are swearing by the throne of God and by God, who sits on the throne.

23“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens,* but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. 24Blind guides! You strain your water so you won’t accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel!*

25“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! 26You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish,* and then the outside will become clean, too.

27“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. 28Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you build tombs for the prophets your ancestors killed, and you decorate the monuments of the godly people your ancestors destroyed. 30Then you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would never have joined them in killing the prophets.’

31“But in saying that, you testify against yourselves that you are indeed the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32Go

ahead and finish what your ancestors started. 33Snakes! Sons of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell?

34“Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers of religious law. But you will kill some by crucifixion, and you will flog others with whips in your synagogues, chasing them from city to city. 35As a result, you will be held responsible for the murder of all godly people of all time—from the murder of righteous Abel to the murder of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you killed in the Temple between the sanctuary and the altar. 36I tell you the truth, this judgment will fall on this very generation.

JESUS GRIEVES OVER JERUSALEM

37“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God’s messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn’t let me. 38And now, look, your house is abandoned and desolate.* 39For I tell you this, you will never see me again until you say, ‘Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!’*”

Matthew 24

JESUS FORETELLS THE FUTURE

1As Jesus was leaving the Temple grounds, his disciples pointed out to him the various Temple buildings. 2But he responded, “Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!”

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

3Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him
privately and said, “Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign
will signal your return and the end of the world?*”

4Jesus told them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, 5for many will
come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They will deceive
many. 6And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t
panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won’t follow
immediately. 7Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom
against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many
parts of the world. 8But all this is only the first of the birth pains,
with more to come.

9“Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be
hated all over the world because you are my followers.* 10And many
will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. 11And
many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. 12Sin
will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.
13But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14And the Good
News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole
world, so that all nations* will hear it; and then the end will come.

15“The day is coming when you will see what Daniel the prophet
spoke about—the sacrilegious object that causes desecration*
standing in the Holy Place.” (Reader, pay attention!) 16“Then those
in Judea must flee to the hills. 17A person out on the deck of a roof
must not go down into the house to pack. 18A person out in the field
must not return even to get a coat. 19How terrible it will be for
pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. 20And pray
that your flight will not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21For there
will be greater anguish than at any time since the world began. And
it will never be so great again. 22In fact, unless that time of calamity
is shortened, not a single person will survive. But it will be
shortened for the sake of God’s chosen ones.

23“Then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘There he
is,’ don’t believe it. 24For false messiahs and false prophets will rise
up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if
possible, even God’s chosen ones. 25See, I have warned you about
this ahead of time.

26“So if someone tells you, ‘Look, the Messiah is out in the desert,’
don’t bother to go and look. Or, ‘Look, he is hiding here,’ don’t
believe it! 27For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the
west, so it will be when the Son of Man* comes. 28Just as the
gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs
indicate that the end is near.*

29“Immediately after the anguish of those days, the sun will be
darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the
sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.*

30And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will
appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all
the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming
on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* 31And he will
send out his angels with the mighty blast of a trumpet, and they
will gather his chosen ones from all over the world*—from the
farthest ends of the earth and heaven.

32“Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and
its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. 33In the
same way, when you see all these things, you can know his return is
very near, right at the door. 34I tell you the truth, this generation*
will not pass from the scene until all these things take place.
35Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never
disappear.

36“However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will

happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself.* Only the Father knows.

37"When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day.
38In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets
and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his
boat. 39People didn't realize what was going to happen until the
flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be
when the Son of Man comes.

40"Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken,
the other left. 41Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one
will be taken, the other left.

42"So you, too, must keep watch! For you don't know what day your
Lord is coming. 43Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly
when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit
his house to be broken into. 44You also must be ready all the time,
for the Son of Man will come when least expected.

45"A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give
the responsibility of managing his other household servants and
feeding them. 46If the master returns and finds that the servant has
done a good job, there will be a reward. 47I tell you the truth, the
master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. 48But what if
the servant is evil and thinks, 'My master won't be back for a while,'
49and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting
drunk? 50The master will return unannounced and unexpected,
51and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with
the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of
teeth.

Matthew 25

PARABLE OF THE TEN BRIDESMAIDS

1“Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids* who
took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2Five of them
were foolish, and five were wise. 3The five who were foolish didn’t
take enough olive oil for their lamps, 4but the other five were wise
enough to take along extra oil. 5When the bridegroom was delayed,
they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6“At midnight they were roused by the shout, ‘Look, the bridegroom
is coming! Come out and meet him!’

7“All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. 8Then the
five foolish ones asked the others, ‘Please give us some of your oil
because our lamps are going out.’

9“But the others replied, ‘We don’t have enough for all of us. Go to
a shop and buy some for yourselves.’

10“But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then
those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and
the door was locked. 11Later, when the other five bridesmaids
returned, they stood outside, calling, ‘Lord! Lord! Open the door for
us!’

12“But he called back, ‘Believe me, I don’t know you!’

13“So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or
hour of my return.

PARABLE OF THE THREE SERVANTS

14“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a
man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and
entrusted his money to them while he was gone. 15He gave five bags
of silver* to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver
to the last—dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left
on his trip.

16“The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest
the money and earned five more. 17The servant with two bags of
silver also went to work and earned two more. 18But the servant
who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid
the master’s money.

19“After a long time their master returned from his trip and called
them to give an account of how they had used his money. 20The
servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came
forward with five more and said, ‘Master, you gave me five bags of
silver to invest, and I have earned five more.’

21“The master was full of praise. ‘Well done, my good and faithful
servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so
now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate
together!*’

22“The servant who had received the two bags of silver came
forward and said, ‘Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest,
and I have earned two more.’

23“The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You
have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give
you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’

24“Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said,
‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t
plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate. 25I was afraid I
would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your
money back.’

26“But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you
knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t
cultivate, 27why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I
could have gotten some interest on it.’

28“Then he ordered, ‘Take the money from this servant, and give it
to the one with the ten bags of silver. 29To those who use well what
they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an
abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they
have will be taken away. 30Now throw this useless servant into
outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

31 "But when the Son of Man* comes in his glory, and all the angels
with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. 32 All the
nations* will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the
people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will
place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are
blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from
the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was
thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited
me into your home. 36 I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was
sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

37 "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see
you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to
drink? 38 Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give
you clothing? 39 When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit
you?'

40 "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to
one of the least of these my brothers and sisters,* you were doing it
to me!'

41“Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with
you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil
and his demons.* 42For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was
thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. 43I was a stranger, and you
didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give
me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’

44“Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or
thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help
you?’

45“And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to
help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to
help me.’

46“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous
will go into eternal life.”

Matthew 26

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

1When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his
disciples, 2“As you know, Passover begins in two days, and the Son
of Man* will be handed over to be crucified.”

3At that same time the leading priests and elders were meeting at
the residence of Caiaphas, the high priest, 4plotting how to capture
Jesus secretly and kill him. 5“But not during the Passover
celebration,” they agreed, “or the people may riot.”

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

6Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man
who had previously had leprosy. 7While he was eating,* a woman
came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume and
poured it over his head.

8The disciples were indignant when they saw this. “What a waste!”
they said. 9“It could have been sold for a high price and the money
given to the poor.”

10But Jesus, aware of this, replied, “Why criticize this woman for
doing such a good thing to me? 11You will always have the poor
among you, but you will not always have me. 12She has poured this
perfume on me to prepare my body for burial. 13I tell you the truth,
wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this
woman’s deed will be remembered and discussed.”

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

14Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the
leading priests 15and asked, “How much will you pay me to betray
Jesus to you?” And they gave him thirty pieces of silver. 16From that
time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

EASTER MATTHEW 26:17-35

THE LAST SUPPER

17On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples
came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to prepare the
Passover meal for you?”

18“As you go into the city,” he told them, “you will see a certain
man. Tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My time has come, and I will eat
the Passover meal with my disciples at your house.’” 19So the
disciples did as Jesus told them and prepared the Passover meal

there.

20When it was evening, Jesus sat down at the table* with the
Twelve. 21While they were eating, he said, “I tell you the truth, one
of you will betray me.”

22Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, “Am I the one, Lord?”

23He replied, “One of you who has just eaten from this bowl with
me will betray me. 24For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures
declared long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who
betrays him. It would be far better for that man if he had never
been born!”

25Judas, the one who would betray him, also asked, “Rabbi, am I
the one?”

And Jesus told him, “You have said it.”

26As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then
he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take this
and eat it, for this is my body.”

27And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave
it to them and said, “Each of you drink from it, 28for this is my
blood, which confirms the covenant* between God and his people. It
is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many. 29Mark my
words—I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new with
you in my Father’s Kingdom.”

30Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

31On the way, Jesus told them, "Tonight all of you will desert me.
For the Scriptures say, 'God will strike* the Shepherd, and the sheep
of the flock will be scattered.'

32But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you
to Galilee and meet you there."

33Peter declared, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never
desert you."

34Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before
the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know
me."

35"No!" Peter insisted. "Even if I have to die with you, I will never
deny you!" And all the other disciples vowed the same.

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

36Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane,
and he said, "Sit here while I go over there to pray." 37He took Peter
and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished
and distressed. 38He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the
point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

39He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground,
praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be
taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

40Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said
to Peter, “Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? 41Keep watch
and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is
willing, but the body is weak!”

42Then Jesus left them a second time and prayed, “My Father! If
this cup cannot be taken away* unless I drink it, your will be done.”
43When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they
couldn’t keep their eyes open.

44So he went to pray a third time, saying the same things again.
45Then he came to the disciples and said, “Go ahead and sleep.
Have your rest. But look—the time has come. The Son of Man is
betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46Up, let’s be going. Look, my
betrayer is here!”

JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED

47And even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples,
arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They
had been sent by the leading priests and elders of the people. 48The
traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: “You will know
which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss.” 49So Judas came
straight to Jesus. “Greetings, Rabbi!” he exclaimed and gave him
the kiss.

50Jesus said, “My friend, go ahead and do what you have come for.”

Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. 51But one of the
men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest’s
slave, slashing off his ear.

52“Put away your sword,” Jesus told him. “Those who use the sword
will die by the sword. 53Don’t you realize that I could ask my Father
for thousands* of angels to protect us, and he would send them
instantly? 54But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that
describe what must happen now?”

55Then Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I some dangerous
revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me?
Why didn’t you arrest me in the Temple? I was there teaching every
day. 56But this is all happening to fulfill the words of the prophets
as recorded in the Scriptures.” At that point, all the disciples
deserted him and fled.

JESUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL

57Then the people who had arrested Jesus led him to the home of
Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of religious law and
the elders had gathered. 58Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a
distance and came to the high priest’s courtyard. He went in and sat
with the guards and waited to see how it would all end.

59Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council* were trying
to find witnesses who would lie about Jesus, so they could put him
to death. 60But even though they found many who agreed to give
false witness, they could not use anyone’s testimony. Finally, two
men came forward 61who declared, “This man said, ‘I am able to
destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”

62Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Well, aren’t you
going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for
yourself?” 63But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to
him, “I demand in the name of the living God—tell us if you are the
Messiah, the Son of God.”

64Jesus replied, “You have said it. And in the future you will see the
Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand* and
coming on the clouds of heaven.”*

65Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said,
“Blasphemy! Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard
his blasphemy. 66What is your verdict?”

“Guilty!” they shouted. “He deserves to die!”

67Then they began to spit in Jesus’ face and beat him with their
fists. And some slapped him, 68jeering, “Prophesy to us, you
Messiah! Who hit you that time?”

PETER DENIES JESUS

69Meanwhile, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant
girl came over and said to him, “You were one of those with Jesus
the Galilean.”

70But Peter denied it in front of everyone. “I don’t know what
you’re talking about,” he said.

71Later, out by the gate, another servant girl noticed him and said
to those standing around, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.*”

72Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath. “I don’t even know
the man,” he said.

73A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter and
said, “You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean
accent.”

74Peter swore, “A curse on me if I’m lying—I don’t know the man!”
And immediately the rooster crowed.

75Suddenly, Jesus’ words flashed through Peter’s mind: “Before the
rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me.”
And he went away, weeping bitterly.

Matthew 27

JUDAS HANGS HIMSELF

1Very early in the morning the leading priests and the elders of the
people met again to lay plans for putting Jesus to death. 2Then they
bound him, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman
governor.

3When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been
condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the thirty
pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders. 4“I have
sinned,” he declared, “for I have betrayed an innocent man.”

“What do we care?” they retorted. “That’s your problem.”

5Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the Temple and went
out and hanged himself.

6The leading priests picked up the coins. “It wouldn’t be right to put
this money in the Temple treasury,” they said, “since it was
payment for murder.”*7After some discussion they finally decided to
buy the potter’s field, and they made it into a cemetery for
foreigners. 8That is why the field is still called the Field of Blood.
9This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah that says, “They took* the
thirty pieces of silver— the price at which he was valued by the
people of Israel,

10and purchased the potter's field, as the LORD directed.*"

JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

11Now Jesus was standing before Pilate, the Roman governor. "Are you the king of the Jews?" the governor asked him.

Jesus replied, "You have said it."

12But when the leading priests and the elders made their accusations against him, Jesus remained silent. 13"Don't you hear all these charges they are bringing against you?" Pilate demanded. 14But Jesus made no response to any of the charges, much to the governor's surprise.

15Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd—anyone they wanted. 16This year there was a notorious prisoner, a man named Barabbas.*17As the crowds gathered before Pilate's house that morning, he asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" 18(He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.)

19Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: "Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night."

20Meanwhile, the leading priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be put to death. 21So the governor asked again, "Which of these two do you want me to release to you?"

The crowd shouted back, "Barabbas!"

22Pilate responded, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

They shouted back, “Crucify him!”

23“Why?” Pilate demanded. “What crime has he committed?”

But the mob roared even louder, “Crucify him!”

24Pilate saw that he wasn’t getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. The responsibility is yours!”

25And all the people yelled back, “We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!”*

26So Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

27Some of the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into their headquarters* and called out the entire regiment. 28They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. 29They wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head, and they placed a reed stick in his right hand as a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mockery and taunted, “Hail! King of the Jews!” 30And they spit on him and grabbed the stick and struck him on the head with it. 31When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

EASTER MATTHEW 27:32-66

THE CRUCIFIXION

32Along the way, they came across a man named Simon, who was
from Cyrene,* and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross.
33And they went out to a place called Golgotha (which means
"Place of the Skull"). 34The soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with
bitter gall, but when he had tasted it, he refused to drink it.

35After they had nailed him to the cross, the soldiers gambled for
his clothes by throwing dice.*36Then they sat around and kept guard
as he hung there. 37A sign was fastened above Jesus' head,
announcing the charge against him. It read: "This is Jesus, the King
of the Jews." 38Two revolutionaries* were crucified with him, one
on his right and one on his left.

39The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in
mockery. 40"Look at you now!" they yelled at him. "You said you
were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well
then, if you are the Son of God, save yourself and come down from
the cross!"

41The leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders
also mocked Jesus. 42"He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't
save himself! So he is the King of Israel, is he? Let him come down
from the cross right now, and we will believe in him! 43He trusted
God, so let God rescue him now if he wants him! For he said, 'I am
the Son of God.'" 44Even the revolutionaries who were crucified
with him ridiculed him in the same way.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

45At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock.
46At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, *"Eli, Eli,* * *lema sabachthani?"* which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"*

47Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. 48One of them ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink. 49But the rest said, "Wait! Let's see whether Elijah comes to save him."*

50Then Jesus shouted out again, and he released his spirit. 51At that moment the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split apart, 52and tombs opened. The bodies of many godly men and women who had died were raised from the dead. 53They left the cemetery after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city of Jerusalem, and appeared to many people.

54The Roman officer* and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!"

55And many women who had come from Galilee with Jesus to care for him were watching from a distance. 56Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James and Joseph), and the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

57As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, 58went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. 59Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. 60He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of

the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.
61Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from
the tomb and watching.

THE GUARD AT THE TOMB

62The next day, on the Sabbath,* the leading priests and Pharisees
went to see Pilate. 63They told him, “Sir, we remember what that
deceiver once said while he was still alive: ‘After three days I will
rise from the dead.’ 64So we request that you seal the tomb until the
third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing
his body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If
that happens, we’ll be worse off than we were at first.”

65Pilate replied, “Take guards and secure it the best you can.” 66So
they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

EASTER MATTHEW 28:1-20

Matthew 28

THE RESURRECTION

1Early on Sunday morning,* as the new day was dawning, Mary
Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

2Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord
came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. 3His
face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.
4The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into
a dead faint.

5Then the angel spoke to the women. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I
know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6He isn’t here!
He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see
where his body was lying. 7And now, go quickly and tell his
disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of
you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told
you.”

8The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened
but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples
the angel’s message. 9And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted
them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him.
10Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid! Go tell my brothers to
leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.”

THE REPORT OF THE GUARD

11As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into
the city and told the leading priests what had happened. 12A
meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the
soldiers a large bribe. 13They told the soldiers, “You must say,
‘Jesus’ disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and
they stole his body.’ 14If the governor hears about it, we’ll stand up
for you so you won’t get in trouble.” 15So the guards accepted the
bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely
among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

16Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain
where Jesus had told them to go. 17When they saw him, they
worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

18Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority
in heaven and on earth. 19Therefore, go and make disciples of all
the nations,* baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit. 20Teach these new disciples to obey all the
commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you
always, even to the end of the age.”

WELCOME TO

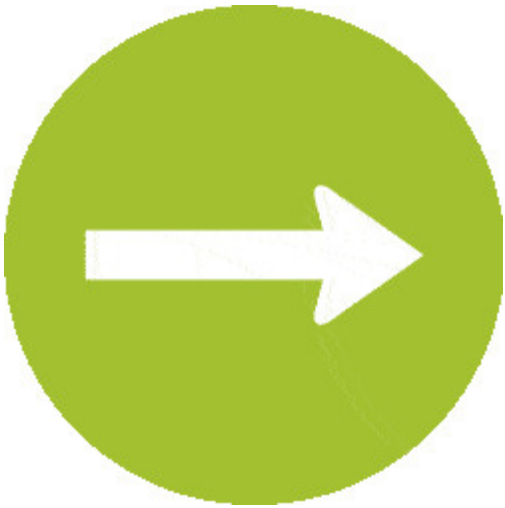
MARK

The Gospel of Mark focuses on Jesus’ activities more than his teachings. Jesus is on the go throughout Mark’s account. All of Jesus’ activities point to one clear characteristic of his: He is a servant to all who need him. This is a central theme of the book. Mark clearly indicates that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. No human could do the miraculous things Jesus does: heal blindness and paralysis, feed thousands, cast out demons, and walk on water.

Mark is the first author to write a Gospel. Since he is not one of Jesus’ twelve disciples, he records the recollections of the apostle Peter. Mark’s account is the shortest of the four Gospels because his writing style is quick and succinct, focusing on the action of the story. Mark writes specifically to Gentiles, or non-Jews. He leaves the words of a Roman army officer ringing in the ears of his Roman readers: “This man truly was the Son of God!” (15:39).

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll land once in the book of Mark to read about Jesus' crucifixion—but the story doesn't end there. Your next stop is at Mark 15:1.



6 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your route through Mark contains six

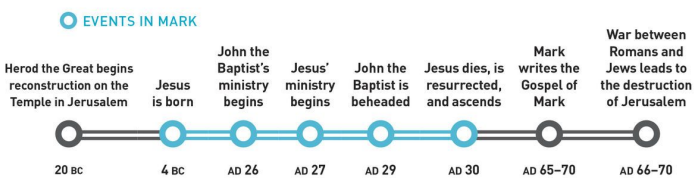
stops that will teach you about Jesus' ministry, his interaction with people, and some of the events of his final week in Jerusalem. Your next stop is at Mark 2:1.

7 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Seven stops in Mark will provide you with even more insights into Jesus' ministry—especially the healings. Your next stop is at Mark 2:1.

FINDING JESUS IN MARK

Mark boldly opens his Gospel by stating who Jesus is: “This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.” Mark skips over Jesus’ early years and starts with Jesus’ ministry and teachings. His action-packed accounts of Jesus’ life focus on what Jesus did. Jesus is revealed as a servant to all people through his words and actions. He displays great power over disease, demons, and disabilities, but he uses this power to help others, not himself. Instead of imitating “the rulers in this world [who] lord it over their people,” Jesus says that he “came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many” (10:42, 45).



Mark 1

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

1This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.* It
began 2just as the prophet Isaiah had written: “Look, I am sending
my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way.*

3He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the
LORD’s coming!
Clear the road for him!’*”

4This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and
preached that people should be baptized to show that they had
repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. 5All of
Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and
hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in
the Jordan River. 6His clothes were woven from coarse camel hair,
and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts
and wild honey.

7John announced: “Someone is coming soon who is greater than I
am—so much greater that I’m not even worthy to stoop down like a
slave and untie the straps of his sandals. 8I baptize you with* water,
but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!”

THE BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION OF JESUS

9One day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized
him in the Jordan River. 10As Jesus came up out of the water, he
saw the heavens splitting apart and the Holy Spirit descending on
him* like a dove. 11And a voice from heaven said, “You are my
dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.”

12The Spirit then compelled Jesus to go into the wilderness, 13where
he was tempted by Satan for forty days. He was out among the wild

animals, and angels took care of him.

14Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where
he preached God's Good News.*15"The time promised by God has
come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent
of your sins and believe the Good News!"

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

16One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of
Galilee, he saw Simon* and his brother Andrew throwing a net into
the water, for they fished for a living. 17Jesus called out to them,
"Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!"
18And they left their nets at once and followed him.

19A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and
John, in a boat repairing their nets. 20He called them at once, and
they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat
with the hired men.

JESUS CASTS OUT AN EVIL SPIRIT

21Jesus and his companions went to the town of Capernaum. When
the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue and began to
teach. 22The people were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with
real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law.

23Suddenly, a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an evil*
spirit began shouting, 24"Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of
Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the
Holy One of God!"

25Jesus cut him short. "Be quiet! Come out of the man," he ordered.

26At that, the evil spirit screamed, threw the man into a convulsion,
and then came out of him.

27Amazement gripped the audience, and they began to discuss what
had happened. “What sort of new teaching is this?” they asked
excitedly. “It has such authority! Even evil spirits obey his orders!”
28The news about Jesus spread quickly throughout the entire region
of Galilee.

JESUS HEALS MANY PEOPLE

29After Jesus left the synagogue with James and John, they went to
Simon and Andrew’s home. 30Now Simon’s mother-in-law was sick
in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away. 31So
he went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up.
Then the fever left her, and she prepared a meal for them.

32That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people
were brought to Jesus. 33The whole town gathered at the door to
watch. 34So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various
diseases, and he cast out many demons. But because the demons
knew who he was, he did not allow them to speak.

JESUS PREACHES IN GALILEE

35Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to
an isolated place to pray. 36Later Simon and the others went out to
find him. 37When they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking
for you.”

38But Jesus replied, “We must go on to other towns as well, and I
will preach to them, too. That is why I came.” 39So he traveled
throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and
casting out demons.

JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH LEPROSY

40A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to
be healed. “If you are willing, you can heal me and make me
clean,” he said.

41Moved with compassion,* Jesus reached out and touched him. “I
am willing,” he said. “Be healed!” 42Instantly the leprosy
disappeared, and the man was healed. 43Then Jesus sent him on his
way with a stern warning: 44“Don’t tell anyone about this. Instead,
go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering
required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of
leprosy.* This will be a public testimony that you have been
cleansed.”

45But the man went and spread the word, proclaiming to everyone
what had happened. As a result, large crowds soon surrounded
Jesus, and he couldn’t publicly enter a town anywhere. He had to
stay out in the secluded places, but people from everywhere kept
coming to him.

Mark 2

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

1When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news
spread quickly that he was back home. 2Soon the house where he
was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more
room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to
them, 3four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. 4They
couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a
hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man
on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. 5Seeing their faith, Jesus
said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."

6But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there
thought to themselves, 7"What is he saying? This is blasphemy!
Only God can forgive sins!"

8Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked
them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? 9Is it easier to say
to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up, pick up
your mat, and walk'? 10So I will prove to you that the Son of Man*

has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, 11"Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

12And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"

JESUS CALLS LEVI (MATTHEW)

13Then Jesus went out to the lakeshore again and taught the crowds that were coming to him. 14As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him.

15Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) 16But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees* saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?*"

17When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

A DISCUSSION ABOUT FASTING

18Once when John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, some people came to Jesus and asked, "Why don't your disciples fast like

John's disciples and the Pharisees do?"

19Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the
groom? Of course not. They can't fast while the groom is with them.
20But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then
they will fast.

21"Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the
new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an
even bigger tear than before.

22"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine
would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both
be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins."

A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SABBATH

23One Sabbath day as Jesus was walking through some grainfields,
his disciples began breaking off heads of grain to eat. 24But the
Pharisees said to Jesus, "Look, why are they breaking the law by
harvesting grain on the Sabbath?"

25Jesus said to them, "Haven't you ever read in the Scriptures what
David did when he and his companions were hungry? 26He went
into the house of God (during the days when Abiathar was high
priest) and broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that
only the priests are allowed to eat. He also gave some to his
companions."

27Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the
needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the
Sabbath. 28So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!"

JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH

1Jesus went into the synagogue again and noticed a man with a
deformed hand. 2Since it was the Sabbath, Jesus' enemies watched
him closely. If he healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse
him of working on the Sabbath.

3Jesus said to the man with the deformed hand, "Come and stand in
front of everyone." 4Then he turned to his critics and asked, "Does
the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing
evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?" But they wouldn't
answer him.

5He looked around at them angrily and was deeply saddened by
their hard hearts. Then he said to the man, "Hold out your hand."
So the man held out his hand, and it was restored! 6At once the
Pharisees went away and met with the supporters of Herod to plot
how to kill Jesus.

CROWDS FOLLOW JESUS

7Jesus went out to the lake with his disciples, and a large crowd
followed him. They came from all over Galilee, Judea, 8Jerusalem,
Idumea, from east of the Jordan River, and even from as far north
as Tyre and Sidon. The news about his miracles had spread far and
wide, and vast numbers of people came to see him.

9Jesus instructed his disciples to have a boat ready so the crowd
would not crush him. 10He had healed many people that day, so all
the sick people eagerly pushed forward to touch him. 11And

whenever those possessed by evil* spirits caught sight of him, the spirits would throw them to the ground in front of him shrieking, “You are the Son of God!” 12But Jesus sternly commanded the spirits not to reveal who he was.

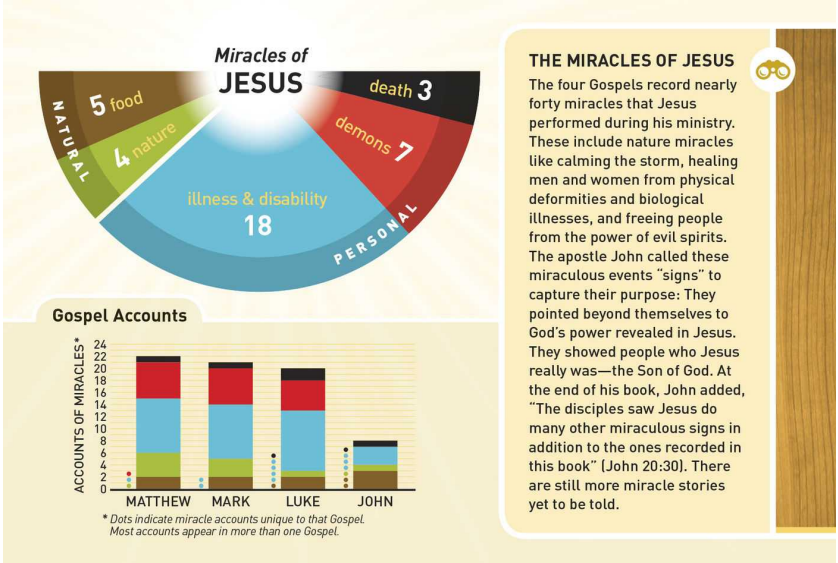
JESUS CHOOSES THE TWELVE APOSTLES

13Afterward Jesus went up on a mountain and called out the ones he wanted to go with him. And they came to him. 14Then he appointed twelve of them and called them his apostles.* They were to accompany him, and he would send them out to preach, 15giving them authority to cast out demons. 16These are the twelve he chose:
Simon (whom he named Peter),

17James and John (the sons of Zebedee, but Jesus nicknamed them “Sons of Thunder”*),

18Andrew, Philip,
Bartholomew,
Matthew,
Thomas,
James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus,
Simon (the zealot*),

19Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).



MIRACLES OF JESUS

JESUS AND THE PRINCE OF DEMONS

20 One time Jesus entered a house, and the crowds began to gather
again. Soon he and his disciples couldn't even find time to eat.
21 When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take
him away. "He's out of his mind," they said.

22 But the teachers of religious law who had arrived from Jerusalem
said, "He's possessed by Satan,* the prince of demons. That's where
he gets the power to cast out demons."

23 Jesus called them over and responded with an illustration. "How
can Satan cast out Satan?" he asked. 24 "A kingdom divided by civil
war will collapse. 25 Similarly, a family splintered by feuding will fall
apart. 26 And if Satan is divided and fights against himself, how can
he stand? He would never survive. 27 Let me illustrate this further.
Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like
Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—

someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.

28“I tell you the truth, all sin and blasphemy can be forgiven, 29but
anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. This
is a sin with eternal consequences.” 30He told them this because
they were saying, “He’s possessed by an evil spirit.”

THE TRUE FAMILY OF JESUS

31Then Jesus’ mother and brothers came to see him. They stood
outside and sent word for him to come out and talk with them.
32There was a crowd sitting around Jesus, and someone said, “Your
mother and your brothers* are outside asking for you.”

33Jesus replied, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” 34Then
he looked at those around him and said, “Look, these are my
mother and brothers. 35Anyone who does God’s will is my brother
and sister and mother.”

Mark 4

PARABLE OF THE FARMER SCATTERING SEED

1Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large
crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat
in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. 2He taught
them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this
one:

3“Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. 4As he scattered it
across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds
came and ate it. 5Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying
rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. 6But
the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn’t have
deep roots, it died. 7Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and
choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. 8Still other
seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a
crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as
had been planted!” 9Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should
listen and understand.”

10Later, when Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples and with
the others who were gathered around, they asked him what the
parables meant.

11He replied, “You are permitted to understand the secret* of the
Kingdom of God. But I use parables for everything I say to
outsiders, 12so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: ‘When they see
what I do, they will learn nothing.

When they hear what I say, they will not understand.
Otherwise, they will turn to me and be forgiven.’*”

13Then Jesus said to them, “If you can’t understand the meaning of
this parable, how will you understand all the other parables? 14The
farmer plants seed by taking God’s word to others. 15The seed that
fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to
have Satan come at once and take it away. 16The seed on the rocky
soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive
it with joy. 17But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last

long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are
persecuted for believing God's word. 18The seed that fell among the
thorns represents others who hear God's word, 19but all too quickly
the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of
wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.
20And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and
accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a
hundred times as much as had been planted!"

PARABLE OF THE LAMP

21Then Jesus asked them, "Would anyone light a lamp and then put
it under a basket or under a bed? Of course not! A lamp is placed on
a stand, where its light will shine. 22For everything that is hidden
will eventually be brought into the open, and every secret will be
brought to light. 23Anyone with ears to hear should listen and
understand."

24Then he added, "Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer
you listen, the more understanding you will be given*—and you
will receive even more. 25To those who listen to my teaching, more
understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening,
even what little understanding they have will be taken away from
them."

PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED

26Jesus also said, "The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters
seed on the ground. 27Night and day, while he's asleep or awake,
the seed sprouts and grows, but he does not understand how it
happens. 28The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf
blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and
finally the grain ripens. 29And as soon as the grain is ready, the
farmer comes and harvests it with a sickle, for the harvest time has
come."

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

30 Jesus said, “How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story
should I use to illustrate it? 31 It is like a mustard seed planted in the
ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, 32 but it becomes the largest of
all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests
in its shade.”

33 Jesus used many similar stories and illustrations to teach the
people as much as they could understand. 34 In fact, in his public
ministry he never taught without using parables; but afterward,
when he was alone with his disciples, he explained everything to
them.

SUNSET ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

35As evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s cross to the
other side of the lake.” 36So they took Jesus in the boat and started
out, leaving the crowds behind (although other boats followed).
37But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into
the boat, and it began to fill with water.

38Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a
cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, “Teacher, don’t you
care that we’re going to drown?”

39When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves,
“Silence! Be still!” Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a
great calm. 40Then he asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still
have no faith?”

41The disciples were absolutely terrified. “Who is this man?” they
asked each other. “Even the wind and waves obey him!”

THE REGION OF THE GERASENES

Mark 5

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

1So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the
Gerasenes.*2When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed
by an evil* spirit came out from a cemetery to meet him. 3This man
lived among the burial caves and could no longer be restrained,
even with a chain. 4Whenever he was put into chains and shackles
—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and
smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him.
5Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the
hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.

6When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to
meet him, and bowed low before him. 7With a shriek, he screamed,
“Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High
God? In the name of God, I beg you, don’t torture me!” 8For Jesus
had already said to the spirit, “Come out of the man, you evil
spirit.”

9Then Jesus demanded, “What is your name?”

And he replied, “My name is Legion, because there are many of us
inside this man.” 10Then the evil spirits begged him again and again
not to send them to some distant place.

11There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside
nearby. 12“Send us into those pigs,” the spirits begged. “Let us enter
them.”

13So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the
man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs

plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

14The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. 15A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. 16Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. 17And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

18As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. 19But Jesus said, “No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.” 20So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns* of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

HEALING MARK 5:21-43

JESUS HEALS IN RESPONSE TO FAITH

21Jesus got into the boat again and went back to the other side of
the lake, where a large crowd gathered around him on the shore.
22Then a leader of the local synagogue, whose name was Jairus,
arrived. When he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet, 23pleading fervently
with him. “My little daughter is dying,” he said. “Please come and
lay your hands on her; heal her so she can live.”

24Jesus went with him, and all the people followed, crowding
around him. 25A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years
with constant bleeding. 26She had suffered a great deal from many
doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay
them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse.
27She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through
the crowd and touched his robe. 28For she thought to herself, “If I
can just touch his robe, I will be healed.” 29Immediately the
bleeding stopped, and she could feel in her body that she had been
healed of her terrible condition.

30Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him,
so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my
robe?”

31His disciples said to him, “Look at this crowd pressing around
you. How can you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

32But he kept on looking around to see who had done it. 33Then the
frightened woman, trembling at the realization of what had
happened to her, came and fell to her knees in front of him and told
him what she had done. 34And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith
has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.”

35While he was still speaking to her, messengers arrived from the
home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. They told him, “Your

daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."

36But Jesus overheard* them and said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid.
Just have faith."

37Then Jesus stopped the crowd and wouldn't let anyone go with
him except Peter, James, and John (the brother of James). 38When
they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw much
commotion and weeping and wailing. 39He went inside and asked,
"Why all this commotion and weeping? The child isn't dead; she's
only asleep."

40The crowd laughed at him. But he made them all leave, and he
took the girl's father and mother and his three disciples into the
room where the girl was lying. 41Holding her hand, he said to her,
"Talitha koum," which means "Little girl, get up!" 42And the girl,
who was twelve years old, immediately stood up and walked
around! They were overwhelmed and totally amazed. 43Jesus gave
them strict orders not to tell anyone what had happened, and then
he told them to give her something to eat.

Mark 6

JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

1Jesus left that part of the country and returned with his disciples to
Nazareth, his hometown. 2The next Sabbath he began teaching in
the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. They asked,

“Where did he get all this wisdom and the power to perform such miracles?” 3Then they scoffed, “He’s just a carpenter, the son of Mary* and the brother of James, Joseph,* Judas, and Simon. And his sisters live right here among us.” They were deeply offended and refused to believe in him.

4Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his relatives and his own family.” 5And because of their unbelief, he couldn’t do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6And he was amazed at their unbelief.

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

Then Jesus went from village to village, teaching the people. 7And he called his twelve disciples together and began sending them out two by two, giving them authority to cast out evil* spirits. 8He told them to take nothing for their journey except a walking stick—no food, no traveler’s bag, no money.*9He allowed them to wear sandals but not to take a change of clothes.

10“Wherever you go,” he said, “stay in the same house until you leave town. 11But if any place refuses to welcome you or listen to you, shake its dust from your feet as you leave to show that you have abandoned those people to their fate.”

12So the disciples went out, telling everyone they met to repent of their sins and turn to God. 13And they cast out many demons and healed many sick people, anointing them with olive oil.

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

14Herod Antipas, the king, soon heard about Jesus, because everyone was talking about him. Some were saying,* “This must be John the Baptist raised from the dead. That is why he can do such miracles.” 15Others said, “He’s the prophet Elijah.” Still others said, “He’s a prophet like the other great prophets of the past.”

16When Herod heard about Jesus, he said, “John, the man I
beheaded, has come back from the dead.”

17For Herod had sent soldiers to arrest and imprison John as a favor
to Herodias. She had been his brother Philip’s wife, but Herod had
married her. 18John had been telling Herod, “It is against God’s law
for you to marry your brother’s wife.” 19So Herodias bore a grudge
against John and wanted to kill him. But without Herod’s approval
she was powerless, 20for Herod respected John; and knowing that he
was a good and holy man, he protected him. Herod was greatly
disturbed whenever he talked with John, but even so, he liked to
listen to him.

21Herodias’s chance finally came on Herod’s birthday. He gave a
party for his high government officials, army officers, and the
leading citizens of Galilee. 22Then his daughter, also named
Herodias,* came in and performed a dance that greatly pleased
Herod and his guests. “Ask me for anything you like,” the king said
to the girl, “and I will give it to you.” 23He even vowed, “I will give
you whatever you ask, up to half my kingdom!”

24She went out and asked her mother, “What should I ask for?”

Her mother told her, “Ask for the head of John the Baptist!”

25So the girl hurried back to the king and told him, “I want the head
of John the Baptist, right now, on a tray!”

26Then the king deeply regretted what he had said; but because of
the vows he had made in front of his guests, he couldn’t refuse her.
27So he immediately sent an executioner to the prison to cut off
John’s head and bring it to him. The soldier beheaded John in the
prison, 28brought his head on a tray, and gave it to the girl, who
took it to her mother. 29When John’s disciples heard what had
happened, they came to get his body and buried it in a tomb.

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

30The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told
him all they had done and taught. 31Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by
ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.” He said this because
there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his
apostles didn’t even have time to eat.

32So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone.
33But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and
people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there
ahead of them. 34Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the
boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep
without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, “This is a
remote place, and it’s already getting late. 36Send the crowds away
so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy something
to eat.”

37But Jesus said, “You feed them.”

“With what?” they asked. “We’d have to work for months to earn
enough money* to buy food for all these people!”

38“How much bread do you have?” he asked. “Go and find out.”

They came back and reported, “We have five loaves of bread and
two fish.”

39Then Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in
groups on the green grass. 40So they sat down in groups of fifty or a
hundred.

41Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven,

and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. He also divided the fish for everyone to share. 42They all ate as much as they wanted, 43and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftover bread and fish. 44A total of 5,000 men and their families were fed.*

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

45Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the people home. 46After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray.

47Late that night, the disciples were in their boat in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. 48He saw that they were in serious trouble, rowing hard and struggling against the wind and waves. About three o'clock in the morning* Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. He intended to go past them, 49but when they saw him walking on the water, they cried out in terror, thinking he was a ghost. 50They were all terrified when they saw him.

But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage! I am here!*" 51Then he climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped. They were totally amazed, 52for they still didn't understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves. Their hearts were too hard to take it in.

53After they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret. They brought the boat to shore 54and climbed out. The people recognized Jesus at once, 55and they ran throughout the whole area, carrying sick people on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56Wherever he went—in villages, cities, or the countryside—they brought the sick out to the marketplaces. They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed.

Mark 7

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT INNER PURITY

1One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from
Jerusalem to see Jesus. 2They noticed that some of his disciples
failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating.
3(The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have
poured water over their cupped hands,* as required by their ancient
traditions. 4Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until
they immerse their hands* in water. This is but one of many
traditions they have clung to—such as their ceremonial washing of
cups, pitchers, and kettles.*)

5So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, "Why
don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without
first performing the hand-washing ceremony."

6Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he
prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honor me with
their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

7Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’*

8For you ignore God’s law and substitute your own tradition.”

9Then he said, “You skillfully sidestep God’s law in order to hold on to your own tradition. 10For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: ‘Honor your father and mother,’* and ‘Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.’* 11But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, ‘Sorry, I can’t help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.’* 12In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. 13And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others.”

14Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “All of you listen,” he said, “and try to understand. 15It’s not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.*”

17Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowd, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the parable he had just used. 18“Don’t you understand either?” he asked. “Can’t you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you? 19Food doesn’t go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer.” (By saying this, he declared that every kind of food is acceptable in God’s eyes.)

20And then he added, “It is what comes from inside that defiles you. 21For from within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. 23All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.”

THE FAITH OF A GENTILE WOMAN

24Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre.* He
didn't want anyone to know which house he was staying in, but he
couldn't keep it a secret. 25Right away a woman who had heard
about him came and fell at his feet. Her little girl was possessed by
an evil* spirit, 26and she begged him to cast out the demon from her
daughter.

Since she was a Gentile, born in Syrian Phoenicia, 27Jesus told her,
"First I should feed the children—my own family, the Jews.* It isn't
right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs."

28She replied, "That's true, Lord, but even the dogs under the table
are allowed to eat the scraps from the children's plates."

29"Good answer!" he said. "Now go home, for the demon has left
your daughter." 30And when she arrived home, she found her little
girl lying quietly in bed, and the demon was gone.

HEALING MARK 7:31-37

TYRE AND SIDON

JESUS HEALS A DEAF MAN

31Jesus left Tyre and went up to Sidon before going back to the Sea
of Galilee and the region of the Ten Towns.*32A deaf man with a
speech impediment was brought to him, and the people begged
Jesus to lay his hands on the man to heal him.

33Jesus led him away from the crowd so they could be alone. He put
his fingers into the man's ears. Then, spitting on his own fingers, he
touched the man's tongue. 34Looking up to heaven, he sighed and
said, *"Ephphatha,"* which means, "Be opened!" 35Instantly the man
could hear perfectly, and his tongue was freed so he could speak
plainly!

36Jesus told the crowd not to tell anyone, but the more he told them
not to, the more they spread the news. 37They were completely
amazed and said again and again, "Everything he does is wonderful.
He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who
cannot speak."

Mark 8

JESUS FEEDS FOUR THOUSAND

1About this time another large crowd had gathered, and the people
ran out of food again. Jesus called his disciples and told them, 2"I
feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three
days, and they have nothing left to eat. 3If I send them home
hungry, they will faint along the way. For some of them have come
a long distance."

4His disciples replied, “How are we supposed to find enough food to feed them out here in the wilderness?”

5Jesus asked, “How much bread do you have?”

“Seven loaves,” they replied.

6So Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to his disciples, who distributed the bread to the crowd. 7A few small fish were found, too, so Jesus also blessed these and told the disciples to distribute them.

8They ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food. 9There were about 4,000 people in the crowd that day, and Jesus sent them home after they had eaten. 10Immediately after this, he got into a boat with his disciples and crossed over to the region of Dalmanutha.

PHARISEES DEMAND A MIRACULOUS SIGN

11When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had arrived, they came and started to argue with him. Testing him, they demanded that he show them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.

12When he heard this, he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why do these people keep demanding a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, I will not give this generation any such sign.” 13So he got back into the boat and left them, and he crossed to the other side of the lake.

YEAST OF THE PHARISEES AND HEROD

14But the disciples had forgotten to bring any food. They had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. 15As they were crossing the lake, Jesus warned them, “Watch out! Beware of the yeast of the

Pharisees and of Herod."

16At this they began to argue with each other because they hadn't
brought any bread. 17Jesus knew what they were saying, so he said,
"Why are you arguing about having no bread? Don't you know or
understand even yet? Are your hearts too hard to take it in? 18'You
have eyes—can't you see? You have ears—can't you hear?'* Don't
you remember anything at all? 19When I fed the 5,000 with five
loaves of bread, how many baskets of leftovers did you pick up
afterward?"

"Twelve," they said.

20"And when I fed the 4,000 with seven loaves, how many large
baskets of leftovers did you pick up?"

"Seven," they said.

21"Don't you understand yet?" he asked them.

JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN

22When they arrived at Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man
to Jesus, and they begged him to touch the man and heal him.
23Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the
village. Then, spitting on the man's eyes, he laid his hands on him
and asked, "Can you see anything now?"

24The man looked around. "Yes," he said, "I see people, but I can't
see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around."

25Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes
were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see
everything clearly. 26Jesus sent him away, saying, "Don't go back
into the village on your way home."

CAESAREA PHILIPPI

PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

27 Jesus and his disciples left Galilee and went up to the villages
near Caesarea Philippi. As they were walking along, he asked them,
"Who do people say I am?"

28 "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah,
and others say you are one of the other prophets."

29 Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?"

Peter replied, "You are the Messiah.*"

30 But Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

31 Then Jesus began to tell them that the Son of Man* must suffer
many terrible things and be rejected by the elders, the leading
priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but
three days later he would rise from the dead. 32 As he talked about
this openly with his disciples, Peter took him aside and began to
reprimand him for saying such things.*

33 Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded
Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things
merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

34Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, “If any of
you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways,
take up your cross, and follow me. 35If you try to hang on to your
life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for
the sake of the Good News, you will save it. 36And what do you
benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?* 37Is
anything worth more than your soul? 38If anyone is ashamed of me
and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man
will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his
Father with the holy angels.”

Mark 9

1Jesus went on to say, “I tell you the truth, some standing here right
now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great
power!”

MOUNT HERMON

THE TRANSFIGURATION

2Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up
a high mountain to be alone. As the men watched, Jesus'
appearance was transformed, 3and his clothes became dazzling
white, far whiter than any earthly bleach could ever make them.
4Then Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus.

5Peter exclaimed, "Rabbi, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's
make three shelters as memorials*—one for you, one for Moses, and
one for Elijah." 6He said this because he didn't really know what
else to say, for they were all terrified.

7Then a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said,
"This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him." 8Suddenly, when they
looked around, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only
Jesus with them.

9As they went back down the mountain, he told them not to tell
anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man* had risen from the
dead. 10So they kept it to themselves, but they often asked each
other what he meant by "rising from the dead."

11Then they asked him, "Why do the teachers of religious law insist
that Elijah must return before the Messiah comes?*"

12Jesus responded, "Elijah is indeed coming first to get everything
ready. Yet why do the Scriptures say that the Son of Man must
suffer greatly and be treated with utter contempt? 13But I tell you,
Elijah has already come, and they chose to abuse him, just as the
Scriptures predicted."

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED BOY

14When they returned to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd

surrounding them, and some teachers of religious law were arguing with them. 15When the crowd saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with awe, and they ran to greet him.

16"What is all this arguing about?" Jesus asked.

17One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, "Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won't let him talk. 18And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid.* So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn't do it."

19Jesus said to them,*"You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

20So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth.

21"How long has this been happening?" Jesus asked the boy's father.

He replied, "Since he was a little boy. 22The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can."

23"What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes."

24The father instantly cried out, "I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!"

25When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil* spirit. “Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,” he said. “I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!”

26Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, “He’s dead.” 27But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up.

28Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, “Why couldn’t we cast out that evil spirit?”

29Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.*”

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH

30Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn’t want anyone to know he was there, 31for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead.” 32They didn’t understand what he was saying, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM

33After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, “What were you discussing out on the road?” 34But they didn’t answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. 35He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, “Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else.”

36Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his

arms, he said to them, 37“Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf* welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me.”

USING THE NAME OF JESUS

38John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he wasn’t in our group.”

39“Don’t stop him!” Jesus said. “No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me. 40Anyone who is not against us is for us. 41If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will surely be rewarded.

42“But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck. 43If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It’s better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of hell* with two hands.* 45If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It’s better to enter eternal life with only one foot than to be thrown into hell with two feet.* 47And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. It’s better to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48‘where the maggots never die and the fire never goes out.’*

49“For everyone will be tested with fire.* 50Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other.”

Mark 10

DISCUSSION ABOUT DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE

1Then Jesus left Capernaum and went down to the region of Judea
and into the area east of the Jordan River. Once again crowds
gathered around him, and as usual he was teaching them.

2Some Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question:
"Should a man be allowed to divorce his wife?"

3Jesus answered them with a question: "What did Moses say in the
law about divorce?"

4"Well, he permitted it," they replied. "He said a man can give his
wife a written notice of divorce and send her away."*

5But Jesus responded, "He wrote this commandment only as a
concession to your hard hearts. 6But 'God made them male and

female’* from the beginning of creation. 7‘This explains why a man
leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife,* 8and the two
are united into one.’* Since they are no longer two but one, 9let no
one split apart what God has joined together.”

10Later, when he was alone with his disciples in the house, they
brought up the subject again. 11He told them, “Whoever divorces his
wife and marries someone else commits adultery against her. 12And
if a woman divorces her husband and marries someone else, she
commits adultery.”

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

13One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could
touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for
bothering him.

14When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his
disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop
them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these
children. 15I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the
Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” 16Then he took the

children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

THE RICH MAN

17As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

18“Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked. “Only God is truly good. 19But to answer your question, you know the commandments: ‘You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.’*”

20“Teacher,” the man replied, “I’ve obeyed all these commandments since I was young.”

21Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. “There is still one thing you haven’t done,” he told him. “Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

22At this the man’s face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

23Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!” 24This amazed them. But Jesus said again, “Dear children, it is very hard* to enter the Kingdom of God. 25In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”

26The disciples were astounded. “Then who in the world can be saved?” they asked.

27Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is
impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God.”

28Then Peter began to speak up. “We’ve given up everything to
follow you,” he said.

29“Yes,” Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has
given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children
or property, for my sake and for the Good News, 30will receive now
in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters,
mothers, children, and property—along with persecution. And in
the world to come that person will have eternal life. 31But many
who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those
who seem least important now will be the greatest then.*”

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH

32They were now on the way up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was
walking ahead of them. The disciples were filled with awe, and the
people following behind were overwhelmed with fear. Taking the
twelve disciples aside, Jesus once more began to describe
everything that was about to happen to him. 33“Listen,” he said,
“we’re going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man* will be
betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law.
They will sentence him to die and hand him over to the Romans.*
34They will mock him, spit on him, flog him with a whip, and kill
him, but after three days he will rise again.”

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT SERVING OTHERS

35Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came over and spoke to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do us a favor.”

36“What is your request?” he asked.

37They replied, “When you sit on your glorious throne, we want to sit in places of honor next to you, one on your right and the other on your left.”

38But Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?”

39“Oh yes,” they replied, “we are able!”

Then Jesus told them, “You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering. 40But I have no right to say who will sit on my right or my left. God has prepared those places for the ones he has chosen.”

41When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. 42So Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. 43But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, 44and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. 45For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

JESUS HEALS BLIND BARTIMAEUS

46Then they reached Jericho, and as Jesus and his disciples left town, a large crowd followed him. A blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting beside the road. 47When

Bartimaeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was nearby, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

48“Be quiet!” many of the people yelled at him.

But he only shouted louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

49When Jesus heard him, he stopped and said, “Tell him to come here.”

So they called the blind man. “Cheer up,” they said. “Come on, he’s calling you!” 50Bartimaeus threw aside his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

51“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked.

“My Rabbi,*” the blind man said, “I want to see!”

52And Jesus said to him, “Go, for your faith has healed you.” Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus down the road.*

Mark 11

JESUS’ TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

1As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent

two of them on ahead. 2“Go into that village over there,” he told them. “As soon as you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 3If anyone asks, ‘What are you doing?’ just say, ‘The Lord needs it and will return it soon.’”

4The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, tied outside the front door. 5As they were untying it, some bystanders demanded, “What are you doing, untying that colt?” 6They said what Jesus had told them to say, and they were permitted to take it. 7Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it, and he sat on it.

8Many in the crowd spread their garments on the road ahead of him, and others spread leafy branches they had cut in the fields. 9Jesus was in the center of the procession, and the people all around him were shouting, “Praise God!*

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!

10Blessings on the coming Kingdom of our ancestor David!
Praise God in highest heaven!”*

11So Jesus came to Jerusalem and went into the Temple. After looking around carefully at everything, he left because it was late in the afternoon. Then he returned to Bethany with the twelve disciples.

JESUS CURSES THE FIG TREE

12The next morning as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13He noticed a fig tree in full leaf a little way off, so he went over to see if he could find any figs. But there were only leaves because it was too early in the season for fruit. 14Then Jesus said to the tree, “May no one ever eat your fruit again!” And the disciples heard him say it.

JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

15When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple
and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for
sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and
the chairs of those selling doves, 16and he stopped everyone from
using the Temple as a marketplace.*17He said to them, “The
Scriptures declare, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer for
all nations,’ but you have turned it into a den of thieves.”*

18When the leading priests and teachers of religious law heard what
Jesus had done, they began planning how to kill him. But they were
afraid of him because the people were so amazed at his teaching.

19That evening Jesus and the disciples left* the city.

20The next morning as they passed by the fig tree he had cursed, the
disciples noticed it had withered from the roots up. 21Peter
remembered what Jesus had said to the tree on the previous day
and exclaimed, “Look, Rabbi! The fig tree you cursed has withered
and died!”

22Then Jesus said to the disciples, “Have faith in God. 23I tell you
the truth, you can say to this mountain, ‘May you be lifted up and
thrown into the sea,’ and it will happen. But you must really believe
it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. 24I tell you, you can
pray for anything, and if you believe that you’ve received it, it will
be yours. 25But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are
holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive
your sins, too.*”

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED

27Again they entered Jerusalem. As Jesus was walking through the
Temple area, the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and
the elders came up to him. 28They demanded, “By what authority
are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right to do
them?”

29“I’ll tell you by what authority I do these things if you answer one
question,” Jesus replied. 30“Did John’s authority to baptize come
from heaven, or was it merely human? Answer me!”

31They talked it over among themselves. “If we say it was from
heaven, he will ask why we didn’t believe John. 32But do we dare
say it was merely human?” For they were afraid of what the people
would do, because everyone believed that John was a prophet. 33So
they finally replied, “We don’t know.”

And Jesus responded, “Then I won’t tell you by what authority I do
these things.”

Mark 12

PARABLE OF THE EVIL FARMERS

1Then Jesus began teaching them with stories: “A man planted a
vineyard. He built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the
grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard
to tenant farmers and moved to another country. 2At the time of the
grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the
crop. 3But the farmers grabbed the servant, beat him up, and sent
him back empty-handed. 4The owner then sent another servant, but
they insulted him and beat him over the head. 5The next servant he
sent was killed. Others he sent were either beaten or killed, 6until
there was only one left—his son whom he loved dearly. The owner
finally sent him, thinking, ‘Surely they will respect my son.’

7“But the tenant farmers said to one another, ‘Here comes the heir
to this estate. Let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!’ 8So
they grabbed him and murdered him and threw his body out of the
vineyard.

9“What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do?” Jesus
asked. “I’ll tell you—he will come and kill those farmers and lease

the vineyard to others. 10Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures?

'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.

11This is the LORD's doing, and it is wonderful to see.'*"

12The religious leaders* wanted to arrest Jesus because they realized he was telling the story against them—they were the wicked farmers. But they were afraid of the crowd, so they left him and went away.

TAXES FOR CAESAR

13Later the leaders sent some Pharisees and supporters of Herod to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested. 14"Teacher," they said, "we know how honest you are. You are impartial and don't play favorites. You teach the way of God truthfully. Now tell us—is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? 15Should we pay them, or shouldn't we?"

Jesus saw through their hypocrisy and said, "Why are you trying to trap me? Show me a Roman coin,* and I'll tell you." 16When they handed it to him, he asked, "Whose picture and title are stamped on it?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

17"Well, then," Jesus said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."

His reply completely amazed them.

DISCUSSION ABOUT RESURRECTION

18Then Jesus was approached by some Sadducees—religious leaders who say there is no resurrection from the dead. They posed this question: 19"Teacher, Moses gave us a law that if a man dies,

leaving a wife without children, his brother should marry the widow and have a child who will carry on the brother's name.*20Well, suppose there were seven brothers. The oldest one married and then died without children. 21So the second brother married the widow, but he also died without children. Then the third brother married her. 22This continued with all seven of them, and still there were no children. Last of all, the woman also died. 23So tell us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were married to her."

24Jesus replied, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God. 25For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven.

26"But now, as to whether the dead will be raised—haven't you ever read about this in the writings of Moses, in the story of the burning bush? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said to Moses,* 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'* 27So he is the God of the living, not the dead. You have made a serious error."

THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT

28One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

29Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. 30And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.'* 31The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* No other commandment is greater than these."

32The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You
have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no
other. 33And I know it is important to love him with all my heart
and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my
neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the
burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.”

34Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You
are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared
to ask him any more questions.

WHOSE SON IS THE MESSIAH?

35Later, as Jesus was teaching the people in the Temple, he asked,
“Why do the teachers of religious law claim that the Messiah is the
son of David? 36For David himself, speaking under the inspiration of
the Holy Spirit, said, ‘The LORD said to my Lord, Sit in the place of
honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies beneath your
feet.’*

37Since David himself called the Messiah ‘my Lord,’ how can the
Messiah be his son?” The large crowd listened to him with great
delight.

38Jesus also taught: “Beware of these teachers of religious law! For
they like to parade around in flowing robes and receive respectful
greetings as they walk in the marketplaces. 39And how they love the
seats of honor in the synagogues and the head table at banquets.
40Yet they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then
pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. Because of
this, they will be more severely punished.”

THE WIDOW’S OFFERING

41Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched
as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in
large amounts. 42Then a poor widow came and dropped in two

small coins.*

43Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I tell you the truth, this
poor widow has given more than all the others who are making
contributions. 44For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she,
poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on.”

Mark 13

JESUS FORETELLS THE FUTURE

1As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said,
“Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the
impressive stones in the walls.”

2Jesus replied, “Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be
completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of
another!”

3Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across the valley from the
Temple. Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately and
asked him, 4“Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will
show us that these things are about to be fulfilled?”

5Jesus replied, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, 6for many will come
in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah.’* They will deceive many.
7And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don’t panic. Yes,
these things must take place, but the end won’t follow immediately.
8Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against
kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many parts of the world, as
well as famines. But this is only the first of the birth pains, with
more to come.

9“When these things begin to happen, watch out! You will be

handed over to the local councils and beaten in the synagogues. You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me.* 10For the Good News must first be preached to all nations.* 11But when you are arrested and stand trial, don't worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12"A brother will betray his brother to death, a father will betray his own child, and children will rebel against their parents and cause them to be killed. 13And everyone will hate you because you are my followers.* But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

14"The day is coming when you will see the sacrilegious object that causes desecration* standing where he* should not be." (Reader, pay attention!) "Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. 15A person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack. 16A person out in the field must not return even to get a coat. 17How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. 18And pray that your flight will not be in winter. 19For there will be greater anguish in those days than at any time since God created the world. And it will never be so great again. 20In fact, unless the Lord shortens that time of calamity, not a single person will survive. But for the sake of his chosen ones he has shortened those days.

21"Then if anyone tells you, 'Look, here is the Messiah,' or 'There he is,' don't believe it. 22For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. 23Watch out! I have warned you about this ahead of time!

24"At that time, after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light,

25the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will
be shaken.*

26Then everyone will see the Son of Man* coming on the clouds
with great power and glory.* 27And he will send out his angels to
gather his chosen ones from all over the world*—from the farthest
ends of the earth and heaven.

28"Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and
its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. 29In the
same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can
know that his return is very near, right at the door. 30I tell you the
truth, this generation* will not pass from the scene before all these
things take place. 31Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words
will never disappear.

32"However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will
happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the
Father knows. 33And since you don't know when that time will
come, be on guard! Stay alert*!

34"The coming of the Son of Man can be illustrated by the story of a
man going on a long trip. When he left home, he gave each of his
slaves instructions about the work they were to do, and he told the
gatekeeper to watch for his return. 35You, too, must keep watch! For
you don't know when the master of the household will return—in
the evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at daybreak. 36Don't let
him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning. 37I say to
you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!"

Mark 14

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

1It was now two days before Passover and the Festival of
Unleavened Bread. The leading priests and the teachers of religious

law were still looking for an opportunity to capture Jesus secretly and kill him. 2“But not during the Passover celebration,” they agreed, “or the people may riot.”

3Meanwhile, Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon, a man who had previously had leprosy. While he was eating,* a woman came in with a beautiful alabaster jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard. She broke open the jar and poured the perfume over his head.

4Some of those at the table were indignant. “Why waste such expensive perfume?” they asked. 5“It could have been sold for a year’s wages* and the money given to the poor!” So they scolded her harshly.

6But Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. Why criticize her for doing such a good thing to me? 7You will always have the poor among you, and you can help them whenever you want to. But you will not always have me. 8She has done what she could and has anointed my body for burial ahead of time. 9I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, this woman’s deed will be remembered and discussed.”

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

10Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus to them. 11They were delighted when they heard why he had come, and they promised to give him money. So he began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

PASSOVERS THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE

THE LAST SUPPER

12On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the
Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do
you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal for you?"

13So Jesus sent two of them into Jerusalem with these instructions:
"As you go into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will
meet you. Follow him. 14At the house he enters, say to the owner,
'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the
Passover meal with my disciples?' 15He will take you upstairs to a
large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare
our meal." 16So the two disciples went into the city and found
everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover
meal there.

17In the evening Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18As they were at
the table* eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, one of you eating
with me here will betray me."

19Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, "Am I the one?"

20He replied, "It is one of you twelve who is eating from this bowl
with me. 21For the Son of Man* must die, as the Scriptures declared
long ago. But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him. It
would be far better for that man if he had never been born!"

22As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then
he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take it,
for this is my body."

23And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave
it to them, and they all drank from it. 24And he said to them, "This
is my blood, which confirms the covenant* between God and his

people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many. 25I tell you the truth,
I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new in the
Kingdom of God.”

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

26Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

27On the way, Jesus told them, "All of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, 'God will strike* the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'

28But after I am raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there."

29Peter said to him, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will."

30Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me."

31"No!" Peter declared emphatically. "Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!" And all the others vowed the same.

EASTER MARK 14:32-42

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

32They went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said,
"Sit here while I go and pray." 33He took Peter, James, and John
with him, and he became deeply troubled and distressed. 34He told
them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here
and keep watch with me."

35He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that,
if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by.
36"Abba, Father,"* he cried out, "everything is possible for you.
Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will
to be done, not mine."

37Then he returned and found the disciples asleep. He said to Peter,
"Simon, are you asleep? Couldn't you watch with me even one
hour? 38Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to
temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

39Then Jesus left them again and prayed the same prayer as before.
40When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they
couldn't keep their eyes open. And they didn't know what to say.

41When he returned to them the third time, he said, "Go ahead and
sleep. Have your rest. But no—the time has come. The Son of Man

is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!"

JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED

43And immediately, even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders. 44The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: "You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss. Then you can take him away under guard." 45As soon as they arrived, Judas walked up to Jesus. "Rabbi!" he exclaimed, and gave him the kiss.

46Then the others grabbed Jesus and arrested him. 47But one of the men with Jesus pulled out his sword and struck the high priest's slave, slashing off his ear.

48Jesus asked them, "Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? 49Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I was there among you teaching every day. But these things are happening to fulfill what the Scriptures say about me."

50Then all his disciples deserted him and ran away. 51One young man following behind was clothed only in a long linen shirt. When the mob tried to grab him, 52he slipped out of his shirt and ran away naked.

THE HOME OF THE HIGH PRIEST

JESUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL

53They took Jesus to the high priest's home where the leading
priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered.
54Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a distance and went right into
the high priest's courtyard. There he sat with the guards, warming
himself by the fire.

55Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council* were trying
to find evidence against Jesus, so they could put him to death. But
they couldn't find any. 56Many false witnesses spoke against him,
but they contradicted each other. 57Finally, some men stood up and
gave this false testimony: 58"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this
Temple made with human hands, and in three days I will build
another, made without human hands.'" 59But even then they didn't
get their stories straight!

60Then the high priest stood up before the others and asked Jesus,
"Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have
to say for yourself?" 61But Jesus was silent and made no reply. Then
the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the
Blessed One?"

62Jesus said, "I AM.* And you will see the Son of Man seated in the
place of power at God's right hand* and coming on the clouds of
heaven.*"

63Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said,
"Why do we need other witnesses? 64You have all heard his
blasphemy. What is your verdict?"

“Guilty!” they all cried. “He deserves to die!”

65Then some of them began to spit at him, and they blindfolded him
and beat him with their fists. “Prophesy to us,” they jeered. And the
guards slapped him as they took him away.

PETER DENIES JESUS

66Meanwhile, Peter was in the courtyard below. One of the servant
girls who worked for the high priest came by 67and noticed Peter
warming himself at the fire. She looked at him closely and said,
“You were one of those with Jesus of Nazareth.*”

68But Peter denied it. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he
said, and he went out into the entryway. Just then, a rooster
crowed.*

69When the servant girl saw him standing there, she began telling
the others, “This man is definitely one of them!” 70But Peter denied
it again.

A little later some of the other bystanders confronted Peter and
said, “You must be one of them, because you are a Galilean.”

71Peter swore, “A curse on me if I’m lying—I don’t know this man
you’re talking about!” 72And immediately the rooster crowed the
second time.

Suddenly, Jesus’ words flashed through Peter’s mind: “Before the
rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know
me.” And he broke down and wept.

Mark 15

JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

1Very early in the morning the leading priests, the elders, and the
teachers of religious law—the entire high council*—met to discuss
their next step. They bound Jesus, led him away, and took him to
Pilate, the Roman governor.

2Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus replied, "You have said it."

3Then the leading priests kept accusing him of many crimes, 4and
Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer them? What about all
these charges they are bringing against you?" 5But Jesus said
nothing, much to Pilate's surprise.

6Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover
celebration to release one prisoner—anyone the people requested.
7One of the prisoners at that time was Barabbas, a revolutionary

who had committed murder in an uprising. 8The crowd went to
Pilate and asked him to release a prisoner as usual.

9"Would you like me to release to you this 'King of the Jews'?"
Pilate asked. 10(For he realized by now that the leading priests had
arrested Jesus out of envy.) 11But at this point the leading priests
stirred up the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas instead of
Jesus. 12Pilate asked them, "Then what should I do with this man
you call the king of the Jews?"

13They shouted back, "Crucify him!"

14"Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?"

But the mob roared even louder, "Crucify him!"

15So to pacify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He
ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him
over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

16The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the governor's
headquarters (called the Praetorium) and called out the entire
regiment. 17They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn
branches into a crown and put it on his head. 18Then they saluted
him and taunted, "Hail! King of the Jews!" 19And they struck him
on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their
knees in mock worship. 20When they were finally tired of mocking
him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him
again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

GOLGOTHA

THE CRUCIFIXION

21A passerby named Simon, who was from Cyrene,* was coming in
from the countryside just then, and the soldiers forced him to carry
Jesus' cross. (Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus.) 22And
they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means "Place
of the Skull"). 23They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he
refused it.

24Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross. They divided his clothes
and threw dice* to decide who would get each piece. 25It was nine
o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26A sign announced
the charge against him. It read, "The King of the Jews." 27Two
revolutionaries* were crucified with him, one on his right and one
on his left.*

29The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in
mockery. "Ha! Look at you now!" they yelled at him. "You said you
were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days.
30Well then, save yourself and come down from the cross!"

31The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked
Jesus. "He saved others," they scoffed, "but he can't save himself!
32Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so
we can see it and believe him!" Even the men who were crucified
with Jesus ridiculed him.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

33At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock.
34Then at three o'clock Jesus called out with a loud voice, *"Eloi,
Eloi, lema sabachthani?"* which means "My God, my God, why have

you abandoned me?”*

35Some of the bystanders misunderstood and thought he was calling
for the prophet Elijah. 36One of them ran and filled a sponge with
sour wine, holding it up to him on a reed stick so he could drink.
“Wait!” he said. “Let’s see whether Elijah comes to take him down!”

37Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. 38And
the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from
top to bottom.

39When the Roman officer* who stood facing him* saw how he had
died, he exclaimed, “This man truly was the Son of God!”

40Some women were there, watching from a distance, including
Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the younger and of
Joseph*), and Salome. 41They had been followers of Jesus and had
cared for him while he was in Galilee. Many other women who had
come with him to Jerusalem were also there.

ANCIENT BURIAL PRACTICES

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

42This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation,* the day
before the Sabbath. As evening approached, 43Joseph of Arimathea
took a risk and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. (Joseph
was an honored member of the high council, and he was waiting for
the Kingdom of God to come.) 44Pilate couldn’t believe that Jesus
was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if he

had died yet. 45The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate
told Joseph he could have the body. 46Joseph bought a long sheet of
linen cloth. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped
it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the
rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. 47Mary
Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body
was laid.

Mark 16

THE RESURRECTION

1Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene,
Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased
burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body. 2Very early on
Sunday morning,* just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. 3On the
way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for
us from the entrance to the tomb?" 4But as they arrived, they looked
up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been
rolled aside.

5When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a

white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, 6but the angel said, “Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth,* who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. 7Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died.”

8The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened.*

[*The most ancient manuscripts of Mark conclude with verse 16:8. Later manuscripts add one or both of the following endings.*]

[*Shorter Ending of Mark*]

Then they briefly reported all this to Peter and his companions. Afterward Jesus himself sent them out from east to west with the sacred and unfailing message of salvation that gives eternal life. Amen.

[*Longer Ending of Mark*]

9After Jesus rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, the first person who saw him was Mary Magdalene, the woman from whom he had cast out seven demons. 10She went to the disciples, who were grieving and weeping, and told them what had happened. 11But when she told them that Jesus was alive and she had seen him, they didn’t believe her.

12Afterward he appeared in a different form to two of his followers who were walking from Jerusalem into the country. 13They rushed back to tell the others, but no one believed them.

14Still later he appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating

together. He rebuked them for their stubborn unbelief because they refused to believe those who had seen him after he had been raised from the dead.*

15And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. 16Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned. 17These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages.* 18They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won’t hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed.”

19When the Lord Jesus had finished talking with them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand. 20And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.

Luke

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

WELCOME TO

LUKE

An early Gentile convert, Luke, also writes about Jesus’ life and ministry. He has listened to everything eyewitnesses remember about Jesus and has compiled it all into this “careful account.” As a physician, Luke writes with care and sensitivity. He emphasizes Jesus’ compassion toward women, the outcasts of society, the sick, and the poor. He presents his historical account in chronological order, starting with the details of Jesus’ ancestry, birth, and early

life; then moving on to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He portrays Jesus as the ideal and perfect human.

Luke records the most parables of all the Gospel writers, including the stories of the good Samaritan (10:29-37), the lost coin (15:8-10), and the lost son (15:11-32).

3 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll make three stops in this book to read the famous Christmas story and the story of Jesus' baptism. Your next stop is at Luke 1:5.

11 STOPS

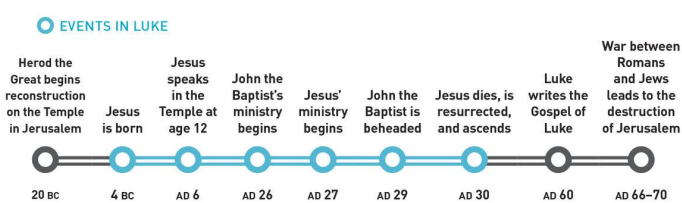
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The eleven readings in Luke will take you through the events surrounding Jesus' birth, two of his parables, and some of his teachings. Your next stop is at Luke 1:5.

16 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: On this route you'll read about John the Baptist, the news of Jesus' coming, his birth and early life, some of his teachings, and his interaction with ordinary people. Your next stop is at Luke 1:5.

FINDING JESUS IN LUKE

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus is revealed as fully human. Jesus was born in a miraculous yet humble way (chapter 2). He faced temptation (chapter 4). He enjoyed meals with friends, even with people who were considered sinful and unholy by those in power (7:34). Jesus endured suffering, experienced sorrow, and tasted death just like every human. Luke shows us that we can reach out to Jesus, who will sympathize with us. When a woman reached out to touch Jesus for healing, Jesus responded with compassion and mercy. He showed us what God intended for humanity—to love and serve both God and our neighbors.



Luke 1

INTRODUCTION

1Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that
have been fulfilled among us. 2They used the eyewitness reports
circulating among us from the early disciples.*3Having carefully
investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to
write a careful account for you, most honorable Theophilus, 4so you
can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST FORETOLD

5When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named
Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his
wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. 6Zechariah
and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of
the Lord's commandments and regulations. 7They had no children
because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very
old.

8One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order
was on duty that week. 9As was the custom of the priests, he was
chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense.
10While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside,
praying.

11While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord
appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar.
12Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw
him. 13But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has
heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and
you are to name him John. 14You will have great joy and gladness,
and many will rejoice at his birth, 15for he will be great in the eyes
of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He
will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth.*16And he
will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. 17He will be a man
with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for
the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to
their children,* and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept
the wisdom of the godly.”

18Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure this will happen?
I’m an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years.”

19Then the angel said, “I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of
God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! 20But now,
since you didn’t believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to
speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled
at the proper time.”

21Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of
the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long. 22When he
finally did come out, he couldn’t speak to them. Then they realized
from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in
the sanctuary.

23When Zechariah's week of service in the Temple was over, he returned home. 24Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months. 25"How kind the Lord is!" she exclaimed. "He has taken away my disgrace of having no children."

THE MESSIAH LUKE 1:26-56

THE BIRTH OF JESUS FORETOLD

26In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, 27to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. 28Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!*"

29Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. 30"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! 31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. 33And he will reign over Israel* forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

34Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

35The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the
power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be
born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. 36What’s
more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age!
People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and
is now in her sixth month. 37For the word of God will never fail.*”

38Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you
have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

39A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the
town 40where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted
Elizabeth. 41At the sound of Mary’s greeting, Elizabeth’s child
leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, “God has
blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. 43Why am I
so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? 44When I
heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. 45You
are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he
said.”

SONGS LUKE 1:46-55

THE MAGNIFICAT: MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE

46Mary responded, "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

47How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

48For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

49For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me.

50He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him.

51His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.

52He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble.

53He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.

54He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful.

55For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever."

56Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

SONGS LUKE 1:57-80

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

57When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth

to a son. 58And when her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very merciful to her, everyone rejoiced with her.

59When the baby was eight days old, they all came for the circumcision ceremony. They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father. 60But Elizabeth said, “No! His name is John!”

61“What?” they exclaimed. “There is no one in all your family by that name.” 62So they used gestures to ask the baby’s father what he wanted to name him. 63He motioned for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s surprise he wrote, “His name is John.” 64Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.

65Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills. 66Everyone who heard about it reflected on these events and asked, “What will this child turn out to be?” For the hand of the Lord was surely upon him in a special way.

ZECHARIAH’S PROPHECY

67Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy:

68“Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people.

69He has sent us a mighty Savior*
from the royal line of his servant David,

70just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago.

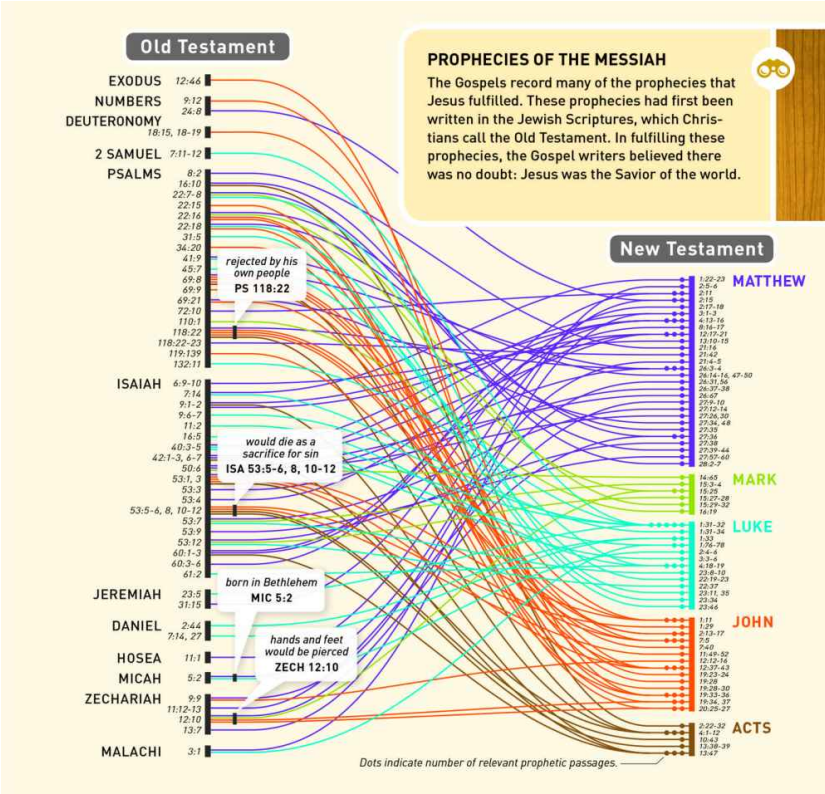
71Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us.

72He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant—

73the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham.

74We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God
without fear,

75in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live.



PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH

76“And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most
High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord.

77You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness
of their sins.

78Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is
about to break upon us,*

79to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of
death, and to guide us to the path of peace.”

80John grew up and became strong in spirit. And he lived in the
wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.

MARY AND JOSEPH'S JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

Luke 2

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

1At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census
should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2(This was the first
census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3All returned
to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. 4And
because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to
Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from
the village of Nazareth in Galilee. 5He took with him Mary, his
fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

6And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.
7She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in
strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no
lodging available for them.

THE SHEPHERDS AND ANGELS

8That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby,
guarding their flocks of sheep. 9Suddenly, an angel of the Lord
appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory
surrounded them. They were terrified, 10but the angel reassured
them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will
bring great joy to all people. 11The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the
Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12And
you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped
snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

13Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the
armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

14"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with
whom God is pleased."

15When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to
each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has
happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there

was the baby, lying in the manger. 17After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. 18All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, 19but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. 20The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

JESUS IS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

21Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.

22Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. 23The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the LORD."* 24So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord—"either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*

SONGS LUKE 2:25-35

THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON

25At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to

come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him 26and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, 28Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

29"Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised.

30I have seen your salvation,

31which you have prepared for all people.

32He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

33Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, but he will be a joy to many others. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. 35As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

THE PROPHECY OF ANNA

36Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. 37Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four.* She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. 38She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

39When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. 40There the

child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

JESUS SPEAKS WITH THE TEACHERS

41Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. 42When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual. 43After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't miss him at first, 44because they assumed he was among the other travelers. But when he didn't show up that evening, they started looking for him among their relatives and friends.

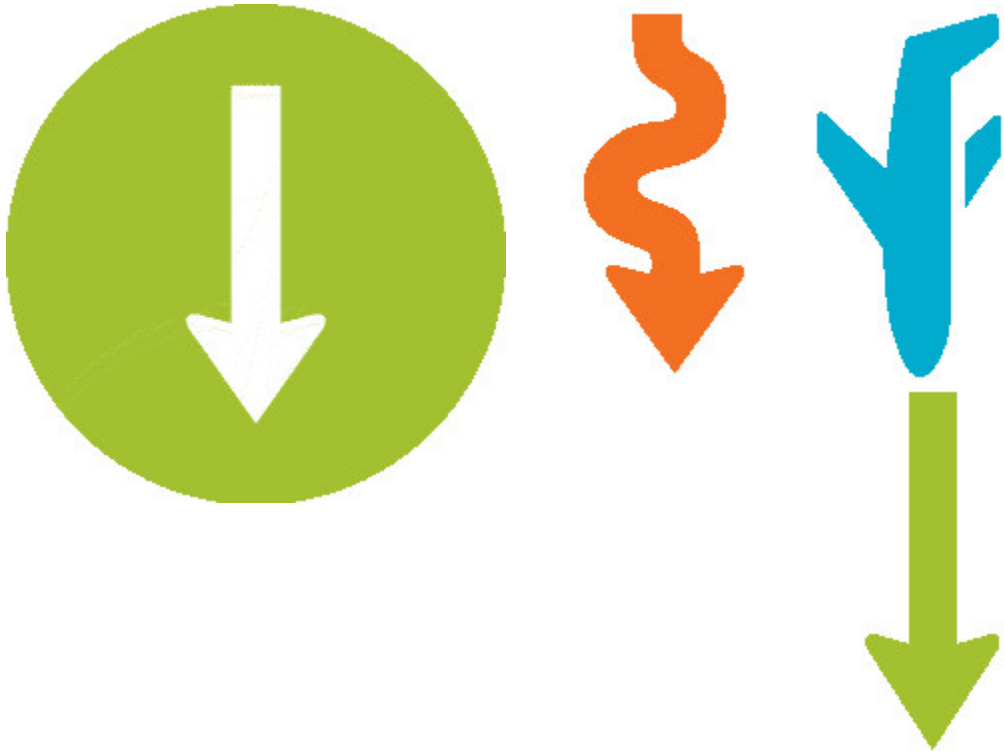
45When they couldn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for him there. 46Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. 47All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

48His parents didn't know what to think. "Son," his mother said to him, "why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere."

49"But why did you need to search?" he asked. "Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?"* 50But they didn't understand what he meant.

51Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart.

52Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.



THE JUDEAN WILDERNESS

Luke 3

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

1It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman
emperor. Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea; Herod Antipas
was ruler* over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler* over Iturea and
Traconitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene. 2Annas and Caiaphas
were the high priests. At this time a message from God came to
John son of Zechariah, who was living in the wilderness. 3Then
John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River,
preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had
repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. 4Isaiah had
spoken of John when he said, “He is a voice shouting in the
wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming!

Clear the road for him!

5The valleys will be filled, and the mountains and hills made level.
The curves will be straightened, and the rough places made smooth.

6And then all people will see the salvation sent from God.'"*

7When the crowds came to John for baptism, he said, "You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee God's coming wrath? 8Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. 9Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire."

10The crowds asked, "What should we do?"

11John replied, "If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry."

12Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, "Teacher, what should we do?"

13He replied, "Collect no more taxes than the government requires."

14"What should we do?" asked some soldiers.

John replied, "Don't extort money or make false accusations. And be content with your pay."

15Everyone was expecting the Messiah to come soon, and they were eager to know whether John might be the Messiah. 16John answered their questions by saying, "I baptize you with* water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his

sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*17He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.” 18John used many such warnings as he announced the Good News to the people.

19John also publicly criticized Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee,* for marrying Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for many other wrongs he had done. 20So Herod put John in prison, adding this sin to his many others.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

21One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, 22and the Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, “You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.*”

THE ANCESTORS OF JESUS

23Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his public ministry.

Jesus was known as the son of Joseph.
Joseph was the son of Heli.

24Heli was the son of Matthat.
Matthat was the son of Levi.

Levi was the son of Melki.
Melki was the son of Jannai.
Jannai was the son of Joseph.

25Joseph was the son of Mattathias.
Mattathias was the son of Amos.
Amos was the son of Nahum.
Nahum was the son of Esli.
Esli was the son of Naggai.

26Naggai was the son of Maath.
Maath was the son of Mattathias.
Mattathias was the son of Semein.
Semein was the son of Josech.
Josech was the son of Joda.

27Joda was the son of Joanan.
Joanan was the son of Rhesa.
Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel.
Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the son of Neri.

28Neri was the son of Melki.
Melki was the son of Addi.
Addi was the son of Cosam.
Cosam was the son of Elmadam.
Elmadam was the son of Er.

29Er was the son of Joshua.
Joshua was the son of Eliezer.
Eliezer was the son of Jorim.
Jorim was the son of Matthat.
Matthat was the son of Levi.

30Levi was the son of Simeon.
Simeon was the son of Judah.
Judah was the son of Joseph.
Joseph was the son of Jonam.
Jonam was the son of Eliakim.

31Eliakim was the son of Melea.

Melea was the son of Menna.
Menna was the son of Mattatha.
Mattatha was the son of Nathan.
Nathan was the son of David.

32David was the son of Jesse.
Jesse was the son of Obed.
Obed was the son of Boaz.
Boaz was the son of Salmon.*
Salmon was the son of Nahshon.

33Nahshon was the son of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the son of Admin.
Admin was the son of Arni.*
Arni was the son of Hezron.
Hezron was the son of Perez.
Perez was the son of Judah.

34Judah was the son of Jacob.
Jacob was the son of Isaac.
Isaac was the son of Abraham.
Abraham was the son of Terah.
Terah was the son of Nahor.

35Nahor was the son of Serug.
Serug was the son of Reu.
Reu was the son of Peleg.
Peleg was the son of Eber.
Eber was the son of Shelah.

36Shelah was the son of Cainan.
Cainan was the son of Arphaxad.
Arphaxad was the son of Shem.
Shem was the son of Noah.
Noah was the son of Lamech.

37Lamech was the son of Methuselah.
Methuselah was the son of Enoch.
Enoch was the son of Jared.

Jared was the son of Mahalalel.
Mahalalel was the son of Kenan.

38Kenan was the son of Enosh.*
Enosh was the son of Seth.
Seth was the son of Adam.
Adam was the son of God.

DEMONS LUKE 4:1-13

Luke 4

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

1Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River.
He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,*2where he was tempted
by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and
became very hungry.

3Then the devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this
stone to become a loaf of bread.”

4But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by
bread alone.’*”

5Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms
of the world in a moment of time. 6“I will give you the glory of
these kingdoms and authority over them,” the devil said, “because
they are mine to give to anyone I please. 7I will give it all to you if
you will worship me.”

8Jesus replied, “The Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the LORD
your God and serve only him.’*”

9Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! 10For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect and guard you.

11And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’*”

12Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the LORD your God.’*”

13When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.

JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

14Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit’s power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. 15He taught regularly in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

16When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. 17The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

18“The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the

blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free,

19and that the time of the LORD's favor has come.*"

20He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. 21Then he began to speak to them. "The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!"

22Everyone spoke well of him and was amazed by the gracious words that came from his lips. "How can this be?" they asked. "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

23Then he said, "You will undoubtedly quote me this proverb: 'Physician, heal yourself'—meaning, 'Do miracles here in your hometown like those you did in Capernaum.' 24But I tell you the truth, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown.

25"Certainly there were many needy widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the heavens were closed for three and a half years, and a severe famine devastated the land. 26Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a foreigner—a widow of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. 27And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, but the only one healed was Naaman, a Syrian."

28When they heard this, the people in the synagogue were furious. 29Jumping up, they mobbed him and forced him to the edge of the hill on which the town was built. They intended to push him over the cliff, 30but he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.

JESUS CASTS OUT A DEMON

31Then Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught there in the synagogue every Sabbath day. 32There, too, the people were amazed at his teaching, for he spoke with authority.

33Once when he was in the synagogue, a man possessed by a demon
—an evil* spirit—began shouting at Jesus, 34"Go away! Why are you
interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy
us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

35Jesus cut him short. "Be quiet! Come out of the man," he ordered.
At that, the demon threw the man to the floor as the crowd
watched; then it came out of him without hurting him further.

36Amazed, the people exclaimed, "What authority and power this
man's words possess! Even evil spirits obey him, and they flee at his
command!" 37The news about Jesus spread through every village in
the entire region.

JESUS HEALS MANY PEOPLE

38After leaving the synagogue that day, Jesus went to Simon's
home, where he found Simon's mother-in-law very sick with a high
fever. "Please heal her," everyone begged. 39Standing at her
bedside, he rebuked the fever, and it left her. And she got up at
once and prepared a meal for them.

40As the sun went down that evening, people throughout the village
brought sick family members to Jesus. No matter what their
diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one. 41Many were
possessed by demons; and the demons came out at his command,
shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But because they knew he was
the Messiah, he rebuked them and refused to let them speak.

JESUS CONTINUES TO PREACH

42Early the next morning Jesus went out to an isolated place. The
crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found
him, they begged him not to leave them. 43But he replied, "I must
preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too,

because that is why I was sent.” 44So he continued to travel around,
preaching in synagogues throughout Judea.*

Luke 5

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

1One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee,*
great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. 2He

noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. 3Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon,* its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

4When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

5"Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." 6And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! 7A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

8When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm too much of a sinner to be around you." 9For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. 10His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" 11And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

SKIP TO 5:27

JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH LEPROSY

12In one of the villages, Jesus met a man with an advanced case of leprosy. When the man saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground, begging to be healed. "Lord," he said, "if you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean."

13Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared. 14Then Jesus instructed him not to tell anyone what had happened. He said, "Go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering

required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy.* This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed."

15But despite Jesus' instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. 16But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

17One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord's healing power was strongly with Jesus.

18Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, 19but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. 20Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the man, "Young man, your sins are forgiven."

21But the Pharisees and teachers of religious law said to themselves, "Who does he think he is? That's blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!"

22Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? 23Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up and walk'? 24So I will prove to you that the Son of Man* has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

25And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God. 26Everyone was

gripped with great wonder and awe, and they praised God, exclaiming, “We have seen amazing things today!”

JESUS CALLS LEVI (MATTHEW)

27Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector’s booth. “Follow me and be my disciple,” Jesus said to him. 28So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him.

29Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi’s fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. 30But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus’ disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with such scum?*”

31Jesus answered them, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. 32I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent.”

A DISCUSSION ABOUT FASTING

33One day some people said to Jesus, “John the Baptist’s disciples fast and pray regularly, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. Why are your disciples always eating and drinking?”

34Jesus responded, “Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. 35But someday the groom will be taken

away from them, and then they will fast."

36Then Jesus gave them this illustration: "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and uses it to patch an old garment. For then the new garment would be ruined, and the new patch wouldn't even match the old garment.

37"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the new wine would burst the wineskins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. 38New wine must be stored in new wineskins. 39But no one who drinks the old wine seems to want the new wine. 'The old is just fine,' they say."

Luke 6

A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SABBATH

1One Sabbath day as Jesus was walking through some grainfields, his disciples broke off heads of grain, rubbed off the husks in their hands, and ate the grain. 2But some Pharisees said, "Why are you breaking the law by harvesting grain on the Sabbath?"

3Jesus replied, "Haven't you read in the Scriptures what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4He went into the house of God and broke the law by eating the sacred loaves of bread that only the priests can eat. He also gave some to his companions." 5And Jesus added, "The Son of Man* is Lord, even over the Sabbath."

JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH

6On another Sabbath day, a man with a deformed right hand was in the synagogue while Jesus was teaching. 7The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees watched Jesus closely. If he healed the man's hand, they planned to accuse him of working on the Sabbath.

8But Jesus knew their thoughts. He said to the man with the deformed hand, “Come and stand in front of everyone.” So the man came forward. 9Then Jesus said to his critics, “I have a question for you. Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?”

10He looked around at them one by one and then said to the man, “Hold out your hand.” So the man held out his hand, and it was restored! 11At this, the enemies of Jesus were wild with rage and began to discuss what to do with him.

JESUS CHOOSES THE TWELVE APOSTLES

12One day soon afterward Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night. 13At daybreak he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles. Here are their names:

14Simon (whom he named Peter), Andrew (Peter’s brother), James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,

15Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (who was called the zealot),

16Judas (son of James), Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).

CROWDS FOLLOW JESUS

17When they came down from the mountain, the disciples stood with Jesus on a large, level area, surrounded by many of his followers and by the crowds. There were people from all over Judea and from Jerusalem and from as far north as the seacoasts of Tyre and Sidon. 18They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those troubled by evil* spirits were healed. 19Everyone tried to touch him, because healing power went out from him, and he healed everyone.

THE BEATITUDES

20Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, “God blesses you who
are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours.

21God blesses you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied.
God blesses you who weep now, for in due time you will laugh.

22What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you
and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of
Man. 23When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great
reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors
treated the ancient prophets that same way.

SORROWS FORETOLD

24“What sorrow awaits you who are rich, for you have your only
happiness now.

25What sorrow awaits you who are fat and prosperous now, for a
time of awful hunger awaits you.
What sorrow awaits you who laugh now, for your laughing will
turn to mourning and sorrow.

26What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds, for their
ancestors also praised false prophets.

LOVE FOR ENEMIES

27“But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do
good to those who hate you. 28Bless those who curse you. Pray for
those who hurt you. 29If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the
other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt
also. 30Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away
from you, don’t try to get them back. 31Do to others as you would
like them to do to you.

32“If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit
for that? Even sinners love those who love them! 33And if you do

good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! 34And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return.

35"Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. 36You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

DO NOT JUDGE OTHERS

37"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. 38Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.*"

39Then Jesus gave the following illustration: "Can one blind person lead another? Won't they both fall into a ditch? 40Students* are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

41"And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye* when you have a log in your own? 42How can you think of saying, 'Friend,* let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

THE TREE AND ITS FRUIT

43"A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. 44A tree is identified by its fruit. Figs are never gathered

from thornbushes, and grapes are not picked from bramble bushes.
45A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good
heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of
an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

46"So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do
what I say? 47I will show you what it's like when someone comes to
me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. 48It is like a person
building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid
rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it
stands firm because it is well built. 49But anyone who hears and
doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house without a
foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will
collapse into a heap of ruins."

Luke 7

THE FAITH OF A ROMAN OFFICER

1When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people, he returned
to Capernaum. 2At that time the highly valued slave of a Roman
officer* was sick and near death. 3When the officer heard about
Jesus, he sent some respected Jewish elders to ask him to come and
heal his slave. 4So they earnestly begged Jesus to help the man. "If
anyone deserves your help, he does," they said, 5"for he loves the
Jewish people and even built a synagogue for us."

6So Jesus went with them. But just before they arrived at the house,
the officer sent some friends to say, "Lord, don't trouble yourself by
coming to my home, for I am not worthy of such an honor. 7I am
not even worthy to come and meet you. Just say the word from
where you are, and my servant will be healed. 8I know this because
I am under the authority of my superior officers, and I have
authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or
'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do

it.”

9When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Turning to the crowd that was following him, he said, “I tell you, I haven’t seen faith like this in all Israel!” 10And when the officer’s friends returned to his house, they found the slave completely healed.

JESUS RAISES A WIDOW’S SON

11Soon afterward Jesus went with his disciples to the village of Nain, and a large crowd followed him. 12A funeral procession was coming out as he approached the village gate. The young man who had died was a widow’s only son, and a large crowd from the village was with her. 13When the Lord saw her, his heart overflowed with compassion. “Don’t cry!” he said. 14Then he walked over to the coffin and touched it, and the bearers stopped. “Young man,” he said, “I tell you, get up.” 15Then the dead boy sat up and began to talk! And Jesus gave him back to his mother.

16Great fear swept the crowd, and they praised God, saying, “A mighty prophet has risen among us,” and “God has visited his people today.” 17And the news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding countryside.

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

18The disciples of John the Baptist told John about everything Jesus was doing. So John called for two of his disciples, 19and he sent them to the Lord to ask him, “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting,* or should we keep looking for someone else?”

20John’s two disciples found Jesus and said to him, “John the Baptist sent us to ask, ‘Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?’”

21At that very time, Jesus cured many people of their diseases,
illnesses, and evil spirits, and he restored sight to many who were
blind. 22Then he told John's disciples, "Go back to John and tell him
what you have seen and heard—the blind see, the lame walk, the
lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the
Good News is being preached to the poor. 23And tell him, 'God
blesses those who do not turn away because of me.*'"

24After John's disciples left, Jesus began talking about him to the
crowds. "What kind of man did you go into the wilderness to see?
Was he a weak reed, swayed by every breath of wind? 25Or were
you expecting to see a man dressed in expensive clothes? No,
people who wear beautiful clothes and live in luxury are found in
palaces. 26Were you looking for a prophet? Yes, and he is more than
a prophet. 27John is the man to whom the Scriptures refer when
they say, 'Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he
will prepare your way before you.'*

28I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John.
Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he
is!"

29When they heard this, all the people—even the tax collectors—
agreed that God's way was right,* for they had been baptized by
John. 30But the Pharisees and experts in religious law rejected God's
plan for them, for they had refused John's baptism.

31"To what can I compare the people of this generation?" Jesus
asked. "How can I describe them? 32They are like children playing a
game in the public square. They complain to their friends, 'We
played wedding songs, and you didn't dance, so we played funeral
songs, and you didn't weep.'

33For John the Baptist didn't spend his time eating bread or
drinking wine, and you say, 'He's possessed by a demon.' 34The Son
of Man,* on the other hand, feasts and drinks, and you say, 'He's a

glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and other sinners!' 35But wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it.*"

FORGIVENESS LUKE 7:36-50

JESUS ANOINTED BY A SINFUL WOMAN

36One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to have dinner with him, so Jesus went to his home and sat down to eat.*37When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. 38Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

39When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She's a sinner!"

40Then Jesus answered his thoughts. "Simon," he said to the Pharisee, "I have something to say to you."

"Go ahead, Teacher," Simon replied.

41Then Jesus told him this story: “A man loaned money to two
people—500 pieces of silver* to one and 50 pieces to the other.
42But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them
both, canceling their debts. Who do you suppose loved him more
after that?”

43Simon answered, “I suppose the one for whom he canceled the
larger debt.”

“That’s right,” Jesus said. 44Then he turned to the woman and said
to Simon, “Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your
home, you didn’t offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but
she has washed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair.
45You didn’t greet me with a kiss, but from the time I first came in,
she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46You neglected the courtesy of
olive oil to anoint my head, but she has anointed my feet with rare
perfume.

47“I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so
she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little
shows only little love.” 48Then Jesus said to the woman, “Your sins
are forgiven.”

49The men at the table said among themselves, “Who is this man,
that he goes around forgiving sins?”

50And Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in
peace.”

Luke 8

WOMEN WHO FOLLOWED JESUS

1Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and
villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the
Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, 2along with

some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons; 3Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's business manager; Susanna; and many others who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples.

PARABLE OF THE FARMER SCATTERING SEED

4One day Jesus told a story in the form of a parable to a large crowd that had gathered from many towns to hear him: 5"A farmer went out to plant his seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, and the birds ate it. 6Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture. 7Other seed fell among thorns that grew up with it and choked out the tender plants. 8Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!" When he had said this, he called out, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."

9His disciples asked him what this parable meant. 10He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets* of the Kingdom of God. But I use parables to teach the others so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: 'When they look, they won't really see.

When they hear, they won't understand.'*

11"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is God's word. 12The seeds that fell on the footpath represent those who hear the message, only to have the devil come and take it away from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved. 13The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation. 14The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity. 15And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's word, cling to it, and

patiently produce a huge harvest.

PARABLE OF THE LAMP

16"No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl or hides it
under a bed. A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be
seen by all who enter the house. 17For all that is secret will
eventually be brought into the open, and everything that is
concealed will be brought to light and made known to all.

18"So pay attention to how you hear. To those who listen to my
teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are
not listening, even what they think they understand will be taken
away from them."

THE TRUE FAMILY OF JESUS

19Then Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they
couldn't get to him because of the crowd. 20Someone told Jesus,
"Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, and they
want to see you."

21Jesus replied, "My mother and my brothers are all those who hear
God's word and obey it."

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

22One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's cross to the other side of
the lake." So they got into a boat and started out. 23As they sailed
across, Jesus settled down for a nap. But soon a fierce storm came
down on the lake. The boat was filling with water, and they were in
real danger.

24The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master,
we're going to drown!"

When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves.

Suddenly the storm stopped and all was calm. 25Then he asked them, “Where is your faith?”

The disciples were terrified and amazed. “Who is this man?” they asked each other. “When he gives a command, even the wind and waves obey him!”

DEMONS LUKE 8:26-39

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

26So they arrived in the region of the Gerasenes,* across the lake from Galilee. 27As Jesus was climbing out of the boat, a man who was possessed by demons came out to meet him. For a long time he had been homeless and naked, living in a cemetery outside the town.

28As soon as he saw Jesus, he shrieked and fell down in front of him. Then he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, I beg you, don’t torture me!” 29For Jesus had already commanded the evil* spirit to come out of him. This spirit had often taken control of the man. Even when he was placed under guard and put in chains and shackles, he simply broke them and rushed out into the wilderness, completely under the demon’s power.

30Jesus demanded, “What is your name?”

“Legion,” he replied, for he was filled with many demons. 31The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit.*

32There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside
nearby, and the demons begged him to let them enter into the pigs.

So Jesus gave them permission. 33Then the demons came out of the
man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd plunged down the
steep hillside into the lake and drowned.

34When the herdsmen saw it, they fled to the nearby town and the
surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. 35People
rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered
around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the
demons. He was sitting at Jesus' feet, fully clothed and perfectly
sane, and they were all afraid. 36Then those who had seen what
happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been
healed. 37And all the people in the region of the Gerasenes begged
Jesus to go away and leave them alone, for a great wave of fear
swept over them.

So Jesus returned to the boat and left, crossing back to the other
side of the lake. 38The man who had been freed from the demons
begged to go with him. But Jesus sent him home, saying, 39"No, go
back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for
you." So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things
Jesus had done for him.

DON'T FEAR LUKE 8:40-56

JESUS HEALS IN RESPONSE TO FAITH

40On the other side of the lake the crowds welcomed Jesus, because
they had been waiting for him. 41Then a man named Jairus, a leader
of the local synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with
him to come home with him. 42His only daughter,* who was about
twelve years old, was dying.

As Jesus went with him, he was surrounded by the crowds. 43A
woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant
bleeding,* and she could find no cure. 44Coming up behind Jesus,
she touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding
stopped.

45"Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

Everyone denied it, and Peter said, "Master, this whole crowd is
pressing up against you."

46But Jesus said, "Someone deliberately touched me, for I felt
healing power go out from me." 47When the woman realized that
she could not stay hidden, she began to tremble and fell to her
knees in front of him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she
had touched him and that she had been immediately healed.
48"Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has made you well. Go in
peace."

49While he was still speaking to her, a messenger arrived from the
home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. He told him, "Your
daughter is dead. There's no use troubling the Teacher now."

50But when Jesus heard what had happened, he said to Jairus,
"Don't be afraid. Just have faith, and she will be healed."

51When they arrived at the house, Jesus wouldn't let anyone go in
with him except Peter, John, James, and the little girl's father and
mother. 52The house was filled with people weeping and wailing,

but he said, “Stop the weeping! She isn’t dead; she’s only asleep.”

53But the crowd laughed at him because they all knew she had died.
54Then Jesus took her by the hand and said in a loud voice, “My
child, get up!” 55And at that moment her life* returned, and she
immediately stood up! Then Jesus told them to give her something
to eat. 56Her parents were overwhelmed, but Jesus insisted that they
not tell anyone what had happened.

Luke 9

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

1One day Jesus called together his twelve disciples* and gave them
power and authority to cast out all demons and to heal all diseases.
2Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God
and to heal the sick. 3“Take nothing for your journey,” he instructed
them. “Don’t take a walking stick, a traveler’s bag, food, money,* or
even a change of clothes. 4Wherever you go, stay in the same house
until you leave town. 5And if a town refuses to welcome you, shake
its dust from your feet as you leave to show that you have
abandoned those people to their fate.”

6So they began their circuit of the villages, preaching the Good
News and healing the sick.

HEROD’S CONFUSION

7When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee,* heard about everything
Jesus was doing, he was puzzled. Some were saying that John the
Baptist had been raised from the dead. 8Others thought Jesus was
Elijah or one of the other prophets risen from the dead.

9“I beheaded John,” Herod said, “so who is this man about whom I
hear such stories?” And he kept trying to see him.

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

10When the apostles returned, they told Jesus everything they had
done. Then he slipped quietly away with them toward the town of
Bethsaida. 11But the crowds found out where he was going, and
they followed him. He welcomed them and taught them about the
Kingdom of God, and he healed those who were sick.

12Late in the afternoon the twelve disciples came to him and said,
"Send the crowds away to the nearby villages and farms, so they
can find food and lodging for the night. There is nothing to eat here
in this remote place."

13But Jesus said, "You feed them."

"But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish," they
answered. "Or are you expecting us to go and buy enough food for
this whole crowd?" 14For there were about 5,000 men there.

Jesus replied, "Tell them to sit down in groups of about fifty each."
15So the people all sat down. 16Jesus took the five loaves and two
fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking
the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the
disciples so they could distribute it to the people. 17They all ate as
much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve
baskets of leftovers!

PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

18One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone. Only his disciples
were with him, and he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

19"Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah,
and others say you are one of the other ancient prophets risen from
the dead."

20Then he asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

Peter replied, “You are the Messiah* sent from God!”

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

21Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone who he was. 22“The Son of Man* must suffer many terrible things,” he said. “He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead.”

23Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. 24If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 25And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? 26If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels. 27I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God.”

THE TRANSFIGURATION

28About eight days later Jesus took Peter, John, and James up on a mountain to pray. 29And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was transformed, and his clothes became dazzling white. 30Suddenly, two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. 31They were glorious to see. And they were speaking about his exodus from this world, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem.

32Peter and the others had fallen asleep. When they woke up, they saw Jesus’ glory and the two men standing with him. 33As Moses and Elijah were starting to leave, Peter, not even knowing what he

was saying, blurted out, “Master, it’s wonderful for us to be here! Let’s make three shelters as memorials*—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 34But even as he was saying this, a cloud overshadowed them, and terror gripped them as the cloud covered them.

35Then a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, my Chosen One.* Listen to him.” 36When the voice finished, Jesus was there alone. They didn’t tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED BOY

37The next day, after they had come down the mountain, a large crowd met Jesus. 38A man in the crowd called out to him, “Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, my only child. 39An evil spirit keeps seizing him, making him scream. It throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It batters him and hardly ever leaves him alone. 40I begged your disciples to cast out the spirit, but they couldn’t do it.”

41Jesus said, “You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I be with you and put up with you?” Then he said to the man, “Bring your son here.”

42As the boy came forward, the demon knocked him to the ground and threw him into a violent convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil* spirit and healed the boy. Then he gave him back to his father. 43Awe gripped the people as they saw this majestic display of God’s power.

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH

While everyone was marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44“Listen to me and remember what I say. The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies.”

45But they didn't know what he meant. Its significance was hidden
from them, so they couldn't understand it, and they were afraid to
ask him about it.

THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM

46Then his disciples began arguing about which of them was the
greatest. 47But Jesus knew their thoughts, so he brought a little
child to his side. 48Then he said to them, "Anyone who welcomes a
little child like this on my behalf* welcomes me, and anyone who
welcomes me also welcomes my Father who sent me. Whoever is
the least among you is the greatest."

USING THE NAME OF JESUS

49John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw someone using your name to
cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he isn't in our
group."

50But Jesus said, "Don't stop him! Anyone who is not against you is
for you."

OPPOSITION FROM SAMARITANS

51As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus
resolutely set out for Jerusalem. 52He sent messengers ahead to a
Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival. 53But the people of the
village did not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to
Jerusalem. 54When James and John saw this, they said to Jesus,
"Lord, should we call down fire from heaven to burn them up*?"
55But Jesus turned and rebuked them.*56So they went on to another
village.

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

57As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow
you wherever you go."

58But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have
nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head.”

59He said to another person, “Come, follow me.”

The man agreed, but he said, “Lord, first let me return home and
bury my father.”

60But Jesus told him, “Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead!*
Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God.”

61Another said, “Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say
good-bye to my family.”

62But Jesus told him, “Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and
then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.”

Luke 10

JESUS SENDS OUT HIS DISCIPLES

1The Lord now chose seventy-two* other disciples and sent them
ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit.
2These were his instructions to them: “The harvest is great, but the
workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the
harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. 3Now go, and
remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. 4Don’t
take any money with you, nor a traveler’s bag, nor an extra pair of
sandals. And don’t stop to greet anyone on the road.

5“Whenever you enter someone’s home, first say, ‘May God’s peace
be on this house.’ 6If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing
will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. 7Don’t
move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and
drinking what they provide. Don’t hesitate to accept hospitality,
because those who work deserve their pay.

8“If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set
before you. 9Heal the sick, and tell them, ‘The Kingdom of God is
near you now.’ 10But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into
its streets and say, 11‘We wipe even the dust of your town from our
feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know
this—the Kingdom of God is near!’ 12I assure you, even wicked
Sodom will be better off than such a town on judgment day.

13“What sorrow awaits you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the
miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their
people would have repented of their sins long ago, clothing
themselves in burlap and throwing ashes on their heads to show
their remorse. 14Yes, Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment
day than you. 15And you people of Capernaum, will you be honored
in heaven? No, you will go down to the place of the dead.*”

16Then he said to the disciples, “Anyone who accepts your message
is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting me.
And anyone who rejects me is rejecting God, who sent me.”

17When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to
him, “Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!”

18“Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning!
19Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy,
and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them.
Nothing will injure you. 20But don’t rejoice because evil spirits obey
you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.”

JESUS’ PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

21At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit,
and he said, “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for
hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and
clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it
pleased you to do it this way.

22“My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows
the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except
the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

23Then when they were alone, he turned to the disciples and said,
“Blessed are the eyes that see what you have seen. 24I tell you, many
prophets and kings longed to see what you see, but they didn’t see
it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn’t hear it.”

THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT

25One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking
him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal
life?”

26Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read
it?”

27The man answered, “‘You must love the LORD your God with all
your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And,
‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

28“Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!”

29The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, “And
who is my neighbor?”

THE ROAD TO JERICHO

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

30Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from
Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They
stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead
beside the road.

31“By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying
there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by.
32A Temple assistant* walked over and looked at him lying there,
but he also passed by on the other side.

33“Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the
man, he felt compassion for him. 34Going over to him, the
Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and
bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took
him to an inn, where he took care of him. 35The next day he handed
the innkeeper two silver coins,* telling him, ‘Take care of this man.
If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’

36“Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the
man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked.

37The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.”

Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

THE VILLAGE OF BETHANY

JESUS VISITS MARTHA AND MARY

38As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem,
they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha
welcomed him into her home. 39Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's
feet, listening to what he taught. 40But Martha was distracted by the
big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord,
doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do
all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

41But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and
upset over all these details! 42There is only one thing worth being
concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken
away from her."

Luke 11

TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER

1Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of
his disciples came to him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as
John taught his disciples."

2Jesus said, "This is how you should pray:*

“Father, may your name be kept holy.
May your Kingdom come soon.

3Give us each day the food we need,*

4and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
And don’t let us yield to temptation.*”

5Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story:
“Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to
borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 6‘A friend of mine has
just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ 7And
suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door
is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t
help you.’ 8But I tell you this—though he won’t do it for friendship’s
sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you
whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.*

9“And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you
ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and
the door will be opened to you. 10For everyone who asks, receives.
Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door
will be opened.

11“You fathers—if your children ask* for a fish, do you give them a
snake instead? 12Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a
scorpion? Of course not! 13So if you sinful people know how to give
good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly
Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”

JESUS AND THE PRINCE OF DEMONS

14One day Jesus cast out a demon from a man who couldn’t speak,
and when the demon was gone, the man began to speak. The
crowds were amazed, 15but some of them said, “No wonder he can
cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan,* the prince of

demons.” 16Others, trying to test Jesus, demanded that he show
them a miraculous sign from heaven to prove his authority.

17He knew their thoughts, so he said, “Any kingdom divided by civil
war is doomed. A family splintered by feuding will fall apart. 18You
say I am empowered by Satan. But if Satan is divided and fighting
against himself, how can his kingdom survive? 19And if I am
empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out
demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said.
20But if I am casting out demons by the power of God,* then the
Kingdom of God has arrived among you. 21For when a strong man
like Satan is fully armed and guards his palace, his possessions are
safe—22until someone even stronger attacks and overpowers him,
strips him of his weapons, and carries off his belongings.

23“Anyone who isn’t with me opposes me, and anyone who isn’t
working with me is actually working against me.

24“When an evil* spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert,
searching for rest. But when it finds none, it says, ‘I will return to
the person I came from.’ 25So it returns and finds that its former
home is all swept and in order. 26Then the spirit finds seven other
spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live
there. And so that person is worse off than before.”

27As he was speaking, a woman in the crowd called out, “God bless
your mother—the womb from which you came, and the breasts that
nursed you!”

28Jesus replied, “But even more blessed are all who hear the word
of God and put it into practice.”

THE SIGN OF JONAH

29As the crowd pressed in on Jesus, he said, “This evil generation
keeps asking me to show them a miraculous sign. But the only sign I
will give them is the sign of Jonah. 30What happened to him was a
sign to the people of Nineveh that God had sent him. What happens
to the Son of Man* will be a sign to these people that he was sent by
God.

31“The queen of Sheba* will stand up against this generation on
judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to
hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon
is here—but you refuse to listen. 32The people of Nineveh will also
stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it,
for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now
someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent.

RECEIVING THE LIGHT

33“No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a basket.*
Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be seen by
all who enter the house.

34“Your eye is a lamp that provides light for your body. When your
eye is good, your whole body is filled with light. But when it is bad,
your body is filled with darkness. 35Make sure that the light you
think you have is not actually darkness. 36If you are filled with light,
with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as
though a floodlight were filling you with light.”

JESUS CRITICIZES THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

37As Jesus was speaking, one of the Pharisees invited him home for
a meal. So he went in and took his place at the table.*38His host was
amazed to see that he sat down to eat without first performing the
hand-washing ceremony required by Jewish custom. 39Then the
Lord said to him, “You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside

of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and wickedness! 40Fools! Didn't God make the inside as well as the outside? 41So clean the inside by giving gifts to the poor, and you will be clean all over.

42"What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens,* but you ignore justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.

43"What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you love to sit in the seats of honor in the synagogues and receive respectful greetings as you walk in the marketplaces. 44Yes, what sorrow awaits you! For you are like hidden graves in a field. People walk over them without knowing the corruption they are stepping on."

45"Teacher," said an expert in religious law, "you have insulted us, too, in what you just said."

46"Yes," said Jesus, "what sorrow also awaits you experts in religious law! For you crush people with unbearable religious demands, and you never lift a finger to ease the burden. 47What sorrow awaits you! For you build monuments for the prophets your own ancestors killed long ago. 48But in fact, you stand as witnesses who agree with what your ancestors did. They killed the prophets, and you join in their crime by building the monuments! 49This is what God in his wisdom said about you:* 'I will send prophets and apostles to them, but they will kill some and persecute the others.'

50"As a result, this generation will be held responsible for the murder of all God's prophets from the creation of the world—51from the murder of Abel to the murder of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, it will certainly be charged against this generation.

52“What sorrow awaits you experts in religious law! For you remove
the key to knowledge from the people. You don’t enter the Kingdom
yourselves, and you prevent others from entering.”

53As Jesus was leaving, the teachers of religious law and the
Pharisees became hostile and tried to provoke him with many
questions. 54They wanted to trap him into saying something they
could use against him.

Luke 12

A WARNING AGAINST HYPOCRISY

1Meanwhile, the crowds grew until thousands were milling about
and stepping on each other. Jesus turned first to his disciples and
warned them, “Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees—their
hypocrisy. 2The time is coming when everything that is covered up
will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all.
3Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and
what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from
the housetops for all to hear!

4“Dear friends, don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body;
they cannot do any more to you after that. 5But I’ll tell you whom to
fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill you and then throw you
into hell.* Yes, he’s the one to fear.

GOD LOVES YOU LUKE 12:6-12

6“What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins*? Yet God
does not forget a single one of them. 7And the very hairs on your
head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to
God than a whole flock of sparrows.

8“I tell you the truth, everyone who acknowledges me publicly here
on earth, the Son of Man* will also acknowledge in the presence of
God’s angels. 9But anyone who denies me here on earth will be
denied before God’s angels. 10Anyone who speaks against the Son of
Man can be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit
will not be forgiven.

11“And when you are brought to trial in the synagogues and before
rulers and authorities, don’t worry about how to defend yourself or
what to say, 12for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what
needs to be said.”

PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

13Then someone called from the crowd, “Teacher, please tell my brother to divide our father’s estate with me.”

14Jesus replied, “Friend, who made me a judge over you to decide such things as that?” 15Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”

16Then he told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. 17He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ 18Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. 19And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!”’

20“But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’

21“Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”

TEACHING ABOUT MONEY AND POSSESSIONS

22Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. 23For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. 24Look at the ravens. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! 25Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? 26And if worry can’t accomplish a little thing like that, what’s the use of worrying over bigger things?

27“Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. 28And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he

will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

29"And don't be concerned about what to eat and what to drink.
Don't worry about such things. 30These things dominate the
thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already
knows your needs. 31Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he
will give you everything you need.

32"So don't be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great
happiness to give you the Kingdom.

33"Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up
treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old
or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and
no moth can destroy it. 34Wherever your treasure is, there the
desires of your heart will also be.

BE READY FOR THE LORD'S COMING

35"Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, 36as though
you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast.
Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment
he arrives and knocks. 37The servants who are ready and waiting for
his return will be rewarded. I tell you the truth, he himself will seat
them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat! 38He may
come in the middle of the night or just before dawn.* But whenever
he comes, he will reward the servants who are ready.

39"Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar
was coming, he would not permit his house to be broken into. 40You
also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when
least expected."

41Peter asked, "Lord, is that illustration just for us or for everyone?"

42And the Lord replied, “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom
the master can give the responsibility of managing his other
household servants and feeding them. 43If the master returns and
finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward.
44I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of
all he owns. 45But what if the servant thinks, ‘My master won’t be
back for a while,’ and he begins beating the other servants,
partying, and getting drunk? 46The master will return unannounced
and unexpected, and he will cut the servant in pieces and banish
him with the unfaithful.

47“And a servant who knows what the master wants, but isn’t
prepared and doesn’t carry out those instructions, will be severely
punished. 48But someone who does not know, and then does
something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has
been given much, much will be required in return; and when
someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be
required.

JESUS CAUSES DIVISION

49“I have come to set the world on fire, and I wish it were already
burning! 50I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of me, and I
am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished. 51Do you think I
have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I have come to divide
people against each other! 52From now on families will be split
apart, three in favor of me, and two against—or two in favor and
three against.

53‘Father will be divided against son and son against father; mother
against daughter and daughter against mother; and mother-in-law
against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-
law.’*”

54Then Jesus turned to the crowd and said, “When you see clouds
beginning to form in the west, you say, ‘Here comes a shower.’ And
you are right. 55When the south wind blows, you say, ‘Today will be

a scorcher.' And it is. 56You fools! You know how to interpret the weather signs of the earth and sky, but you don't know how to interpret the present times.

57"Why can't you decide for yourselves what is right? 58When you are on the way to court with your accuser, try to settle the matter before you get there. Otherwise, your accuser may drag you before the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, who will throw you into prison. 59And if that happens, you won't be free again until you have paid the very last penny.*"

Luke 13

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

1About this time Jesus was informed that Pilate had murdered some people from Galilee as they were offering sacrifices at the Temple. 2"Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other people from Galilee?" Jesus asked. "Is that why they suffered? 3Not at all! And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins and turn to God. 4And what about the eighteen people who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem? 5No, and I tell you again that unless you repent, you will perish, too."

PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

6Then Jesus told this story: "A man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed. 7Finally, he said to his gardener, 'I've

waited three years, and there hasn't been a single fig! Cut it down. It's just taking up space in the garden.'

8"The gardener answered, 'Sir, give it one more chance. Leave it another year, and I'll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. 9If we get figs next year, fine. If not, then you can cut it down.'"

JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH

10One Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, 11he saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to stand up straight. 12When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Dear woman, you are healed of your sickness!" 13Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised God!

14But the leader in charge of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus had healed her on the Sabbath day. "There are six days of the week for working," he said to the crowd. "Come on those days to be healed, not on the Sabbath."

15But the Lord replied, "You hypocrites! Each of you works on the Sabbath day! Don't you untie your ox or your donkey from its stall on the Sabbath and lead it out for water? 16This dear woman, a daughter of Abraham, has been held in bondage by Satan for eighteen years. Isn't it right that she be released, even on the Sabbath?"

17This shamed his enemies, but all the people rejoiced at the wonderful things he did.

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

18Then Jesus said, "What is the Kingdom of God like? How can I illustrate it? 19It is like a tiny mustard seed that a man planted in a

garden; it grows and becomes a tree, and the birds make nests in its branches."

PARABLE OF THE YEAST

20He also asked, "What else is the Kingdom of God like? 21It is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough."

THE NARROW DOOR

22Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he went, always pressing on toward Jerusalem. 23Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?"

He replied, 24"Work hard to enter the narrow door to God's Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail. 25When the master of the house has locked the door, it will be too late. You will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Lord, open the door for us!' But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' 26Then you will say, 'But we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' 27And he will reply, 'I tell you, I don't know you or where you come from. Get away from me, all you who do evil.'

28"There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for you will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you will be thrown out. 29And people will come from all over the world—from east and west, north and south—to take their places in the Kingdom of God. 30And note this: Some who seem least important now will be the greatest then, and some who are the greatest now will be least important then.*"

JESUS GRIEVES OVER JERUSALEM

31At that time some Pharisees said to him, "Get away from here if you want to live! Herod Antipas wants to kill you!"

32Jesus replied, “Go tell that fox that I will keep on casting out
demons and healing people today and tomorrow; and the third day
I will accomplish my purpose. 33Yes, today, tomorrow, and the next
day I must proceed on my way. For it wouldn’t do for a prophet of
God to be killed except in Jerusalem!

34“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and
stones God’s messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your
children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings,
but you wouldn’t let me. 35And now, look, your house is abandoned.
And you will never see me again until you say, ‘Blessings on the one
who comes in the name of the LORD!’*”

Luke 14

JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH

1One Sabbath day Jesus went to eat dinner in the home of a leader
of the Pharisees, and the people were watching him closely. 2There
was a man there whose arms and legs were swollen.*3Jesus asked
the Pharisees and experts in religious law, “Is it permitted in the
law to heal people on the Sabbath day, or not?” 4When they refused
to answer, Jesus touched the sick man and healed him and sent him

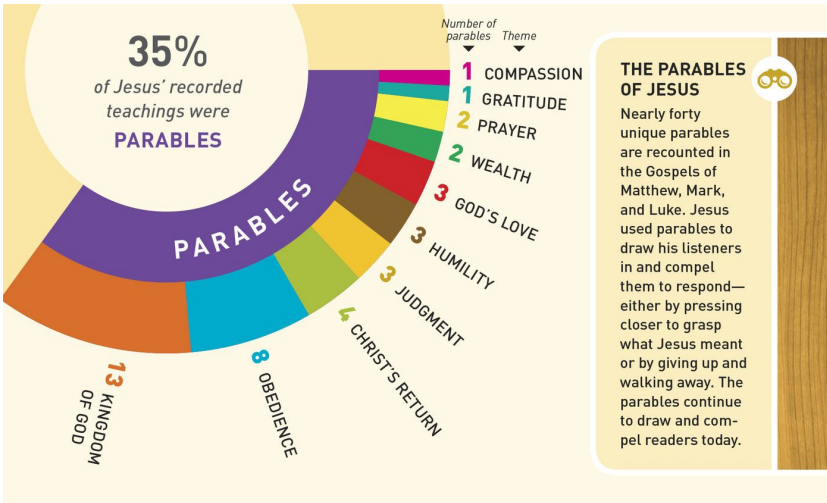
away. 5Then he turned to them and said, “Which of you doesn’t work on the Sabbath? If your son* or your cow falls into a pit, don’t you rush to get him out?” 6Again they could not answer.

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT HUMILITY

7When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in the seats of honor near the head of the table, he gave them this advice: 8“When you are invited to a wedding feast, don’t sit in the seat of honor. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited? 9The host will come and say, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!

10“Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, ‘Friend, we have a better place for you!’ Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. 11For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

12Then he turned to his host. “When you put on a luncheon or a banquet,” he said, “don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. 13Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.”



PARABLES OF JESUS

PARABLE OF THE GREAT FEAST

15 Hearing this, a man sitting at the table with Jesus exclaimed,
"What a blessing it will be to attend a banquet* in the Kingdom of
God!"

16 Jesus replied with this story: "A man prepared a great feast and
sent out many invitations. 17 When the banquet was ready, he sent
his servant to tell the guests, 'Come, the banquet is ready.' 18 But
they all began making excuses. One said, 'I have just bought a field
and must inspect it. Please excuse me.' 19 Another said, 'I have just
bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse
me.' 20 Another said, 'I now have a wife, so I can't come.'

21 "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His
master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys
of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the
lame.' 22 After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still
room for more.' 23 So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes

and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. 24For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet.'"

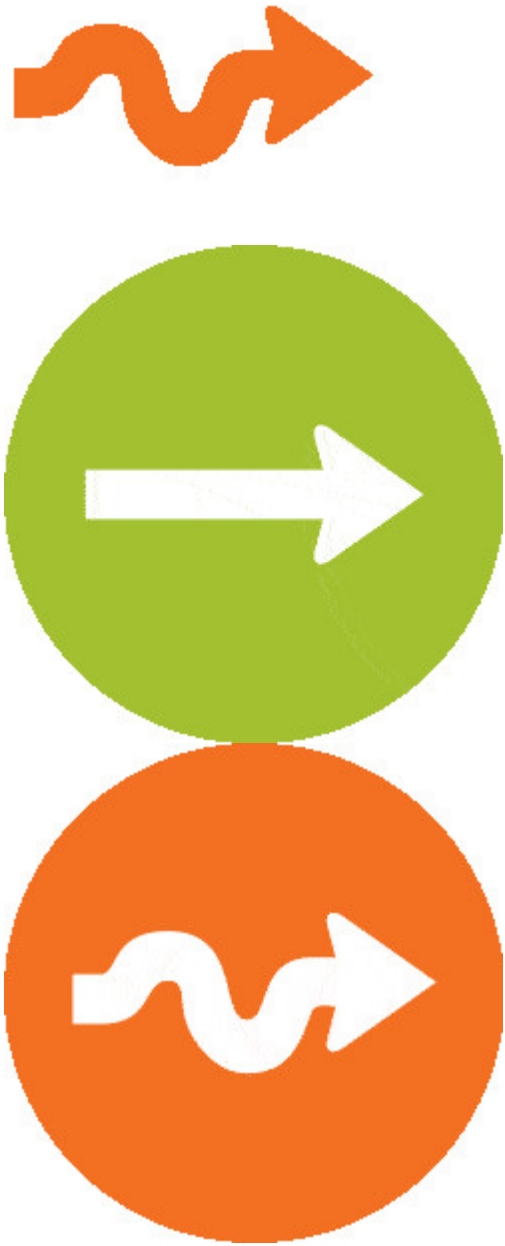
THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE

25A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, 26"If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. 27And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

28"But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? 29Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. 30They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

31"Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? 32And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. 33So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

34"Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? 35Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!"



Luke 15

PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

1Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen
to Jesus teach. 2This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law
complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even
eating with them!

3So Jesus told them this story: 4"If a man has a hundred sheep and
one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-
nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is
lost until he finds it? 5And when he has found it, he will joyfully
carry it home on his shoulders. 6When he arrives, he will call
together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because
I have found my lost sheep.' 7In the same way, there is more joy in
heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than
over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed
away!

PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

8"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins* and loses one. Won't
she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully
until she finds it? 9And when she finds it, she will call in her friends
and neighbors and say, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my
lost coin.' 10In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's
angels when even one sinner repents."

PARABLE OF THE LOST SON

11To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man
had two sons. 12The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of
your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his
wealth between his sons.

13"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and
moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild

living. 14About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept
over the land, and he began to starve. 15He persuaded a local farmer
to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs.
16The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was
feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

17"When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home
even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am
dying of hunger! 18I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I
have sinned against both heaven and you, 19and I am no longer
worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired
servant."'

20"So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long
way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and
compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. 21His
son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you,
and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.*'

22"But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe
in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals
for his feet. 23And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must
celebrate with a feast, 24for this son of mine was dead and has now
returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party
began.

25"Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working. When he
returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house, 26and he
asked one of the servants what was going on. 27'Your brother is
back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf. We
are celebrating because of his safe return.'

28"The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came
out and begged him, 29but he replied, 'All these years I've slaved for
you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And
in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast
with my friends. 30Yet when this son of yours comes back after

squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!'

31"His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours. 32We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!'"

Luke 16

PARABLE OF THE SHREWD MANAGER

1Jesus told this story to his disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money. 2So the employer called him in and said, 'What's this I hear about you? Get your report in order, because you are going to be fired.'

3"The manager thought to himself, 'Now what? My boss has fired me. I don't have the strength to dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg. 4Ah, I know how to ensure that I'll have plenty of friends who will give me a home when I am fired.'

5"So he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and discuss the situation. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe him?' 6The man replied, 'I owe him 800 gallons of olive oil.' So the manager told him, 'Take the bill and quickly change it to 400 gallons.*'

7“‘And how much do you owe my employer?’ he asked the next man. ‘I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat,’ was the reply. ‘Here,’ the manager said, ‘take the bill and change it to 800 bushels.*’

8“The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light. 9Here’s the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.*

10“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. 11And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? 12And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?

13“No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

14The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, heard all this and scoffed at him. 15Then he said to them, “You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God.

16“Until John the Baptist, the law of Moses and the messages of the prophets were your guides. But now the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is eager to get in.* 17But that doesn’t mean that the law has lost its force. It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the smallest point of God’s law to be overturned.

18“For example, a man who divorces his wife and marries someone
else commits adultery. And anyone who marries a woman divorced
from her husband commits adultery.”

AFTERLIFE LUKE 16:19-31

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

19Jesus said, “There was a certain rich man who was splendidly
clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury.
20At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with
sores. 21As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s
table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores.

22“Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to be
with Abraham.* The rich man also died and was buried, 23and his
soul went to the place of the dead.* There, in torment, he saw
Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

24“The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send
Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my
tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’

25“But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your

lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. 26And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.'

27"Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home. 28For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.'

29"But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.'

30"The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.'

31"But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

TEACHINGS ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND FAITH

1One day Jesus said to his disciples, “There will always be
temptations to sin, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the
tempting! 2It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a
millstone hung around your neck than to cause one of these little
ones to fall into sin. 3So watch yourselves!

“If another believer* sins, rebuke that person; then if there is
repentance, forgive. 4Even if that person wrongs you seven times a
day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must
forgive.”

5The apostles said to the Lord, “Show us how to increase our faith.”

6The Lord answered, “If you had faith even as small as a mustard
seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘May you be uprooted and
thrown into the sea,’ and it would obey you!

7“When a servant comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep,
does his master say, ‘Come in and eat with me’? 8No, he says,
‘Prepare my meal, put on your apron, and serve me while I eat.
Then you can eat later.’ 9And does the master thank the servant for
doing what he was told to do? Of course not. 10In the same way,
when you obey me you should say, ‘We are unworthy servants who
have simply done our duty.’”

SAMARIA

TEN HEALED OF LEPROSY

11As Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, he reached the border

between Galilee and Samaria. 12As he entered a village there, ten lepers stood at a distance, 13crying out, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

14He looked at them and said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.”* And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy.

15One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, “Praise God!” 16He fell to the ground at Jesus’ feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan.

17Jesus asked, “Didn’t I heal ten men? Where are the other nine? 18Has no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” 19And Jesus said to the man, “Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you.*”

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

20One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, “When will the Kingdom of God come?”

Jesus replied, “The Kingdom of God can’t be detected by visible signs.* 21You won’t be able to say, ‘Here it is!’ or ‘It’s over there!’ For the Kingdom of God is already among you.*”

22Then he said to his disciples, “The time is coming when you will long to see the day when the Son of Man returns,* but you won’t see

it. 23People will tell you, ‘Look, there is the Son of Man,’ or ‘Here he is,’ but don’t go out and follow them. 24For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other, so it will be on the day* when the Son of Man comes. 25But first the Son of Man must suffer terribly* and be rejected by this generation.

26“When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah’s day. 27In those days, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28“And the world will be as it was in the days of Lot. People went about their daily business—eating and drinking, buying and selling, farming and building—29until the morning Lot left Sodom. Then fire and burning sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. 30Yes, it will be ‘business as usual’ right up to the day when the Son of Man is revealed. 31On that day a person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack. A person out in the field must not return home. 32Remember what happened to Lot’s wife! 33If you cling to your life, you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it. 34That night two people will be asleep in one bed; one will be taken, the other left. 35Two women will be grinding flour together at the mill; one will be taken, the other left.*”

37“Where will this happen, Lord?”* the disciples asked.

Jesus replied, “Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near.”*

Luke 18

PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

1One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. 2“There was a judge in a certain

city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. 3A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' 4The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, 5but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'"

6Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. 7Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man* returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?"

PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND TAX COLLECTOR

9Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: 10"Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. 11The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer*: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! 12I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.'

13"But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' 14I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

15One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But when the disciples saw this, they scolded the parents for bothering him.

16Then Jesus called for the children and said to the disciples, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. 17I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.”

THE RICH MAN

18Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: “Good Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?”

19“Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked him. “Only God is truly good. 20But to answer your question, you know the commandments: ‘You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.’*”

21The man replied, “I’ve obeyed all these commandments since I was young.”

22When Jesus heard his answer, he said, “There is still one thing you haven’t done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

23But when the man heard this he became very sad, for he was very rich.

24When Jesus saw this,* he said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God! 25In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”

26Those who heard this said, “Then who in the world can be saved?”

27He replied, “What is impossible for people is possible with God.”

28Peter said, “We’ve left our homes to follow you.”

29“Yes,” Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, 30will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world to come.”

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH

31Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus said, “Listen, we’re going up to Jerusalem, where all the predictions of the prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true. 32He will be handed over to the Romans,* and he will be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit upon. 33They will flog him with a whip and kill him, but on the third day he will rise again.”

34But they didn’t understand any of this. The significance of his words was hidden from them, and they failed to grasp what he was talking about.

JESUS HEALS A BLIND BEGGAR

35As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind beggar was sitting beside the road. 36When he heard the noise of a crowd going past, he asked what was happening. 37They told him that Jesus the Nazarene* was going by. 38So he began shouting, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

39“Be quiet!” the people in front yelled at him.

But he only shouted louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

40When Jesus heard him, he stopped and ordered that the man be
brought to him. As the man came near, Jesus asked him, 41“What do
you want me to do for you?”

“Lord,” he said, “I want to see!”

42And Jesus said, “All right, receive your sight! Your faith has
healed you.” 43Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus,
praising God. And all who saw it praised God, too.

JERICHO AND JERUSALEM

Luke 19

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

1Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. 2There
was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in
the region, and he had become very rich. 3He tried to get a look at
Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. 4So he ran ahead
and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was
going to pass that way.

5When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by
name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest
in your home today.”

6Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in

great excitement and joy. 7But the people were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled.

8Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!”

9Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. 10For the Son of Man* came to seek and save those who are lost.”

PARABLE OF THE TEN SERVANTS

11The crowd was listening to everything Jesus said. And because he was nearing Jerusalem, he told them a story to correct the impression that the Kingdom of God would begin right away. 12He said, “A nobleman was called away to a distant empire to be crowned king and then return. 13Before he left, he called together ten of his servants and divided among them ten pounds of silver,* saying, ‘Invest this for me while I am gone.’ 14But his people hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We do not want him to be our king.’

15“After he was crowned king, he returned and called in the servants to whom he had given the money. He wanted to find out what their profits were. 16The first servant reported, ‘Master, I invested your money and made ten times the original amount!’

17“‘Well done!’ the king exclaimed. ‘You are a good servant. You

have been faithful with the little I entrusted to you, so you will be governor of ten cities as your reward.'

18"The next servant reported, 'Master, I invested your money and made five times the original amount.'

19"'Well done!' the king said. 'You will be governor over five cities.'

20"But the third servant brought back only the original amount of money and said, 'Master, I hid your money and kept it safe. 21I was afraid because you are a hard man to deal with, taking what isn't yours and harvesting crops you didn't plant.'

22"'You wicked servant!' the king roared. 'Your own words condemn you. If you knew that I'm a hard man who takes what isn't mine and harvests crops I didn't plant, 23why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.'

24"Then, turning to the others standing nearby, the king ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one who has ten pounds.'

25"'But, master,' they said, 'he already has ten pounds!'

26"'Yes,' the king replied, 'and to those who use well what they are given, even more will be given. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away. 27And as for these enemies of mine who didn't want me to be their king—bring them in and execute them right here in front of me.'"

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

28After telling this story, Jesus went on toward Jerusalem, walking ahead of his disciples. 29As he came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he sent two disciples ahead. 30"Go

into that village over there," he told them. "As you enter it, you will see a young donkey tied there that no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31If anyone asks, 'Why are you untying that colt?' just say, 'The Lord needs it.'"

32So they went and found the colt, just as Jesus had said. 33And sure enough, as they were untying it, the owners asked them, "Why are you untying that colt?"

34And the disciples simply replied, "The Lord needs it." 35So they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments over it for him to ride on.

36As he rode along, the crowds spread out their garments on the road ahead of him. 37When he reached the place where the road started down the Mount of Olives, all of his followers began to shout and sing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.

38"Blessings on the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven, and glory in highest heaven!"*

39But some of the Pharisees among the crowd said, "Teacher, rebuke your followers for saying things like that!"

40He replied, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!"

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

41But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. 42"How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from your eyes. 43Before long your enemies will build

ramparts against your walls and encircle you and close in on you
from every side. 44They will crush you into the ground, and your
children with you. Your enemies will not leave a single stone in
place, because you did not recognize it when God visited you.*"

JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

45Then Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people
selling animals for sacrifices. 46He said to them, "The Scriptures
declare, 'My Temple will be a house of prayer,' but you have turned
it into a den of thieves."*

47After that, he taught daily in the Temple, but the leading priests,
the teachers of religious law, and the other leaders of the people
began planning how to kill him. 48But they could think of nothing,
because all the people hung on every word he said.

Luke 20

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED

1One day as Jesus was teaching the people and preaching the Good
News in the Temple, the leading priests, the teachers of religious
law, and the elders came up to him. 2They demanded, "By what
authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right?"

3"Let me ask you a question first," he replied. 4"Did John's authority
to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human?"

5They talked it over among themselves. "If we say it was from
heaven, he will ask why we didn't believe John. 6But if we say it
was merely human, the people will stone us because they are
convinced John was a prophet." 7So they finally replied that they
didn't know.

8And Jesus responded, “Then I won’t tell you by what authority I do these things.”

PARABLE OF THE EVIL FARMERS

9Now Jesus turned to the people again and told them this story: “A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and moved to another country to live for several years. 10At the time of the grape harvest, he sent one of his servants to collect his share of the crop. But the farmers attacked the servant, beat him up, and sent him back empty-handed. 11So the owner sent another servant, but they also insulted him, beat him up, and sent him away empty-handed. 12A third man was sent, and they wounded him and chased him away.

13“‘What will I do?’ the owner asked himself. ‘I know! I’ll send my cherished son. Surely they will respect him.’

14“But when the tenant farmers saw his son, they said to each other, ‘Here comes the heir to this estate. Let’s kill him and get the estate for ourselves!’ 15So they dragged him out of the vineyard and murdered him.

“What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do to them?” Jesus asked. 16“I’ll tell you—he will come and kill those farmers and lease the vineyard to others.”

“How terrible that such a thing should ever happen,” his listeners protested.

17Jesus looked at them and said, “Then what does this Scripture mean?

‘The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.’*

18Everyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces,

and it will crush anyone it falls on."

19The teachers of religious law and the leading priests wanted to arrest Jesus immediately because they realized he was telling the story against them—they were the wicked farmers. But they were afraid of the people's reaction.

TAXES FOR CAESAR

20Watching for their opportunity, the leaders sent spies pretending to be honest men. They tried to get Jesus to say something that could be reported to the Roman governor so he would arrest Jesus. 21"Teacher," they said, "we know that you speak and teach what is right and are not influenced by what others think. You teach the way of God truthfully. 22Now tell us—is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

23He saw through their trickery and said, 24"Show me a Roman coin.* Whose picture and title are stamped on it?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

25"Well then," he said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."

26So they failed to trap him by what he said in front of the people. Instead, they were amazed by his answer, and they became silent.

DISCUSSION ABOUT RESURRECTION

27Then Jesus was approached by some Sadducees—religious leaders who say there is no resurrection from the dead. 28They posed this question: "Teacher, Moses gave us a law that if a man dies, leaving a wife but no children, his brother should marry the widow and have a child who will carry on the brother's name.*29Well, suppose there were seven brothers. The oldest one married and then died

without children. 30So the second brother married the widow, but he also died. 31Then the third brother married her. This continued with all seven of them, who died without children. 32Finally, the woman also died. 33So tell us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were married to her!”

34Jesus replied, “Marriage is for people here on earth. 35But in the age to come, those worthy of being raised from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage. 36And they will never die again. In this respect they will be like angels. They are children of God and children of the resurrection.

37“But now, as to whether the dead will be raised—even Moses proved this when he wrote about the burning bush. Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, he referred to the Lord* as ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’* 38So he is the God of the living, not the dead, for they are all alive to him.”

39“Well said, Teacher!” remarked some of the teachers of religious law who were standing there. 40And then no one dared to ask him any more questions.

WHOSE SON IS THE MESSIAH?

41Then Jesus presented them with a question. “Why is it,” he asked, “that the Messiah is said to be the son of David? 42For David himself wrote in the book of Psalms: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, Sit in the place of honor at my right hand

43until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.’*

44Since David called the Messiah ‘Lord,’ how can the Messiah be his son?”

45Then, with the crowds listening, he turned to his disciples and
said, 46“Beware of these teachers of religious law! For they like to
parade around in flowing robes and love to receive respectful
greetings as they walk in the marketplaces. And how they love the
seats of honor in the synagogues and the head table at banquets.
47Yet they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then
pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. Because of
this, they will be severely punished.”

Luke 21

THE WIDOW’S OFFERING

1While Jesus was in the Temple, he watched the rich people
dropping their gifts in the collection box. 2Then a poor widow came
by and dropped in two small coins.*

3“I tell you the truth,” Jesus said, “this poor widow has given more
than all the rest of them. 4For they have given a tiny part of their
surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she has.”

JESUS FORETELLS THE FUTURE

5Some of his disciples began talking about the majestic stonework
of the Temple and the memorial decorations on the walls. But Jesus
said, 6“The time is coming when all these things will be completely
demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!”

7“Teacher,” they asked, “when will all this happen? What sign will
show us that these things are about to take place?”

8He replied, “Don’t let anyone mislead you, for many will come in
my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’* and saying, ‘The time has
come!’ But don’t believe them. 9And when you hear of wars and
insurrections, don’t panic. Yes, these things must take place first,

but the end won't follow immediately." 10Then he added, "Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11There will be great earthquakes, and there will be famines and plagues in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven.

12"But before all this occurs, there will be a time of great persecution. You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons, and you will stand trial before kings and governors because you are my followers. 13But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me.* 14So don't worry in advance about how to answer the charges against you, 15for I will give you the right words and such wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to reply or refute you! 16Even those closest to you—your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—will betray you. They will even kill some of you. 17And everyone will hate you because you are my followers.* 18But not a hair of your head will perish! 19By standing firm, you will win your souls.

20"And when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived. 21Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. Those in Jerusalem must get out, and those out in the country should not return to the city. 22For those will be days of God's vengeance, and the prophetic words of the Scriptures will be fulfilled. 23How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. For there will be disaster in the land and great anger against this people. 24They will be killed by the sword or sent away as captives to all the nations of the world. And Jerusalem will be trampled down by the Gentiles until the period of the Gentiles comes to an end.

25"And there will be strange signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. 26People will be terrified at what they see coming upon the earth, for the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 27Then everyone will see the Son of Man* coming on a

cloud with power and great glory.* 28So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near!”

29Then he gave them this illustration: “Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. 30When the leaves come out, you know without being told that summer is near. 31In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that the Kingdom of God is near. 32I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things have taken place. 33Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

34“Watch out! Don’t let your hearts be dulled by carousing and drunkenness, and by the worries of this life. Don’t let that day catch you unaware, 35like a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. 36Keep alert at all times. And pray that you might be strong enough to escape these coming horrors and stand before the Son of Man.”

37Every day Jesus went to the Temple to teach, and each evening he returned to spend the night on the Mount of Olives. 38The crowds gathered at the Temple early each morning to hear him.

Luke 22

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS

1The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is also called Passover, was approaching. 2The leading priests and teachers of religious law were plotting how to kill Jesus, but they were afraid of the people’s reaction.

3Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve disciples, 4and he went to the leading priests and captains of the Temple guard to discuss the best way to betray Jesus to them. 5They were delighted, and they promised to give him money. 6So he

agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus so they could arrest him when the crowds weren't around.

THE LAST SUPPER

7Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. 8Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."

9"Where do you want us to prepare it?" they asked him.

10He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, 11say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' 12He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." 13They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.

14When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table.*15Jesus said, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. 16For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."

17Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. 18For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come."

19He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me."

20After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is
the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement
confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for
you.*

21“But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man
who will betray me. 22For it has been determined that the Son of
Man* must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him.”
23The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever
do such a thing.

24Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be
the greatest among them. 25Jesus told them, “In this world the kings
and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called ‘friends
of the people.’ 26But among you it will be different. Those who are
the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader
should be like a servant. 27Who is more important, the one who sits
at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of
course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.

28“You have stayed with me in my time of trial. 29And just as my
Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right 30to eat
and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones,
judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

JESUS PREDICTS PETER’S DENIAL

31“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat.
32But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith
should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again,
strengthen your brothers.”

33Peter said, “Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you, and even to
die with you.”

34But Jesus said, “Peter, let me tell you something. Before the
rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that
you even know me.”

35Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you out to preach the Good
News and you did not have money, a traveler’s bag, or an extra pair
of sandals, did you need anything?”

“No,” they replied.

36“But now,” he said, “take your money and a traveler’s bag. And if
you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one! 37For the time
has come for this prophecy about me to be fulfilled: ‘He was
counted among the rebels.’* Yes, everything written about me by
the prophets will come true.”

38“Look, Lord,” they replied, “we have two swords among us.”

“That’s enough,” he said.

JESUS PRAYS ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

39Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room
and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. 40There he told them,
“Pray that you will not give in to temptation.”

41He walked away, about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and
prayed, 42“Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of
suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”
43Then an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened him. 44He
prayed more fervently, and he was in such agony of spirit that his
sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.*

45At last he stood up again and returned to the disciples, only to
find them asleep, exhausted from grief. 46“Why are you sleeping?”
he asked them. “Get up and pray, so that you will not give in to

temptation."

JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED

47But even as Jesus said this, a crowd approached, led by Judas, one
of the twelve disciples. Judas walked over to Jesus to greet him
with a kiss. 48But Jesus said, "Judas, would you betray the Son of
Man with a kiss?"

49When the other disciples saw what was about to happen, they
exclaimed, "Lord, should we fight? We brought the swords!" 50And
one of them struck at the high priest's slave, slashing off his right
ear.

51But Jesus said, "No more of this." And he touched the man's ear
and healed him.

52Then Jesus spoke to the leading priests, the captains of the
Temple guard, and the elders who had come for him. "Am I some
dangerous revolutionary," he asked, "that you come with swords
and clubs to arrest me? 53Why didn't you arrest me in the Temple? I
was there every day. But this is your moment, the time when the
power of darkness reigns."

EASTER LUKE 22:54-62

PETER DENIES JESUS

54So they arrested him and led him to the high priest's home. And
Peter followed at a distance. 55The guards lit a fire in the middle of
the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter joined them there. 56A
servant girl noticed him in the firelight and began staring at him.
Finally she said, "This man was one of Jesus' followers!"

57But Peter denied it. "Woman," he said, "I don't even know him!"

58After a while someone else looked at him and said, "You must be
one of them!"

"No, man, I'm not!" Peter retorted.

59About an hour later someone else insisted, "This must be one of
them, because he is a Galilean, too."

60But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about."
And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.

61At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly,
the Lord's words flashed through Peter's mind: "Before the rooster
crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even
know me." 62And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly.

63The guards in charge of Jesus began mocking and beating him.
64They blindfolded him and said, "Prophesy to us! Who hit you that
time?" 65And they hurled all sorts of terrible insults at him.

JESUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL

66At daybreak all the elders of the people assembled, including the
leading priests and the teachers of religious law. Jesus was led
before this high council,*67and they said, “Tell us, are you the
Messiah?”

But he replied, “If I tell you, you won’t believe me. 68And if I ask
you a question, you won’t answer. 69But from now on the Son of
Man will be seated in the place of power at God’s right hand.*”

70They all shouted, “So, are you claiming to be the Son of God?”

And he replied, “You say that I am.”

71“Why do we need other witnesses?” they said. “We ourselves
heard him say it.”

Luke 23

JESUS’ TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

1Then the entire council took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor.
2They began to state their case: “This man has been leading our
people astray by telling them not to pay their taxes to the Roman
government and by claiming he is the Messiah, a king.”

3So Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus replied, “You have said it.”

4Pilate turned to the leading priests and to the crowd and said, “I
find nothing wrong with this man!”

5Then they became insistent. “But he is causing riots by his teaching
wherever he goes—all over Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem!”

6“Oh, is he a Galilean?” Pilate asked. 7When they said that he was,
Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas, because Galilee was under
Herod’s jurisdiction, and Herod happened to be in Jerusalem at the
time.

8Herod was delighted at the opportunity to see Jesus, because he
had heard about him and had been hoping for a long time to see
him perform a miracle. 9He asked Jesus question after question, but
Jesus refused to answer. 10Meanwhile, the leading priests and the
teachers of religious law stood there shouting their accusations.
11Then Herod and his soldiers began mocking and ridiculing Jesus.
Finally, they put a royal robe on him and sent him back to Pilate.
12(Herod and Pilate, who had been enemies before, became friends
that day.)

13Then Pilate called together the leading priests and other religious
leaders, along with the people, 14and he announced his verdict.
“You brought this man to me, accusing him of leading a revolt. I
have examined him thoroughly on this point in your presence and
find him innocent. 15Herod came to the same conclusion and sent

him back to us. Nothing this man has done calls for the death penalty. 16So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him."*

18Then a mighty roar rose from the crowd, and with one voice they shouted, "Kill him, and release Barabbas to us!" 19(Barabbas was in prison for taking part in an insurrection in Jerusalem against the government, and for murder.) 20Pilate argued with them, because he wanted to release Jesus. 21But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

22For the third time he demanded, "Why? What crime has he committed? I have found no reason to sentence him to death. So I will have him flogged, and then I will release him."

23But the mob shouted louder and louder, demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their voices prevailed. 24So Pilate sentenced Jesus to die as they demanded. 25As they had requested, he released Barabbas, the man in prison for insurrection and murder. But he turned Jesus over to them to do as they wished.

THE CRUCIFIXION

26As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene,* happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27A large crowd trailed behind, including many grief-stricken women. 28But Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29For the days are coming when they will say, 'Fortunate indeed are the women who are childless, the wombs that have not borne a child and the breasts that have never nursed.' 30People will beg the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and plead with the hills, 'Bury us.'* 31For if these things are done when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?*"

AFTERLIFE LUKE 23:32-43

32Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him.
33When they came to a place called The Skull,* they nailed him to
the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right
and one on his left.

34Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they
are doing.”* And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing
dice.*

35The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,”
they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the
Chosen One.” 36The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a
drink of sour wine. 37They called out to him, “If you are the King of
the Jews, save yourself!” 38A sign was fastened above him with
these words: “This is the King of the Jews.”

39One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the
Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while
you’re at it!”

40But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when
you have been sentenced to die? 41We deserve to die for our crimes,
but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” 42Then he said, “Jesus,
remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

43And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

THE DEATH OF JESUS

44By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. 45The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. 46Then Jesus shouted, “Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!”* And with those words he breathed his last.

47When the Roman officer* overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, “Surely this man was innocent.*” 48And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow.*49But Jesus’ friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

50Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph. He was a member of the Jewish high council, 51but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He was from the town of Arimathea in Judea, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come. 52He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. 53Then he took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a long sheet of linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock. 54This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation,* as the Sabbath was about to begin.

55As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. 56Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.

Luke 24

THE RESURRECTION

1But very early on Sunday morning* the women went to the tomb,
taking the spices they had prepared. 2They found that the stone had
been rolled away from the entrance. 3So they went in, but they
didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4As they stood there puzzled,
two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

5The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the
ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead
for someone who is alive? 6He isn't here! He is risen from the dead!
Remember what he told you back in Galilee, 7that the Son of Man*
must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and
that he would rise again on the third day."

8Then they remembered that he had said this. 9So they rushed back
from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what
had happened. 10It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother
of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had
happened. 11But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they

didn't believe it. 12However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb
to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings;
then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

THE WALK TO EMMAUS

13That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village
of Emmaus, seven miles* from Jerusalem. 14As they walked along
they were talking about everything that had happened. 15As they
talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and

began walking with them. 16But God kept them from recognizing
him.

17He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk
along?”

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. 18Then one of
them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem
who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the
last few days.”

19“What things?” Jesus asked.

“The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they
said. “He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a
mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. 20But our
leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be
condemned to death, and they crucified him. 21We had hoped he
was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened
three days ago.

22“Then some women from our group of his followers were at his
tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing
report. 23They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels
who told them Jesus is alive! 24Some of our men ran out to see, and
sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.”

25Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard
to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. 26Wasn’t it
clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these
things before entering his glory?” 27Then Jesus took them through
the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the
Scriptures the things concerning himself.

28By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their
journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, 29but they begged him,
“Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.” So he went home

with them. 30As they sat down to eat,* he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. 31Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

32They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” 33And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, 34who said, “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.*”

JESUS APPEARS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES

35Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. 36And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. 37But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!

38“Why are you frightened?” he asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt? 39Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.” 40As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet.

41Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42They

gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43and he ate it as they watched.

44Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that
everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets
and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45Then he opened their minds
to understand the Scriptures. 46And he said, “Yes, it was written
long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the
dead on the third day. 47It was also written that this message would
be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations,*
beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who
repent.’ 48You are witnesses of all these things.

49“And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised.
But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you
with power from heaven.”

THE ASCENSION

50Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven,
he blessed them. 51While he was blessing them, he left them and
was taken up to heaven. 52So they worshiped him and then returned
to Jerusalem filled with great joy. 53And they spent all of their time
in the Temple, praising God.

WELCOME TO

JOHN

John's Gospel is unique among the four Gospels. John doesn't start with Jesus' earthly life; instead, he starts "in the beginning" when Jesus, the Word, is living in perfect communion with God. John is less concerned about the specifics of Jesus' actions during his ministry and more concerned about what those actions say about who he is: the eternal Son of God. By focusing on seven of Jesus' miracles that show his divinity, John shows clearly that Jesus is not simply a great man. All that Jesus does and says springs from his life with God. Throughout this Gospel, Jesus talks with crowds and teaches his disciples, and many of their discussions center on his identity as the Son of God. John shows this clearly in his Gospel so that those who read it might believe in Christ and have eternal life (20:31).

3 STOPS

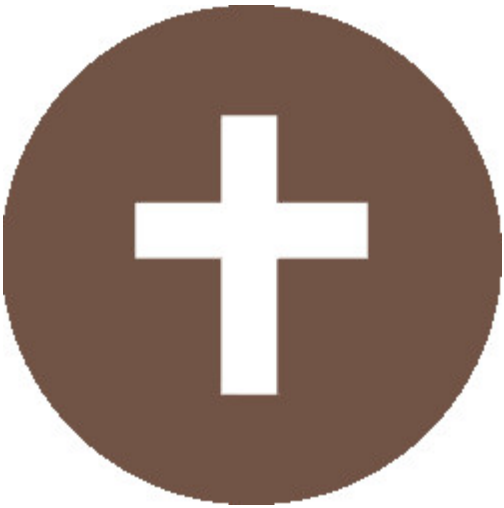
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll stop three times in John to read about Jesus' ministry: how he feeds a hungry crowd, heals a blind man, and reveals the way to the Father. Your next stop is at John 6:1.

10 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You'll stop ten times to study some of the most famous stories about Jesus. He turns water into wine, mingles with outcasts, feeds a crowd, gives life back to a dead friend, and comforts his disciples. Your next stop is at John 1:1.

12 STOPS

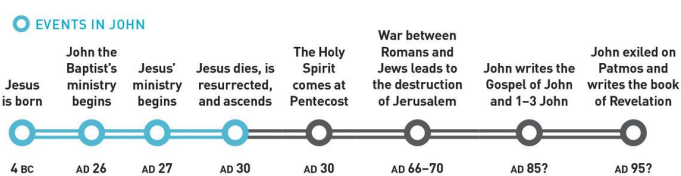
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your stops in this book will give you more insights into Jesus' teachings, including some of his "I am" statements. You'll also read the famous section about Jesus being the Word, the one who reveals the Father. Your next stop is at John 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN JOHN

Jesus is at the center of John's good news. In contrast to the other Gospel writers, John gives a more abstract view of Jesus. He is the Word with God, the One who shares the Father's glory and who is himself God. Jesus reveals God to us and gives eternal life. John provides a detailed account of the Last Supper and Jesus' death and resurrection, recording what Jesus did and said as well as people's reactions to him.

John's Gospel reveals Jesus as the Word, the Lamb of God, and the Chosen One. Jesus describes himself as the Bread of Life; the light of the world; the I AM; the gate for the sheep; the Good Shepherd; the resurrection and the life; the way, the truth, and the life; and the true grapevine.



John 1

PROLOGUE: CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD

1In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2He existed in the beginning with God.

3God created everything through him, and nothing was created
except through him.

4The Word gave life to everything that was created,*
and his life brought light to everyone.

5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never
extinguish it.*

6God sent a man, John the Baptist,*7to tell about the light so that
everyone might believe because of his testimony. 8John himself was
not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. 9The
one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming
into the world.

10He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't
recognize him. 11He came to his own people, and even they rejected
him. 12But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the
right to become children of God. 13They are reborn—not with a
physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth
that comes from God.

14So the Word became human* and made his home among us. He
was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.* And we have seen his
glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

15John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is
the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after
me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

16From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing
after another.*17For the law was given through Moses, but God's
unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. 18No one
has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God,* is near

to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

19This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests
and Temple assistants* from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?"
20He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

21"Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?"

"No," he replied.

"Are you the Prophet we are expecting?"*

"No."

22"Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us.
What do you have to say about yourself?"

23John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "I am a voice
shouting in the wilderness, 'Clear the way for the LORD's coming!'"*

24Then the Pharisees who had been sent 25asked him, "If you aren't
the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to
baptize?"

26John told them, "I baptize with* water, but right here in the
crowd is someone you do not recognize. 27Though his ministry
follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the
straps of his sandal."

28This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan

River, where John was baptizing.

JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD

29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30He is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.’ 31I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel.”

32Then John testified, “I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. 33I didn’t know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.*”

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

35The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, “Look! There is the Lamb of God!” 37When John’s two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.

38Jesus looked around and saw them following. “What do you want?” he asked them.

They replied, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

39“Come and see,” he said. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

40Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means “Christ”*).

42Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas” (which means “Peter”*).

43The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Come, follow me.” 44Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter’s hometown.

45Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses* and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.”

46“Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

“Come and see for yourself,” Philip replied.

47As they approached, Jesus said, “Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity.”

48“How do you know about me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus replied, “I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you.”

49Then Nathanael exclaimed, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!”

50Jesus asked him, “Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.”
51Then he said, “I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth.*”

WEDDINGS JOHN 2:1-12

CANA

John 2

THE WEDDING AT CANA

1The next day* there was a wedding celebration in the village of

Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. 3The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

4"Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

5But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

6Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.*7Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, 8he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

9When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. 10"A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

11This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

12After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

TRAVELING TO JERUSALEM

Jesus probably traveled from Galilee to Jerusalem many times throughout his life. There are two likely routes that he may have taken, one through the Judean hills and one along the Jordan River.

John 2:13

TRAVELING TO JERUSALEM

JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

13It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus
went to Jerusalem. 14In the Temple area he saw merchants selling
cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables
exchanging foreign money. 15Jesus made a whip from some ropes
and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and
cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and
turned over their tables. 16Then, going over to the people who sold
doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my
Father's house into a marketplace!"

17Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures:
"Passion for God's house will consume me."*

18But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God
gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove
it."

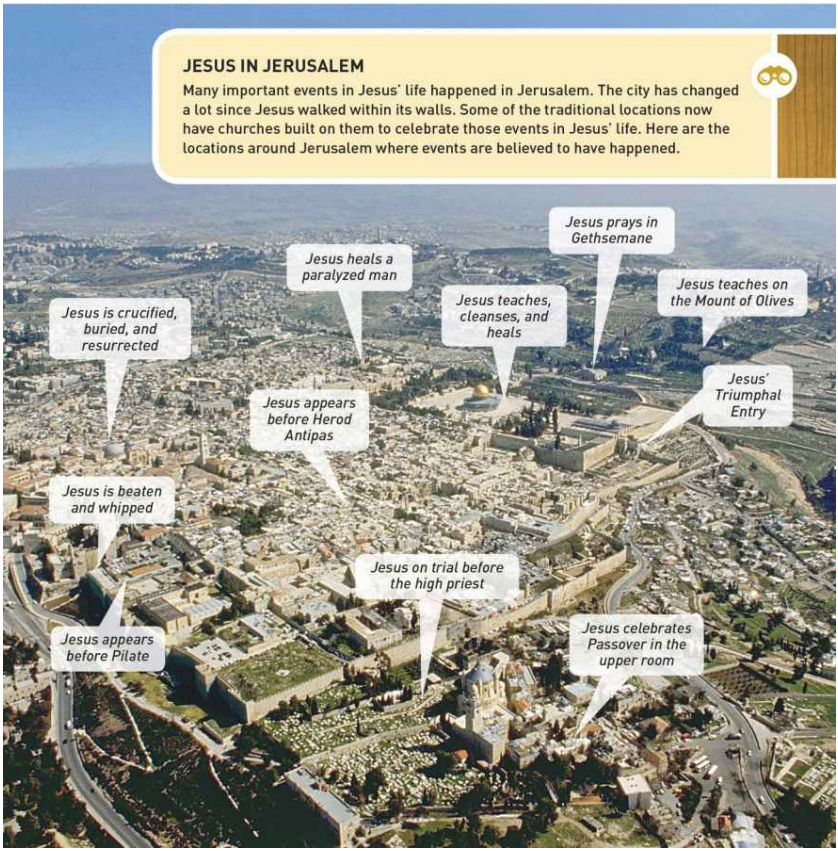
19"All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I
will raise it up."

20"What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this
Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?" 21But when Jesus
said "this temple," he meant his own body. 22After he was raised
from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they
believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

JERUSALEM UNDER HEROD'S RULE

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

23Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the
Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. 24But Jesus didn't
trust them, because he knew all about people. 25No one needed to
tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each
person's heart.



JESUS IN JERUSALEM

John 3

1There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who
was a Pharisee. 2After dark one evening, he came to speak with
Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach
us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

3Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again,* you
cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

4“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old
man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

5Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God
without being born of water and the Spirit.* 6Humans can reproduce
only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.* 7So
don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You* must be born again.’ 8The wind
blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t
tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain
how people are born of the Spirit.”

9“How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

10Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you
don’t understand these things? 11I assure you, we tell you what we
know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. 12But
if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how
can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13No
one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man* has
come down from heaven. 14And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake
on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,
15so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.*

GOD LOVES YOU JOHN 3:16-21

16“For this is how God loved the world: He gave* his one and only
Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have
eternal life. 17God sent his Son into the world not to judge the
world, but to save the world through him.

18“There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But
anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for
not believing in God’s one and only Son. 19And the judgment is
based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved
the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20All
who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins
will be exposed. 21But those who do what is right come to the light
so others can see that they are doing what God wants.*”

JOHN THE BAPTIST EXALTS JESUS

22Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the
Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there,
baptizing people.

23At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim,
because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to
him for baptism. 24(This was before John was thrown into prison.)
25A debate broke out between John’s disciples and a certain Jew*
over ceremonial cleansing. 26So John’s disciples came to him and
said, “Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan
River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing
people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us.”

27John replied, “No one can receive anything unless God gives it
from heaven. 28You yourselves know how plainly I told you, ‘I am
not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.’ 29It is
the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the best man is simply
glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled
with joy at his success. 30He must become greater and greater, and I
must become less and less.

31“He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are
of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from
heaven and is greater than anyone else.*32He testifies about what he
has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them!
33Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true.
34For he is sent by God. He speaks God’s words, for God gives him
the Spirit without limit. 35The Father loves his Son and has put
everything into his hands. 36And anyone who believes in God’s Son
has eternal life. Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son will never
experience eternal life but remains under God’s angry judgment.”

John 4

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

1Jesus* knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and
making more disciples than John 2(though Jesus himself didn't
baptize them—his disciples did). 3So he left Judea and returned to
Galilee.

JACOB'S WELL

4He had to go through Samaria on the way. 5Eventually he came to
the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to
his son Joseph. 6Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the
long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. 7Soon a
Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her,
"Please give me a drink." 8He was alone at the time because his
disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

THE JEWS AND THE SAMARITANS

9The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans.* She said to Jesus, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?”

10Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.”

11“But sir, you don’t have a rope or a bucket,” she said, “and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? 12And besides, do you think you’re greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?”

13Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. 14But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

15“Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.”

16“Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her.

17“I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied.

Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—18for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

19“Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. 20So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim,* where our

ancestors worshiped?”

21Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when
it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this
mountain or in Jerusalem. 22You Samaritans know very little about
the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for
salvation comes through the Jews. 23But the time is coming—indeed
it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in
spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship
him that way. 24For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must
worship in spirit and in truth.”

25The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is
called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

26Then Jesus told her, “I AM the Messiah!”*

27Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him
talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What
do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?” 28The
woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the
village, telling everyone, 29“Come and see a man who told me
everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” 30So the
people came streaming from the village to see him.

31Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat
something.”

32But Jesus replied, “I have a kind of food you know nothing
about.”

33“Did someone bring him food while we were gone?” the disciples
asked each other.

34Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the
will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. 35You know
the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say,
wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe* for harvest.
36The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is
people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and
the harvester alike! 37You know the saying, ‘One plants and another
harvests.’ And it’s true. 38I sent you to harvest where you didn’t
plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to
gather the harvest.”

MANY SAMARITANS BELIEVE

39Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the
woman had said, “He told me everything I ever did!” 40When they
came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he
stayed for two days, 41long enough for many more to hear his
message and believe. 42Then they said to the woman, “Now we
believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have
heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of
the world.”

JESUS HEALS AN OFFICIAL’S SON

43At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee. 44He himself
had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown. 45Yet
the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the
Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.

46As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had

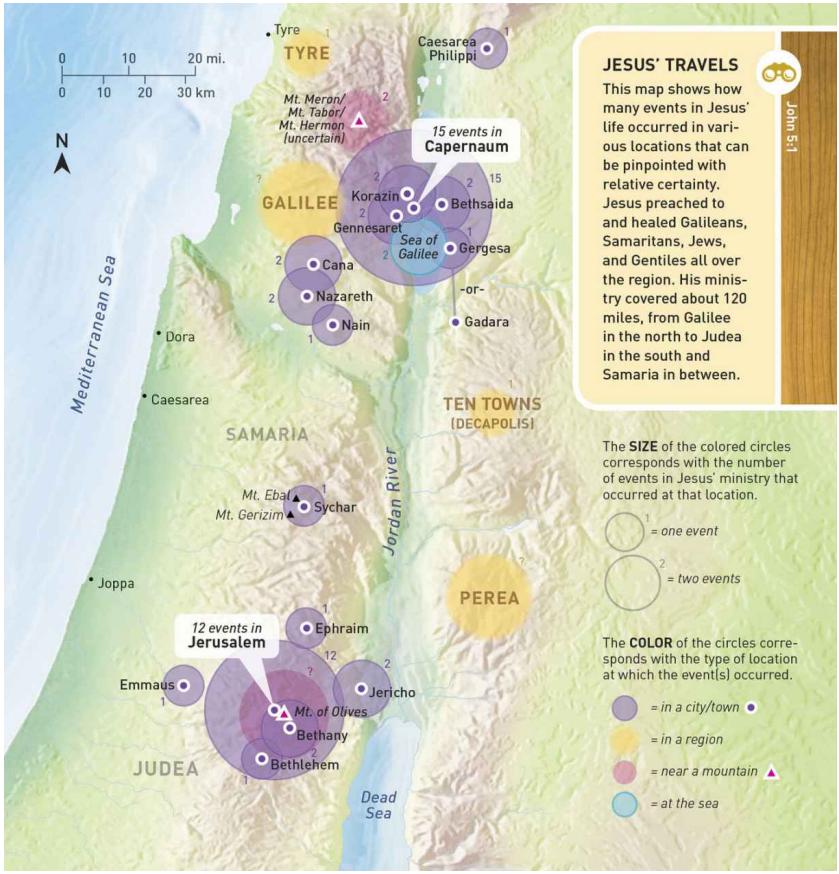
turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick. 47When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die.

48Jesus asked, “Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?”

49The official pleaded, “Lord, please come now before my little boy dies.”

50Then Jesus told him, “Go back home. Your son will live!” And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.

51While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well. 52He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, “Yesterday afternoon at one o’clock his fever suddenly disappeared!” 53Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, “Your son will live.” And he and his entire household believed in Jesus. 54This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.



JESUS' TRAVELS

John 5

JESUS HEALS A LAME MAN

1 Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy
days. 2 Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of
Bethesda,* with five covered porches. 3 Crowds of sick people—
blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches.* 5 One of the men
lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw
him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him,
"Would you like to get well?"

7“I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into
the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets
there ahead of me.”

8Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

9Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and
began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, 10so the
Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You
can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that
sleeping mat!”

11But he replied, “The man who healed me told me, ‘Pick up your
mat and walk.’”

12“Who said such a thing as that?” they demanded.

13The man didn’t know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd.
14But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now
you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen
to you.” 15Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it
was Jesus who had healed him.

JESUS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD

16So the Jewish leaders began harassing* Jesus for breaking the
Sabbath rules. 17But Jesus replied, “My Father is always working,
and so am I.” 18So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a
way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God
his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

19So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing
by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever
the Father does, the Son also does. 20For the Father loves the Son

and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished. 21For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants. 22In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, 23so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

24"I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

25"And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it's here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live. 26The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son. 27And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man.* 28Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, 29and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment. 30I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.

WITNESSES TO JESUS

31"If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid. 32But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true. 33In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true. 34Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved. 35John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message. 36But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings

and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish,
and they prove that he sent me. 37And the Father who sent me has
testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen
him face to face, 38and you do not have his message in your hearts,
because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you.

39"You search the Scriptures because you think they give you
eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! 40Yet you refuse to come
to me to receive this life.

41"Your approval means nothing to me, 42because I know you don't
have God's love within you. 43For I have come to you in my Father's
name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own
name, you gladly welcome them. 44No wonder you can't believe!
For you gladly honor each other, but you don't care about the
honor that comes from the one who alone is God.*

45"Yet it isn't I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will
accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes. 46If you really
believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.
47But since you don't believe what he wrote, how will you believe
what I say?"

John 6

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

1After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee,
also known as the Sea of Tiberias. 2A huge crowd kept following
him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he
healed the sick. 3Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his
disciples around him. 4(It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover
celebration.) 5Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to
look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, “Where can we buy bread
to feed all these people?” 6He was testing Philip, for he already
knew what he was going to do.

7Philip replied, “Even if we worked for months, we wouldn’t have
enough money* to feed them!”

8Then Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up. 9“There’s a young
boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that
with this huge crowd?”

10“Tell everyone to sit down,” Jesus said. So they all sat down on
the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) 11Then
Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to
the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all
ate as much as they wanted. 12After everyone was full, Jesus told his
disciples, “Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted.” 13So
they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left
by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

14When the people saw him* do this miraculous sign, they
exclaimed, “Surely, he is the Prophet we have been
expecting!”*15When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to
be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

16That evening Jesus’ disciples went down to the shore to wait for
him. 17But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn’t come back, they got
into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. 18Soon
a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. 19They
had rowed three or four miles* when suddenly they saw Jesus
walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, 20but he
called out to them, “Don’t be afraid. I am here!*” 21Then they were
eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their
destination!

JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE

22The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that
the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had

not gone with them. 23Several boats from Tiberias landed near the
place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had
eaten. 24So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples
were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum
to look for him. 25They found him on the other side of the lake and
asked, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

26Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me
because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs.
27But don’t be so concerned about perishable things like food.
Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man* can
give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval.”

28They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should
we do?”

29Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you:
Believe in the one he has sent.”

30They answered, “Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to
believe in you. What can you do? 31After all, our ancestors ate
manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures
say, ‘Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.’*”

32Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from
heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from
heaven. 33The true bread of God is the one who comes down from
heaven and gives life to the world.”

34“Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.”

35Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will
never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be
thirsty. 36But you haven’t believed in me even though you have seen
me. 37However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and

I will never reject them. 38For I have come down from heaven to do
the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. 39And this is
the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has
given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. 40For it is
my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should
have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day."

41Then the people* began to murmur in disagreement because he
had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42They
said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and
mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

43But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said. 44For no
one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to
me, and at the last day I will raise them up. 45As it is written in the
Scriptures,* 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens
to the Father and learns from him comes to me. 46(Not that anyone
has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen
him.)

47"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. 48Yes, I
am the bread of life! 49Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness,
but they all died. 50Anyone who eats the bread from heaven,
however, will never die. 51I am the living bread that came down
from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this
bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."

52Then the people began arguing with each other about what he
meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.

53So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh
of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life
within you. 54But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. 55For my
flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56Anyone who eats
my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57I live

because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. 58I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever."

59He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

MANY DISCIPLES DESERT JESUS

60Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"

61Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? 62Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? 63The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64But some of you do not believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) 65Then he said, "That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me."

66At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. 67Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?"

68Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the

words that give eternal life. 69We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.*”

70Then Jesus said, “I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.” 71He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

John 7

JESUS AND HIS BROTHERS

1After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. 2But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters, 3and Jesus’ brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! 4You can’t become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!” 5For even his brothers didn’t believe in him.

6Jesus replied, “Now is not the right time for me to go, but you can go anytime. 7The world can’t hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of doing evil. 8You go on. I’m not going* to this festival, because my time has not yet come.” 9After saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee.

JESUS TEACHES OPENLY AT THE TEMPLE

10But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view. 11The Jewish leaders tried to find him at the festival and kept asking if anyone had seen him. 12There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, “He’s a good man,” but others said, “He’s nothing but a fraud who deceives the people.” 13But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.

14Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple
and began to teach. 15The people* were surprised when they heard
him. “How does he know so much when he hasn’t been trained?”
they asked.

16So Jesus told them, “My message is not my own; it comes from
God who sent me. 17Anyone who wants to do the will of God will
know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own.
18Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves,
but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth,
not lies. 19Moses gave you the law, but none of you obeys it! In fact,
you are trying to kill me.”

20The crowd replied, “You’re demon possessed! Who’s trying to kill
you?”

21Jesus replied, “I did one miracle on the Sabbath, and you were
amazed. 22But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses’
law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision began
with the patriarchs, long before the law of Moses.) 23For if the
correct time for circumcising your son falls on the Sabbath, you go
ahead and do it so as not to break the law of Moses. So why should
you be angry with me for healing a man on the Sabbath? 24Look
beneath the surface so you can judge correctly.”

IS JESUS THE MESSIAH?

25Some of the people who lived in Jerusalem started to ask each
other, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? 26But here he is,
speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Could our leaders
possibly believe that he is the Messiah? 27But how could he be? For
we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he
will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from.”

28While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, “Yes, you
know me, and you know where I come from. But I’m not here on

my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don't know him.
29But I know him because I come from him, and he sent me to you."
30Then the leaders tried to arrest him; but no one laid a hand on
him, because his time* had not yet come.

31Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. "After
all," they said, "would you expect the Messiah to do more
miraculous signs than this man has done?"

32When the Pharisees heard that the crowds were whispering such
things, they and the leading priests sent Temple guards to arrest
Jesus. 33But Jesus told them, "I will be with you only a little longer.
Then I will return to the one who sent me. 34You will search for me
but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going."

35The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. "Where is he
planning to go?" they asked. "Is he thinking of leaving the country
and going to the Jews in other lands?* Maybe he will even teach the
Greeks! 36What does he mean when he says, 'You will search for me
but not find me,' and 'You cannot go where I am going'?"

JESUS PROMISES LIVING WATER

37On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted
to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! 38Anyone
who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare,
'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'"* 39(When he said
"living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to
everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given,*
because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

DIVISION AND UNBELIEF

40When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared,

“Surely this man is the Prophet we’ve been expecting.”*41Others
said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others said, “But he can’t be! Will the
Messiah come from Galilee? 42For the Scriptures clearly state that
the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem,
the village where King David was born.”*43So the crowd was
divided about him. 44Some even wanted him arrested, but no one
laid a hand on him.

45When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus,
the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, “Why didn’t you bring
him in?”

46“We have never heard anyone speak like this!” the guards
responded.

47“Have you been led astray, too?” the Pharisees mocked. 48“Is there
a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? 49This
foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God’s
curse is on them!”

50Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier,
spoke up. 51“Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a
hearing?” he asked.

52They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures
and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes* from Galilee!”

[*The most ancient Greek manuscripts do not include John 7:53–8:11.*]

53Then the meeting broke up, and everybody went home.

John 8

A WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

1Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, 2but early the next morning
he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he
sat down and taught them. 3As he was speaking, the teachers of
religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been
caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.

4"Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of
adultery. 5The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"

6They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use
against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his
finger. 7They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and
said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first
stone!" 8Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

9When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one,
beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of
the crowd with the woman. 10Then Jesus stood up again and said to
the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them
condemn you?"

11"No, Lord," she said.

And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

12Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of
the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness,
because you will have the light that leads to life."

13The Pharisees replied, “You are making those claims about
yourself! Such testimony is not valid.”

14Jesus told them, “These claims are valid even though I make them
about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going,
but you don’t know this about me. 15You judge me by human
standards, but I do not judge anyone. 16And if I did, my judgment
would be correct in every respect because I am not alone. The
Father* who sent me is with me. 17Your own law says that if two
people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact.* 18I
am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other.”

19“Where is your father?” they asked.

Jesus answered, “Since you don’t know who I am, you don’t know
who my Father is. If you knew me, you would also know my
Father.” 20Jesus made these statements while he was teaching in the
section of the Temple known as the Treasury. But he was not
arrested, because his time* had not yet come.

THE UNBELIEVING PEOPLE WARNED

21Later Jesus said to them again, “I am going away. You will search
for me but will die in your sin. You cannot come where I am going.”

22The people* asked, “Is he planning to commit suicide? What does
he mean, ‘You cannot come where I am going’?”

23Jesus continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You
belong to this world; I do not. 24That is why I said that you will die
in your sins; for unless you believe that I AM who I claim to be,*
you will die in your sins.”

25“Who are you?” they demanded.

Jesus replied, “The one I have always claimed to be.* 26I have much
to say about you and much to condemn, but I won’t. For I say only
what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely
truthful.” 27But they still didn’t understand that he was talking
about his Father.

28So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the
cross, then you will understand that I AM he.* I do nothing on my
own but say only what the Father taught me. 29And the one who
sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what
pleases him.” 30Then many who heard him say these things believed
in him.

JESUS AND ABRAHAM

31Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my
disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. 32And you will
know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

33“But we are descendants of Abraham,” they said. “We have never
been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, ‘You will be set free’?”

34Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of
sin. 35A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is
part of the family forever. 36So if the Son sets you free, you are truly
free. 37Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet
some of you are trying to kill me because there’s no room in your
hearts for my message. 38I am telling you what I saw when I was
with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father.”

39“Our father is Abraham!” they declared.

“No,” Jesus replied, “for if you were really the children of Abraham,
you would follow his example.* 40Instead, you are trying to kill me

because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing. 41No, you are imitating your real father."

They replied, "We aren't illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father."

42Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. 43Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me! 44For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don't believe me! 46Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? 47Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don't listen because you don't belong to God."

48The people retorted, "You Samaritan devil! Didn't we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?"

49"No," Jesus said, "I have no demon in me. For I honor my Father —and you dishonor me. 50And though I have no wish to glorify myself, God is going to glorify me. He is the true judge. 51I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!"

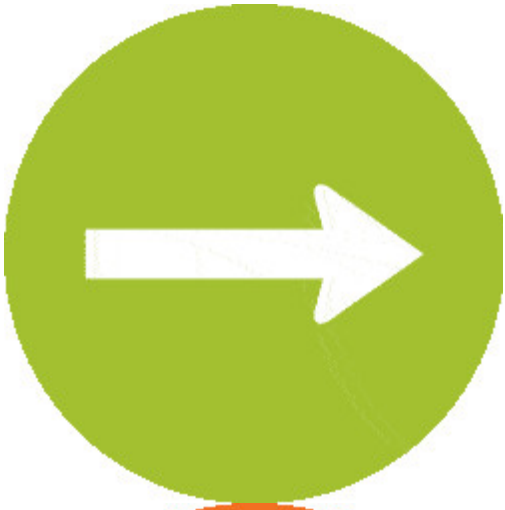
52The people said, "Now we know you are possessed by a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died, but you say, 'Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!' 53Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

54Jesus answered, "If I want glory for myself, it doesn't count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, 'He is our God,'* 55but

you don’t even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would
be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. 56Your
father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He
saw it and was glad.”

57The people said, “You aren’t even fifty years old. How can you say
you have seen Abraham?*”

58Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even
born, I AM!*” 59At that point they picked up stones to throw at him.
But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.



HEALING JOHN 9:1-11

John 9

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

1As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind
from birth. 2"Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man
born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

3"It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus
answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in
him. 4We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one
who sent us.* The night is coming, and then no one can work. 5But
while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

THE POOL OF SILOAM

6Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread
the mud over the blind man's eyes. 7He told him, "Go wash yourself
in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and
washed and came back seeing!

8His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked
each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" 9Some said
he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"

But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"

10They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?"

11He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it
over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash

yourself.’ So I went and washed, and now I can see!”

12“Where is he now?” they asked.

“I don’t know,” he replied.

13Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees,
14because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and
healed him. 15The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told
them, “He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I
could see!”

16Some of the Pharisees said, “This man Jesus is not from God, for
he is working on the Sabbath.” Others said, “But how could an
ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?” So there was a deep
division of opinion among them.

17Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind
and demanded, “What’s your opinion about this man who healed
you?”

The man replied, “I think he must be a prophet.”

18The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind
and could now see, so they called in his parents. 19They asked them,
“Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?”

20His parents replied, “We know this is our son and that he was
born blind, 21but we don’t know how he can see or who healed him.
Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself.” 22His parents said
this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had
announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be
expelled from the synagogue. 23That’s why they said, “He is old
enough. Ask him.”

24So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind
and told him, “God should get the glory for this,* because we know
this man Jesus is a sinner.”

25“I don’t know whether he is a sinner,” the man replied. “But I
know this: I was blind, and now I can see!”

26“But what did he do?” they asked. “How did he heal you?”

27“Look!” the man exclaimed. “I told you once. Didn’t you listen?
Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his
disciples, too?”

28Then they cursed him and said, “You are his disciple, but we are
disciples of Moses! 29We know God spoke to Moses, but we don’t
even know where this man comes from.”

30“Why, that’s very strange!” the man replied. “He healed my eyes,
and yet you don’t know where he comes from? 31We know that God
doesn’t listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship
him and do his will. 32Ever since the world began, no one has been
able to open the eyes of someone born blind. 33If this man were not
from God, he couldn’t have done it.”

34“You were born a total sinner!” they answered. “Are you trying to
teach us?” And they threw him out of the synagogue.

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

35When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and
asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?*”

36The man answered, “Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him.”

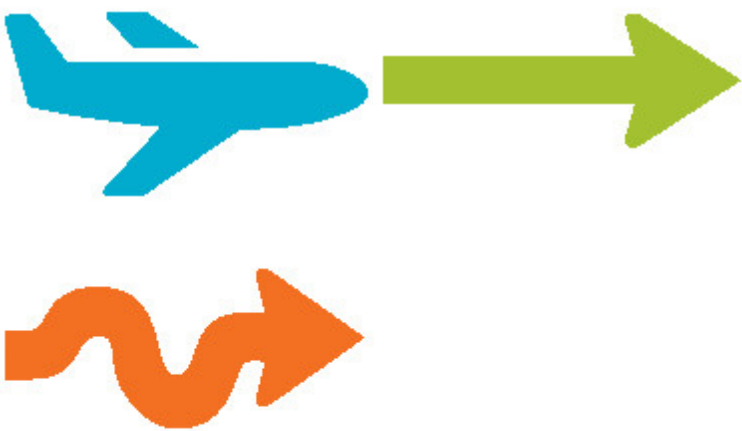
37“You have seen him,” Jesus said, “and he is speaking to you!”

38“Yes, Lord, I believe!” the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

39Then Jesus told him,*“I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see* that they are blind.”

40Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, “Are you saying we’re blind?”

41“If you were blind, you wouldn’t be guilty,” Jesus replied. “But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.



John 10

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP

1"I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a
sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a
thief and a robber! 2But the one who enters through the gate is the
shepherd of the sheep. 3The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and
the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own
sheep by name and leads them out. 4After he has gathered his own
flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they
know his voice. 5They won't follow a stranger; they will run from
him because they don't know his voice."

6Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what
he meant, 7so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the
gate for the sheep. 8All who came before me* were thieves and
robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. 9Yes, I am the
gate. Those who come in through me will be saved.* They will come
and go freely and will find good pastures. 10The thief's purpose is to
steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and
satisfying life.

11“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for
the sheep. 12A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He
will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he
isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the
flock. 13The hired hand runs away because he’s working only for the
money and doesn’t really care about the sheep.

14“I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know
me, 15just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I
sacrifice my life for the sheep. 16I have other sheep, too, that are not
in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my
voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

17“The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it
back again. 18No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it
voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to
and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has
commanded.”

19When he said these things, the people* were again divided in their
opinions about him. 20Some said, “He’s demon possessed and out of
his mind. Why listen to a man like that?” 21Others said, “This
doesn’t sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open
the eyes of the blind?”

THE ORIGIN OF HANUKKAH

JESUS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD

22It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of
Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. 23He was in the Temple,
walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade. 24The
people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep
us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

25Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me.
The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. 26But you don't
believe me because you are not my sheep. 27My sheep listen to my
voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28I give them eternal life,
and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me,
29for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than
anyone else.* No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. 30The
Father and I are one."

31Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. 32Jesus said,
"At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which
one are you going to stone me?"

33They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for
blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."

34Jesus replied, "It is written in your own Scriptures* that God said
to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!'* 35And you
know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who
received God's message were called 'gods,' 36why do you call it
blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father
set me apart and sent me into the world. 37Don't believe me unless I
carry out my Father's work. 38But if I do his work, believe in the
evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't
believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is
in me, and I am in the Father."

39Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left
them. 40He went beyond the Jordan River near the place where
John was first baptizing and stayed there awhile. 41And many

followed him. “John didn’t perform miraculous signs,” they remarked to one another, “but everything he said about this man has come true.” 42And many who were there believed in Jesus.

John 11

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

1A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his
sisters, Mary and Martha. 2This is the Mary who later poured the
expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her
hair.* Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. 3So the two sisters sent a
message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

4But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not
end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son
of God will receive glory from this." 5So although Jesus loved
Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, 6he stayed where he was for the next
two days. 7Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

8But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago
the people* in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there
again?"

9Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day.
During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they
have the light of this world. 10But at night there is danger of
stumbling because they have no light." 11Then he said, "Our friend
Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up."

12The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get
better!" 13They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping,
but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

14So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15And for your sakes,
I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's
go see him."

16Thomas, nicknamed the Twin,* said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s
go, too—and die with Jesus.”

17When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had
already been in his grave for four days. 18Bethany was only a few
miles* down the road from Jerusalem, 19and many of the people had
come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. 20When Martha got
word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary
stayed in the house. 21Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had
been here, my brother would not have died. 22But even now I know
that God will give you whatever you ask.”

23Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

24“Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the
last day.”

25Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life.* Anyone who
believes in me will live, even after dying. 26Everyone who lives in
me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this,
Martha?”

27“Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the
Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from
God.” 28Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the
mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.”
29So Mary immediately went to him.

30Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha
met him. 31When the people who were at the house consoling Mary
saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus’s
grave to weep. So they followed her there. 32When Mary arrived

and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

33When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him,* and he was deeply troubled. 34“Where have you put him?” he asked them.

They told him, “Lord, come and see.” 35Then Jesus wept. 36The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!” 37But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

38Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. 39“Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man’s sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.”

40Jesus responded, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?” 41So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. 42You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.” 43Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” 44And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!”

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

45Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when
they saw this happen. 46But some went to the Pharisees and told
them what Jesus had done. 47Then the leading priests and Pharisees
called the high council* together. “What are we going to do?” they
asked each other. “This man certainly performs many miraculous
signs. 48If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will
believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both
our Temple* and our nation.”

49Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time,* said, “You don’t
know what you’re talking about! 50You don’t realize that it’s better
for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole
nation to be destroyed.”

51He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was
led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. 52And not
only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children
of God scattered around the world.

53So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus’
death. 54As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the
people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness,
to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

55It was now almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, and
many people from all over the country arrived in Jerusalem several
days early so they could go through the purification ceremony
before Passover began. 56They kept looking for Jesus, but as they
stood around in the Temple, they said to each other, “What do you
think? He won’t come for Passover, will he?” 57Meanwhile, the
leading priests and Pharisees had publicly ordered that anyone
seeing Jesus must report it immediately so they could arrest him.

John 12

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

1Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in
Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the
dead. 2A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and
Lazarus was among those who ate* with him. 3Then Mary took a
twelve-ounce jar* of expensive perfume made from essence of nard,
and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair.
The house was filled with the fragrance.

4But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said,
5"That perfume was worth a year's wages.* It should have been sold
and the money given to the poor." 6Not that he cared for the poor—
he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money,
he often stole some for himself.

7Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my
burial. 8You will always have the poor among you, but you will not
always have me."

9When all the people* heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see
him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the
dead. 10Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, 11for it
was because of him that many of the people had deserted them* and
believed in Jesus.

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

12The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem
swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors 13took
palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted,
"Praise God!*

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!
Hail to the King of Israel!"*

14Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the
prophecy that said:

15"Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem.*
Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt."*

16His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a
fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they
remembered what had happened and realized that these things had
been written about him.

17Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb,
raising him from the dead, and they were telling others* about it.
18That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they
had heard about this miraculous sign. 19Then the Pharisees said to
each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone* has gone
after him!"

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

20Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover
celebration 21paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in
Galilee. They said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.” 22Philip told
Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

23Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man* to
enter into his glory. 24I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is
planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will
produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.
25Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care
nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. 26Anyone
who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must
be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

27“Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me
from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! 28Father, bring
glory to your name.”

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought
glory to my name, and I will do so again.” 29When the crowd heard
the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an
angel had spoken to him.

30Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine.
31The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler
of this world, will be cast out. 32And when I am lifted up from the
earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” 33He said this to indicate

how he was going to die.

34The crowd responded, “We understood from Scripture* that the
Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will
die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?”

35Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk
in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you.
Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going.
36Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will
become children of the light.”

After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from
them.

THE UNBELIEF OF THE PEOPLE

37But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the
people still did not believe in him. 38This is exactly what Isaiah the
prophet had predicted: “LORD, who has believed our message?

To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?”*

39But the people couldn’t believe, for as Isaiah also said,

40“The Lord has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts— so
that their eyes cannot see, and their hearts cannot understand, and
they cannot turn to me and have me heal them.”*

41Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw
the future and spoke of the Messiah’s glory. 42Many people did
believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But
they wouldn’t admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them
from the synagogue. 43For they loved human praise more than the
praise of God.

44Jesus shouted to the crowds, “If you trust me, you are trusting not
only me, but also God who sent me. 45For when you see me, you are
seeing the one who sent me. 46I have come as a light to shine in this
dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer
remain in the dark. 47I will not judge those who hear me but don’t
obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it.
48But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day
of judgment by the truth I have spoken. 49I don’t speak on my own
authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say
and how to say it. 50And I know his commands lead to eternal life;
so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.”

THE UPPER ROOM

John 13

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES’ FEET

1Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had

come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end.*2It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas,* son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. 4So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, 5and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

6When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

8"No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

9Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

10Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet,* to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." 11For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? 13You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. 14And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. 15I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. 16I tell you the truth, slaves are

not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. 17Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL

18"I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.'* 19I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah.* 20I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."

21Now Jesus was deeply troubled,* and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"

22The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. 23The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table.*24Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, "Who's he talking about?" 25So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"

26Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. 27When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do." 28None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. 29Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. 30So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

31As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, “The time has come for
the Son of Man* to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified
because of him. 32And since God receives glory because of the Son,*
he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once.
33Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told
the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come
where I am going. 34So now I am giving you a new commandment:
Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each
other. 35Your love for one another will prove to the world that you
are my disciples.”

36Simon Peter asked, “Lord, where are you going?”

And Jesus replied, “You can’t go with me now, but you will follow
me later.”

37“But why can’t I come now, Lord?” he asked. “I’m ready to die for
you.”

38Jesus answered, “Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before
the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that
you even know me.

AFTERLIFE JOHN 14:1-14

John 14

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

1“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in
me. 2There is more than enough room in my Father’s home.* If this
were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a
place for you?* 3When everything is ready, I will come and get you,
so that you will always be with me where I am. 4And you know the
way to where I am going.”

5“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where
you are going, so how can we know the way?”

6Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can
come to the Father except through me. 7If you had really known me,
you would know who my Father is.* From now on, you do know
him and have seen him!”

8Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

9Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet
you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen
the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? 10Don’t
you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The
words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does
his work through me. 11Just believe that I am in the Father and the
Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have
seen me do.

12“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same
works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to
be with the Father. 13You can ask for anything in my name, and I
will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. 14Yes, ask
me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT

15“If you love me, obey* my commandments. 16And I will ask the
Father, and he will give you another Advocate,* who will never
leave you. 17He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The
world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and
doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with
you now and later will be in you.* 18No, I will not abandon you as
orphans—I will come to you. 19Soon the world will no longer see
me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. 20When I am

raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

22Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?"

23Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. 24Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. 25I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. 26But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

27"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. 28Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. 29I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

30"I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, 31but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let's be going.

John 15

JESUS, THE TRUE VINE

1“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 2He cuts
off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes
the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.
3You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have
given you. 4Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch
cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot
be fruitful unless you remain in me.

5“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in
me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you
can do nothing. 6Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown
away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered
into a pile to be burned. 7But if you remain in me and my words
remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be
granted! 8When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples.
This brings great glory to my Father.

9“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my

love. 10When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love,
just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love.
11I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy.
Yes, your joy will overflow! 12This is my commandment: Love each
other in the same way I have loved you. 13There is no greater love
than to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14You are my friends if
you do what I command. 15I no longer call you slaves, because a
master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I
have told you everything the Father told me. 16You didn't choose
me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so
that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.
17This is my command: Love each other.

THE WORLD'S HATRED

18"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. 19The
world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but
you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the
world, so it hates you. 20Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave
is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally
they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would
listen to you. 21They will do all this to you because of me, for they
have rejected the one who sent me. 22They would not be guilty if I
had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for
their sin. 23Anyone who hates me also hates my Father. 24If I hadn't
done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do,
they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I
did, yet they still hate me and my Father. 25This fulfills what is
written in their Scriptures*: 'They hated me without cause.'

26"But I will send you the Advocate*—the Spirit of truth. He will
come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. 27And
you must also testify about me because you have been with me
from the beginning of my ministry.

John 16

1“I have told you these things so that you won’t abandon your faith.
2For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is
coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy
service for God. 3This is because they have never known the Father
or me. 4Yes, I’m telling you these things now, so that when they
happen, you will remember my warning. I didn’t tell you earlier
because I was going to be with you for a while longer.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

5“But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of
you is asking where I am going. 6Instead, you grieve because of
what I’ve told you. 7But in fact, it is best for you that I go away,
because if I don’t, the Advocate* won’t come. If I do go away, then I
will send him to you. 8And when he comes, he will convict the
world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming
judgment. 9The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me.
10Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will
see me no more. 11Judgment will come because the ruler of this
world has already been judged.

12“There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it
now. 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all
truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has
heard. He will tell you about the future. 14He will bring me glory by
telling you whatever he receives from me. 15All that belongs to the
Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever
he receives from me.’

SUFFERING JOHN 16:16-33

SADNESS WILL BE TURNED TO JOY

16 “In a little while you won’t see me anymore. But a little while
after that, you will see me again.”

17 Some of the disciples asked each other, “What does he mean when
he says, ‘In a little while you won’t see me, but then you will see
me,’ and ‘I am going to the Father’? 18 And what does he mean by ‘a
little while’? We don’t understand.”

19 Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, “Are
you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you
won’t see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. 20 I
tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to
happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your
grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. 21 It will be like a woman
suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish
gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the
world. 22 So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you
will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. 23 At that time you
won’t need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask
the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use
my name. 24 You haven’t done this before. Ask, using my name, and
you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

25 “I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I
will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the

Father. 26Then you will ask in my name. I'm not saying I will ask
the Father on your behalf, 27for the Father himself loves you dearly
because you love me and believe that I came from God.* 28Yes, I
came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world
and return to the Father."

29Then his disciples said, "At last you are speaking plainly and not
figuratively. 30Now we understand that you know everything, and
there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came
from God."

31Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe? 32But the time is coming—
indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going
his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the
Father is with me. 33I have told you all this so that you may have
peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.
But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

PRAYERS JOHN 17:1-26

John 17

THE PRAYER OF JESUS

1After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said,
"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory
back to you. 2For you have given him authority over everyone. He

gives eternal life to each one you have given him. 3And this is the
way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus
Christ, the one you sent to earth. 4I brought glory to you here on
earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5Now, Father,
bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

6"I have revealed you* to the ones you gave me from this world.
They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept
your word. 7Now they know that everything I have is a gift from
you, 8for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They
accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you
sent me.

9"My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me,
because they belong to you. 10All who are mine belong to you, and
you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. 11Now I am
departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am
coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name;* now
protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united
just as we are. 12During my time here, I protected them by the
power of the name you gave me.* I guarded them so that not one
was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures
foretold.

13"Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was
with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. 14I
have given them your word. And the world hates them because they
do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.
15I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep
them safe from the evil one. 16They do not belong to this world any
more than I do. 17Make them holy by your truth; teach them your
word, which is truth. 18Just as you sent me into the world, I am
sending them into the world. 19And I give myself as a holy sacrifice
for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

20"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will

ever believe in me through their message. 21I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

22"I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. 23I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. 24Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

25"O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. 26I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."

John 18

JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED

1After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. 2Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. 3The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

4Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.

5"Jesus the Nazarene,"* they replied.

“I AM he,”* Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) 6As Jesus said “I AM he,” they all drew back and fell to the ground! 7Once more he asked them, “Who are you looking for?”

And again they replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

8“I told you that I AM he,” Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.” 9He did this to fulfill his own statement: “I did not lose a single one of those you have given me.”*

10Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest’s slave. 11But Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?”

JESUS AT THE HIGH PRIEST’S HOUSE

12So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. 13First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time.*14Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, “It’s better that one man should die for the people.”

PETER’S FIRST DENIAL

15Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest’s courtyard with Jesus. 16Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. 17The woman asked Peter, “You’re not one of that man’s disciples, are you?”

“No,” he said, “I am not.”

18Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves,

and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

THE HIGH PRIEST QUESTIONS JESUS

19Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and
what he had been teaching them. 20Jesus replied, “Everyone knows
what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the
Temple, where the people* gather. I have not spoken in secret.
21Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me.
They know what I said.”

22Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus
across the face. “Is that the way to answer the high priest?” he
demanded.

23Jesus replied, “If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if
I’m speaking the truth, why are you beating me?”

24Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high
priest.

PETER’S SECOND AND THIRD DENIALS

25Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming
himself, they asked him again, “You’re not one of his disciples, are
you?”

He denied it, saying, “No, I am not.”

26But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the
man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Didn’t I see you out there
in the olive grove with Jesus?” 27Again Peter denied it. And
immediately a rooster crowed.

EASTER JOHN 18:28–19:16

JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

28Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the
morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman
governor.* His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile
them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover. 29So
Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your
charge against this man?"

30"We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a
criminal!" they retorted.

31"Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told
them.

"Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish
leaders replied. 32(This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he
would die.*)

33Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus
to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.

34Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you
about me?"

35"Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading

priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?”

36Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.”

37Pilate said, “So you are a king?”

Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”

38“What is truth?” Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, “He is not guilty of any crime. 39But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this ‘King of the Jews’?”

40But they shouted back, “No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!” (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)

John 19

JESUS SENTENCED TO DEATH

1Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. 2The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. 3“Hail! King of the Jews!” they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

4Pilate went outside again and said to the people, “I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty.” 5Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, “Look, here is the man!”

6When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began

shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

“Take him yourselves and crucify him,” Pilate said. “I find him not guilty.”

7The Jewish leaders replied, “By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God.”

8When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. 9He took Jesus back into the headquarters* again and asked him, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer. 10“Why don’t you talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?”

11Then Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

12Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, “If you release this man, you are no ‘friend of Caesar.’* Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar.”

13When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*). 14It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people,* “Look, here is your king!”

15“Away with him,” they yelled. “Away with him! Crucify him!”

“What? Crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the leading priests shouted back.

16Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

THE CRUCIFIXION

So they took Jesus away. 17Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, *Golgotha*). 18There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. 19And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth,* the King of the Jews." 20The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

21Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'"

22Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

23When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. 24So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice* for it." This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing."* So that is what they did.

25Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. 26When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son." 27And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

28Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill
Scripture he said, “I am thirsty.”* 29A jar of sour wine was sitting
there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and
held it up to his lips. 30When Jesus had tasted it, he said, “It is
finished!” Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

31It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn’t want
the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and
a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked
Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken.
Then their bodies could be taken down. 32So the soldiers came and
broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. 33But when they
came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn’t
break his legs. 34One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with
a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. 35(This report
is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the
truth so that you also may continue to believe.*) 36These things
happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, “Not one of his
bones will be broken,”*37and “They will look on the one they
pierced.”*

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

38Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of
Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for
permission to take down Jesus’ body. When Pilate gave permission,
Joseph came and took the body away. 39With him came Nicodemus,
the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-
five pounds* of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes.
40Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus’ body with
the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. 41The place of crucifixion
was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before.
42And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish
Passover* and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus
there.

THE RESURRECTION

1Early on Sunday morning,* while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene
came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away
from the entrance. 2She ran and found Simon Peter and the other
disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, “They have taken the
Lord’s body out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have
put him!”

3Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. 4They were
both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the
tomb first. 5He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings
lying there, but he didn’t go in. 6Then Simon Peter arrived and went
inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, 7while the
cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart
from the other wrappings. 8Then the disciple who had reached the
tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—9for until then
they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise
from the dead. 10Then they went home.

JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

11Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she
stooped and looked in. 12She saw two white-robed angels, one
sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the
body of Jesus had been lying. 13“Dear woman, why are you crying?”
the angels asked her.

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t
know where they have put him.”

14She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus,
but she didn’t recognize him. 15“Dear woman, why are you crying?”
Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?”

She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken
him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get
him.”

16“Mary!” Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

17“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

18Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message.

JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

19That Sunday evening* the disciples were meeting behind locked
doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly,
Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he
said. 20As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and
his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! 21Again
he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am
sending you.” 22Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the
Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you
do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS

24One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin),* was
not with the others when Jesus came. 25They told him, “We have
seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his
hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound
in his side.”

26Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time
Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as
before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he
said. 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at
my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be
faithless any longer. Believe!”

28“My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

29Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me.
Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

30The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in
addition to the ones recorded in this book. 31But these are written
so that you may continue to believe* that Jesus is the Messiah, the
Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the
power of his name.

John 21

EPILOGUE: JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES

1Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of
Galilee.* This is how it happened. 2Several of the disciples were
there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin),* Nathanael
from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

3Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.”

“We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but
they caught nothing all night.

4At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples
couldn’t see who he was. 5He called out, “Fellows,* have you caught

any fish?”

“No,” they replied.

6Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the
boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in
the net because there were so many fish in it.

7Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When
Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he
had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore.
8The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the
shore, for they were only about a hundred yards* from shore. 9When
they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking
over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

10“Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. 11So Simon
Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were
153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

12“Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the
disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the
Lord. 13Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. 14This was
the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been
raised from the dead.

15After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do
you love me more than these?*”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.”

“Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him.

16Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love
me?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.”

“Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said.

17A third time he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep.

18“I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others* will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go.” 19Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “Follow me.”

20Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved —the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, “Lord, who will betray you?” 21Peter asked Jesus, “What about him, Lord?”

22Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me.” 23So the rumor spread among the community of believers* that this disciple wouldn’t die. But that isn’t what Jesus said at all. He only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

24This disciple is the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And we know that his account of these things is accurate.

25Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be

written.

Acts

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

WELCOME TO

ACTS

The book of Acts is the sequel to the Gospel of Luke, written by the same author. It carefully records the “acts” of the Holy Spirit working through the apostles and the early church. In great detail it tells the story of the church’s beginnings, the Spirit’s arrival to empower God’s people to share the gospel, and the amazing growth of the church from a few people in Jerusalem to thousands in communities throughout the known world. The book begins with Jesus’ ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Then it focuses on the missionary work of Peter and moves on to the conversion and the missionary journeys of Paul. The apostles preach the Good News in Jerusalem before spreading out into Judea and Samaria, to the cities of Damascus and Antioch, and then to “the ends of the earth”—Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and Rome.

6 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll stop to read six great stories about the early church and two of its greatest leaders: Peter and Paul. Your next stop is at Acts 1:1.

13 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your frequent stops in Acts include stories

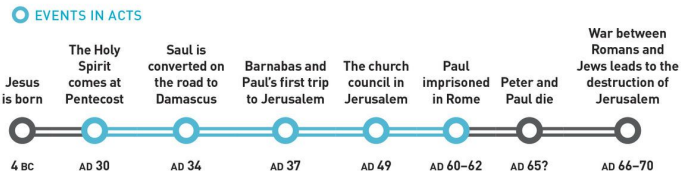
about the early church's origins, Paul's missionary journeys, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Your next stop is at Acts 1:1.

18 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The scenic route takes you through the history of the early church. You'll find out how it all began, travel with the first missionaries, and learn how the Good News was received in Asia and Europe. Your next stop is at Acts 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN ACTS

Acts begins with Jesus ascending to heaven, but the whole book is about his activity through his church. Shortly after the Ascension, the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus had promised to his disciples, arrived. Although Jesus was no longer present in body, his Spirit infused the newly founded church with confidence to boldly share his teachings: first in Judea and Samaria, then throughout the Roman world. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus worked in the lives of such people as Peter, James, John, Stephen, Philip, Cornelius, Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Lydia, Priscilla, Aquila, John Mark, and Luke.



Acts 1

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1In my first book* I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus
began to do and teach 2until the day he was taken up to heaven
after giving his chosen apostles further instructions through the
Holy Spirit. 3During the forty days after he suffered and died, he
appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them
in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them
about the Kingdom of God.

4Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do
not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised,
as I told you before. 5John baptized with* water, but in just a few
days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Modern-day view from the northwest of the Mount of Olives (upper left) and Gethsemane (lower right)

MOUNT OF OLIVES

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

6So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

7He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

9After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. 10As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way

you saw him go!”

MATTHIAS REPLACES JUDAS

12Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives,
a distance of half a mile.*13When they arrived, they went to the
upstairs room of the house where they were staying.

Here are the names of those who were present: Peter, John, James,
Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of
Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot), and Judas (son of James). 14They all
met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary
the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of
Jesus.

15During this time, when about 120 believers* were together in one
place, Peter stood up and addressed them. 16“Brothers,” he said,
“the Scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, who guided
those who arrested Jesus. This was predicted long ago by the Holy
Spirit, speaking through King David. 17Judas was one of us and
shared in the ministry with us.”

18(Judas had bought a field with the money he received for his
treachery. Falling headfirst there, his body split open, spilling out
all his intestines. 19The news of his death spread to all the people of
Jerusalem, and they gave the place the Aramaic name *Akeldama,*
which means “Field of Blood.”)

20Peter continued, “This was written in the book of Psalms, where it
says, ‘Let his home become desolate, with no one living in it.’ It also
says, ‘Let someone else take his position.’*

21“So now we must choose a replacement for Judas from among the
men who were with us the entire time we were traveling with the
Lord Jesus—22from the time he was baptized by John until the day
he was taken from us. Whoever is chosen will join us as a witness of
Jesus’ resurrection.”

23So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known
as Justus) and Matthias. 24Then they all prayed, “O Lord, you know
every heart. Show us which of these men you have chosen 25as an
apostle to replace Judas in this ministry, for he has deserted us and
gone where he belongs.” 26Then they cast lots, and Matthias was
selected to become an apostle with the other eleven.

HOLY SPIRIT ACTS 2:1-13

Acts 2

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

1On the day of Pentecost* all the believers were meeting together in
one place. 2Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the
roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they
were sitting. 3Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire
appeared and settled on each of them. 4And everyone present was
filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages,*
as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

5At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in
Jerusalem. 6When they heard the loud noise, everyone came
running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages
being spoken by the believers.

7They were completely amazed. “How can this be?” they exclaimed.
“These people are all from Galilee, 8and yet we hear them speaking
in our own native languages! 9Here we are—Parthians, Medes,
Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the
province of Asia, 10Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of
Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome 11(both Jews and converts
to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. And we all hear these people
speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has
done!” 12They stood there amazed and perplexed. “What can this
mean?” they asked each other.

13But others in the crowd ridiculed them, saying, “They’re just
drunk, that’s all!”

PETER PREACHES TO THE CROWD

14Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and
shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and
residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. 15These people
are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o’clock in the
morning is much too early for that. 16No, what you see was
predicted long ago by the prophet Joel:

17‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all
people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream
dreams.

18In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants—men
and women alike— and they will prophesy.

19And I will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the
earth below— blood and fire and clouds of smoke.

20The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red
before that great and glorious day of the LORD arrives.

21But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD
will be saved.’*

22“People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the
Nazarene* by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through
him, as you well know. 23But God knew what would happen, and
his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed.
With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and
killed him. 24But God released him from the horrors of death and
raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip.
25King David said this about him: ‘I see that the LORD is always
with me.

I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me.

26No wonder my heart is glad, and my tongue shouts his praises!
My body rests in hope.

27For you will not leave my soul among the dead*
or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.

28You have shown me the way of life, and you will fill me with the
joy of your presence.’*

29“Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that the
patriarch David wasn’t referring to himself, for he died and was
buried, and his tomb is still here among us. 30But he was a prophet,
and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David’s
own descendants would sit on his throne. 31David was looking into
the future and speaking of the Messiah’s resurrection. He was
saying that God would not leave him among the dead or allow his
body to rot in the grave.

32“God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this.
33Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at
God’s right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the
Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today.
34For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said, ‘The
LORD said to my Lord, “Sit in the place of honor at my right hand

35until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your
feet.”’*

36“So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this
Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”

37Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the
other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

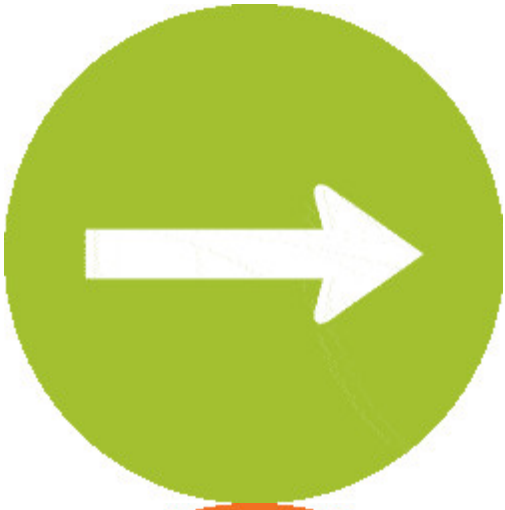
38Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to
God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness
of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39This
promise is to you, to your children, and to those far away*—all who
have been called by the Lord our God.” 40Then Peter continued
preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save
yourselves from this crooked generation!”

41Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to
the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

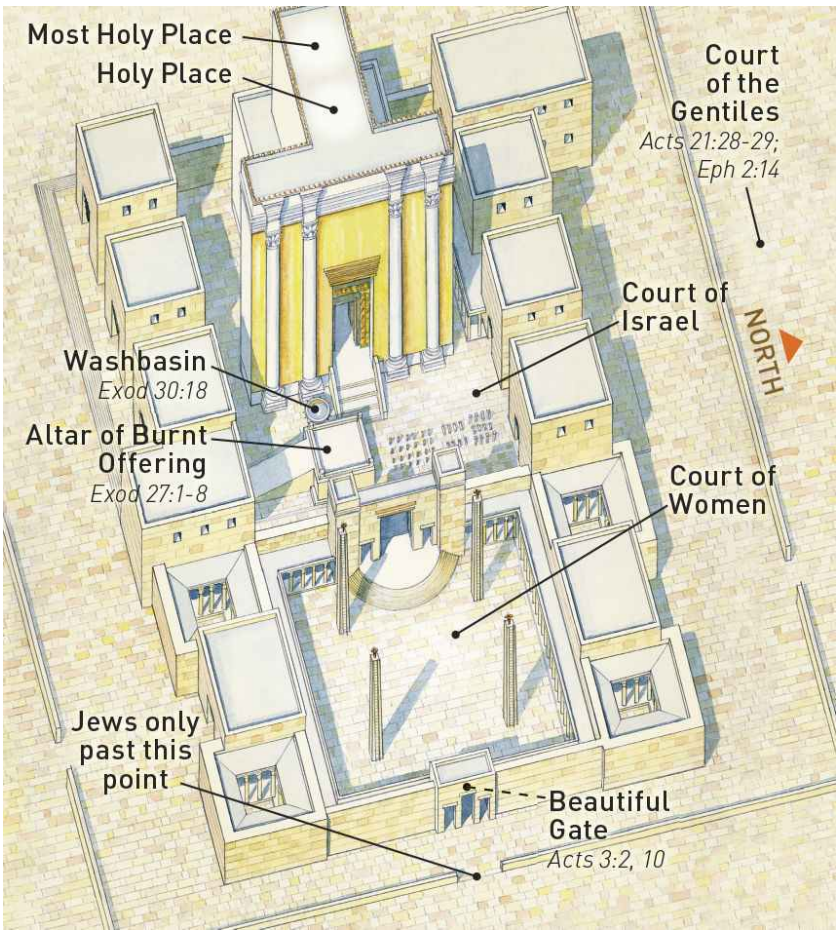
THE BELIEVERS FORM A COMMUNITY

42All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and
to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s
Supper*), and to prayer.

43A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles
performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44And all the
believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.
45They sold their property and possessions and shared the money
with those in need. 46They worshiped together at the Temple each
day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals
with great joy and generosity*—47all the while praising God and
enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord
added to their fellowship those who were being saved.



HEALING ACTS 3:1-11



THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

Acts 3

PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

1Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in
the three o'clock prayer service. 2As they approached the Temple, a

man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple. 3When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money.

4Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, “Look at us!” 5The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting some money. 6But Peter said, “I don’t have any silver or gold for you. But I’ll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene,* get up and* walk!”

7Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man’s feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. 8He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them.

9All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God. 10When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded! 11They all rushed out in amazement to Solomon’s Colonnade, where the man was holding tightly to Peter and John.

PETER PREACHES IN THE TEMPLE

12Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. “People of Israel,” he said, “what is so surprising about this? And why stare at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness? 13For it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the God of all our ancestors—who has brought glory to his servant

Jesus by doing this. This is the same Jesus whom you handed over
and rejected before Pilate, despite Pilate's decision to release him.
14You rejected this holy, righteous one and instead demanded the
release of a murderer. 15You killed the author of life, but God raised
him from the dead. And we are witnesses of this fact!

16"Through faith in the name of Jesus, this man was healed—and
you know how crippled he was before. Faith in Jesus' name has
healed him before your very eyes.

17"Friends,* I realize that what you and your leaders did to Jesus
was done in ignorance. 18But God was fulfilling what all the
prophets had foretold about the Messiah—that he must suffer these
things. 19Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins
may be wiped away. 20Then times of refreshment will come from
the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus, your
appointed Messiah. 21For he must remain in heaven until the time
for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago
through his holy prophets. 22Moses said, 'The LORD your God will
raise up for you a Prophet like me from among your own people.
Listen carefully to everything he tells you.'*23Then Moses said,
'Anyone who will not listen to that Prophet will be completely cut
off from God's people.'*

24"Starting with Samuel, every prophet spoke about what is
happening today. 25You are the children of those prophets, and you
are included in the covenant God promised to your ancestors. For
God said to Abraham, 'Through your descendants* all the families
on earth will be blessed.' 26When God raised up his servant, Jesus,
he sent him first to you people of Israel, to bless you by turning
each of you back from your sinful ways."

Acts 4

PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE COUNCIL

1While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were
confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and
some of the Sadducees. 2These leaders were very disturbed that
Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is
a resurrection of the dead. 3They arrested them and, since it was
already evening, put them in jail until morning. 4But many of the
people who heard their message believed it, so the number of
believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and
children.*

5The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of
religious law met in Jerusalem. 6Annas the high priest was there,
along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the
high priest. 7They brought in the two disciples and demanded, “By
what power, or in whose name, have you done this?”

8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and
elders of our people, 9are we being questioned today because we’ve
done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he
was healed? 10Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people
of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ
the Nazarene,* the man you crucified but whom God raised from
the dead. 11For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where
it says, ‘The stone that you builders rejected has now become the
cornerstone.’*

12There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name
under heaven by which we must be saved."

13The members of the council were amazed when they saw the
boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were
ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also
recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. 14But since they
could see the man who had been healed standing right there among
them, there was nothing the council could say. 15So they ordered
Peter and John out of the council chamber* and conferred among
themselves.

16"What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We
can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and
everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. 17But to keep them from
spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to
speak to anyone in Jesus' name again." 18So they called the apostles
back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the
name of Jesus.

19But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey
you rather than him? 20We cannot stop telling about everything we
have seen and heard."

21The council then threatened them further, but they finally let
them go because they didn't know how to punish them without
starting a riot. For everyone was praising God 22for this miraculous
sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty
years.

THE BELIEVERS PRAY FOR COURAGE

23As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other
believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had
said. 24When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their
voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of
heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—25you spoke

long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying, ‘Why were the nations so angry?

Why did they waste their time with futile plans?

26The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the LORD
and against his Messiah.’*

27“In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. 28But everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. 29And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. 30Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

31After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

THE BELIEVERS SHARE THEIR POSSESSIONS

32All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. 33The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. 34There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them 35and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

36For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. 37He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

Acts 5

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

1But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. 2He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest.

3Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. 4The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!"

5As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died.
Everyone who heard about it was terrified. 6Then some young men
got up, wrapped him in a sheet, and took him out and buried him.

7About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had
happened. 8Peter asked her, “Was this the price you and your
husband received for your land?”

“Yes,” she replied, “that was the price.”

9And Peter said, “How could the two of you even think of
conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men
who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will
carry you out, too.”

10Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men
came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried
her beside her husband. 11Great fear gripped the entire church and
everyone else who heard what had happened.

SOLOMON’S COLONNADE

THE APOSTLES HEAL MANY

12The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders
among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at
the Temple in the area known as Solomon’s Colonnade. 13But no
one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high
regard for them. 14Yet more and more people believed and were
brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. 15As a result
of the apostles’ work, sick people were brought out into the streets
on beds and mats so that Peter’s shadow might fall across some of
them as he went by. 16Crowds came from the villages around

Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil* spirits, and they were all healed.

THE APOSTLES MEET OPPOSITION

17The high priest and his officials, who were Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, 20"Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!"

21So at daybreak the apostles entered the Temple, as they were told, and immediately began teaching.

When the high priest and his officials arrived, they convened the high council*—the full assembly of the elders of Israel. Then they sent for the apostles to be brought from the jail for trial. 22But when the Temple guards went to the jail, the men were gone. So they returned to the council and reported, 23"The jail was securely locked, with the guards standing outside, but when we opened the gates, no one was there!"

24When the captain of the Temple guard and the leading priests heard this, they were perplexed, wondering where it would all end. 25Then someone arrived with startling news: "The men you put in jail are standing in the Temple, teaching the people!"

26The captain went with his Temple guards and arrested the apostles, but without violence, for they were afraid the people would stone them. 27Then they brought the apostles before the high council, where the high priest confronted them. 28"We gave you strict orders never again to teach in this man's name!" he said. "Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!"

29But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather

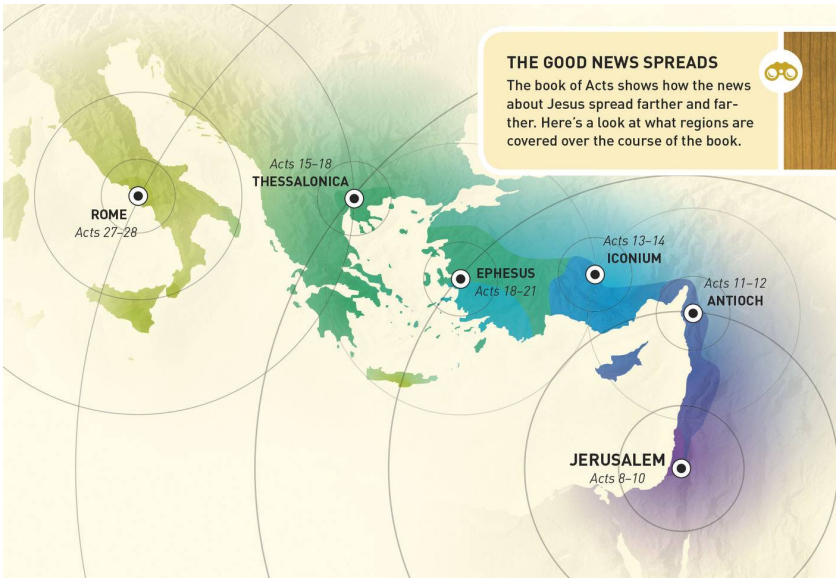
than any human authority. 30The God of our ancestors raised Jesus
from the dead after you killed him by hanging him on a
cross.*31Then God put him in the place of honor at his right hand as
Prince and Savior. He did this so the people of Israel would repent
of their sins and be forgiven. 32We are witnesses of these things and
so is the Holy Spirit, who is given by God to those who obey him."

33When they heard this, the high council was furious and decided to
kill them. 34But one member, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, who was
an expert in religious law and respected by all the people, stood up
and ordered that the men be sent outside the council chamber for a
while. 35Then he said to his colleagues, "Men of Israel, take care
what you are planning to do to these men! 36Some time ago there
was that fellow Theudas, who pretended to be someone great.
About 400 others joined him, but he was killed, and all his
followers went their various ways. The whole movement came to
nothing. 37After him, at the time of the census, there was Judas of
Galilee. He got people to follow him, but he was killed, too, and all
his followers were scattered.

38"So my advice is, leave these men alone. Let them go. If they are
planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon
be overthrown. 39But if it is from God, you will not be able to
overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against
God!"

40The others accepted his advice. They called in the apostles and
had them flogged. Then they ordered them never again to speak in
the name of Jesus, and they let them go.

41The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted
them worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus.*42And every
day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to
teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah."



THE GOOD NEWS SPREADS

Acts 6

SEVEN MEN CHOSEN TO SERVE

1But as the believers* rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of
discontent. The Greek-speaking believers complained about the
Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being
discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.

2So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, "We
apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not
running a food program. 3And so, brothers, select seven men who
are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will
give them this responsibility. 4Then we apostles can spend our time
in prayer and teaching the word."

5Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith). 6These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.

7So God's message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.

STEPHEN IS ARRESTED

8Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed amazing miracles and signs among the people. 9But one day some men from the Synagogue of Freed Slaves, as it was called, started to debate with him. They were Jews from Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and the province of Asia. 10None of them could stand against the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke.

11So they persuaded some men to lie about Stephen, saying, "We heard him blaspheme Moses, and even God." 12This roused the people, the elders, and the teachers of religious law. So they

arrested Stephen and brought him before the high council.*

13The lying witnesses said, “This man is always speaking against the
holy Temple and against the law of Moses. 14We have heard him say
that this Jesus of Nazareth* will destroy the Temple and change the
customs Moses handed down to us.”

15At this point everyone in the high council stared at Stephen,
because his face became as bright as an angel’s.

Acts 7

STEPHEN ADDRESSES THE COUNCIL

1Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these accusations true?”

2This was Stephen’s reply: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me. Our
glorious God appeared to our ancestor Abraham in Mesopotamia
before he settled in Haran.*3God told him, ‘Leave your native land
and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.’*4So
Abraham left the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran until his
father died. Then God brought him here to the land where you now
live.

5“But God gave him no inheritance here, not even one square foot
of land. God did promise, however, that eventually the whole land
would belong to Abraham and his descendants—even though he
had no children yet. 6God also told him that his descendants would
live in a foreign land, where they would be oppressed as slaves for
400 years. 7‘But I will punish the nation that enslaves them,’ God
said, ‘and in the end they will come out and worship me here in this
place.’*

8“God also gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision at that time.
So when Abraham became the father of Isaac, he circumcised him
on the eighth day. And the practice was continued when Isaac
became the father of Jacob, and when Jacob became the father of
the twelve patriarchs of the Israelite nation.

9“These patriarchs were jealous of their brother Joseph, and they
sold him to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him 10and
rescued him from all his troubles. And God gave him favor before
Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God also gave Joseph unusual wisdom, so
that Pharaoh appointed him governor over all of Egypt and put him
in charge of the palace.

11“But a famine came upon Egypt and Canaan. There was great
misery, and our ancestors ran out of food. 12Jacob heard that there
was still grain in Egypt, so he sent his sons—our ancestors—to buy
some. 13The second time they went, Joseph revealed his identity to
his brothers,* and they were introduced to Pharaoh. 14Then Joseph
sent for his father, Jacob, and all his relatives to come to Egypt,
seventy-five persons in all. 15So Jacob went to Egypt. He died there,
as did our ancestors. 16Their bodies were taken to Shechem and
buried in the tomb Abraham had bought for a certain price from
Hamor’s sons in Shechem.

17“As the time drew near when God would fulfill his promise to
Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased.
18But then a new king came to the throne of Egypt who knew
nothing about Joseph. 19This king exploited our people and
oppressed them, forcing parents to abandon their newborn babies
so they would die.

20“At that time Moses was born—a beautiful child in God’s eyes. His
parents cared for him at home for three months. 21When they had to
abandon him, Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him and raised him as
her own son. 22Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians,
and he was powerful in both speech and action.

23“One day when Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his
relatives, the people of Israel. 24He saw an Egyptian mistreating an
Israelite. So Moses came to the man’s defense and avenged him,
killing the Egyptian. 25Moses assumed his fellow Israelites would
realize that God had sent him to rescue them, but they didn’t.

26“The next day he visited them again and saw two men of Israel
fighting. He tried to be a peacemaker. ‘Men,’ he said, ‘you are
brothers. Why are you fighting each other?’

27“But the man in the wrong pushed Moses aside. ‘Who made you a
ruler and judge over us?’ he asked. 28‘Are you going to kill me as
you killed that Egyptian yesterday?’ 29When Moses heard that, he
fled the country and lived as a foreigner in the land of Midian.
There his two sons were born.

30“Forty years later, in the desert near Mount Sinai, an angel
appeared to Moses in the flame of a burning bush. 31When Moses
saw it, he was amazed at the sight. As he went to take a closer look,
the voice of the LORD called out to him, 32‘I am the God of your
ancestors—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’ Moses shook
with terror and did not dare to look.

33“Then the LORD said to him, ‘Take off your sandals, for you are
standing on holy ground. 34I have certainly seen the oppression of
my people in Egypt. I have heard their groans and have come down
to rescue them. Now go, for I am sending you back to Egypt.’*

35“So God sent back the same man his people had previously
rejected when they demanded, ‘Who made you a ruler and judge
over us?’ Through the angel who appeared to him in the burning
bush, God sent Moses to be their ruler and savior. 36And by means
of many wonders and miraculous signs, he led them out of Egypt,
through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness for forty years.

37“Moses himself told the people of Israel, ‘God will raise up for you
a Prophet like me from among your own people.’*38Moses was with
our ancestors, the assembly of God’s people in the wilderness, when
the angel spoke to him at Mount Sinai. And there Moses received
life-giving words to pass on to us.*

39“But our ancestors refused to listen to Moses. They rejected him
and wanted to return to Egypt. 40They told Aaron, ‘Make us some
gods who can lead us, for we don’t know what has become of this
Moses, who brought us out of Egypt.’ 41So they made an idol shaped
like a calf, and they sacrificed to it and celebrated over this thing
they had made. 42Then God turned away from them and abandoned
them to serve the stars of heaven as their gods! In the book of the
prophets it is written, ‘Was it to me you were bringing sacrifices
and offerings during those forty years in the wilderness, Israel?

43No, you carried your pagan gods— the shrine of Molech, the star
of your god Rephan, and the images you made to worship them.
So I will send you into exile as far away as Babylon.’*

44“Our ancestors carried the Tabernacle* with them through the
wilderness. It was constructed according to the plan God had shown
to Moses. 45Years later, when Joshua led our ancestors in battle
against the nations that God drove out of this land, the Tabernacle
was taken with them into their new territory. And it stayed there
until the time of King David.

46“David found favor with God and asked for the privilege of
building a permanent Temple for the God of Jacob.*47But it was
Solomon who actually built it. 48However, the Most High doesn’t
live in temples made by human hands. As the prophet says,

49‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.
Could you build me a temple as good as that?’

asks the LORD.
‘Could you build me such a resting place?

50Didn’t my hands make both heaven and earth?’*

51“You stubborn people! You are heathen* at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That’s what your ancestors did, and so do you! 52Name one prophet your ancestors didn’t persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered. 53You deliberately disobeyed God’s law, even though you received it from the hands of angels.”

54The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen’s accusation, and they shook their fists at him in rage.*55But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand. 56And he told them, “Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand!”

57Then they put their hands over their ears and began shouting. They rushed at him 58and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul.*

59As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” 60He fell to his knees, shouting, “Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!” And with that, he died.

Acts 8

1Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen.

PERSECUTION SCATTERS THE BELIEVERS

A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. 2(Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.) 3But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.

DEMONS ACTS 8:4-25

PHILIP PREACHES IN SAMARIA

4But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News
about Jesus wherever they went. 5Philip, for example, went to the
city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah.
6Crowds listened intently to Philip because they were eager to hear
his message and see the miraculous signs he did. 7Many evil* spirits
were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who
had been paralyzed or lame were healed. 8So there was great joy in
that city.

9A man named Simon had been a sorcerer there for many years,
amazing the people of Samaria and claiming to be someone great.
10Everyone, from the least to the greatest, often spoke of him as
"the Great One—the Power of God." 11They listened closely to him
because for a long time he had astounded them with his magic.

12But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News
concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a
result, many men and women were baptized. 13Then Simon himself
believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he
went, and he was amazed by the signs and great miracles Philip
performed.

14When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria
had accepted God's message, they sent Peter and John there. 15As

soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. 16The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18When Simon saw that the Spirit was given when the apostles laid their hands on people, he offered them money to buy this power. 19"Let me have this power, too," he exclaimed, "so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!"

20But Peter replied, "May your money be destroyed with you for thinking God's gift can be bought! 21You can have no part in this, for your heart is not right with God. 22Repent of your wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive your evil thoughts, 23for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin."

24"Pray to the Lord for me," Simon exclaimed, "that these terrible things you've said won't happen to me!"

25After testifying and preaching the word of the Lord in Samaria, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem. And they stopped in many Samaritan villages along the way to preach the Good News.

ETHIOPIA

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

26As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, “Go south* down
the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza.” 27So he started
out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great
authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch
had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28and he was now returning.
Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the
prophet Isaiah.

29The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the
carriage.”

30Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet
Isaiah. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

31The man replied, “How can I, unless someone instructs me?” And
he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.

32The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this: “He was
led like a sheep to the slaughter.

And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his
mouth.

33He was humiliated and received no justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”*

34The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, was the prophet talking about
himself or someone else?” 35So beginning with this same Scripture,
Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.

36As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch
said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptized?”*38He
ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water,
and Philip baptized him.

39When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord
snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on
his way rejoicing. 40Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north
at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in
every town along the way until he came to Caesarea.

DAMASCUS

Acts 9

SAUL'S CONVERSION

1Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was
eager to kill the Lord's followers.* So he went to the high priest. 2He
requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking
for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he
found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—
back to Jerusalem in chains.

3As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from
heaven suddenly shone down around him. 4He fell to the ground
and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you
persecuting me?"

5“Who are you, lord?” Saul asked.

And the voice replied, “I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting!
6Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you
must do.”

7The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of
someone’s voice but saw no one! 8Saul picked himself up off the
ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his
companions led him by the hand to Damascus. 9He remained there
blind for three days and did not eat or drink.

10Now there was a believer* in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord
spoke to him in a vision, calling, “Ananias!”

“Yes, Lord!” he replied.

11The Lord said, “Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas.
When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is
praying to me right now. 12I have shown him a vision of a man
named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see
again.”

13“But Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I’ve heard many people talk
about the terrible things this man has done to the believers* in
Jerusalem! 14And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest
everyone who calls upon your name.”

15But the Lord said, “Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take
my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of
Israel. 16And I will show him how much he must suffer for my
name’s sake.”

17So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and

said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18Instantly something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. 19Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength.

SAUL IN DAMASCUS AND JERUSALEM

Saul stayed with the believers* in Damascus for a few days. 20And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is indeed the Son of God!”

21All who heard him were amazed. “Isn’t this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem?” they asked. “And didn’t he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?”

22Saul’s preaching became more and more powerful, and the Jews in Damascus couldn’t refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. 23After a while some of the Jews plotted together to kill him. 24They were watching for him day and night at the city gate so they could murder him, but Saul was told about their plot. 25So during the night, some of the other believers* lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the city wall.

26When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to meet with the believers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe he had truly become a believer! 27Then Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them how Saul had seen the Lord on the way to Damascus and how the Lord had spoken to Saul. He also told them that Saul had preached boldly in the name of Jesus in Damascus.

28So Saul stayed with the apostles and went all around Jerusalem with them, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. 29He debated with some Greek-speaking Jews, but they tried to murder him. 30When the believers* heard about this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus, his hometown.

31The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and
Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of
the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also
grew in numbers.

PETER HEALS AENEAS AND RAISES DORCAS

32Meanwhile, Peter traveled from place to place, and he came down
to visit the believers in the town of Lydda. 33There he met a man
named Aeneas, who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight
years. 34Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up,
and roll up your sleeping mat!” And he was healed instantly. 35Then
the whole population of Lydda and Sharon saw Aeneas walking
around, and they turned to the Lord.

36There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is
Dorcas*). She was always doing kind things for others and helping
the poor. 37About this time she became ill and died. Her body was
washed for burial and laid in an upstairs room. 38But the believers
had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to
beg him, “Please come as soon as possible!”

39So Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took
him to the upstairs room. The room was filled with widows who
were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas
had made for them. 40But Peter asked them all to leave the room;
then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, “Get up,
Tabitha.” And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up!

41He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then he called in the
widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive.

42The news spread through the whole town, and many believed in
the Lord. 43And Peter stayed a long time in Joppa, living with
Simon, a tanner of hides.

CAESAREA

Acts 10

CORNELIUS CALLS FOR PETER

1In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer* named Cornelius,
who was a captain of the Italian Regiment. 2He was a devout, God-
fearing man, as was everyone in his household. He gave generously
to the poor and prayed regularly to God. 3One afternoon about three
o'clock, he had a vision in which he saw an angel of God coming
toward him. "Cornelius!" the angel said.

4Cornelius stared at him in terror. "What is it, sir?" he asked the
angel.

And the angel replied, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have
been received by God as an offering! 5Now send some men to
Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. 6He is staying with
Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore."

7As soon as the angel was gone, Cornelius called two of his
household servants and a devout soldier, one of his personal
attendants. 8He told them what had happened and sent them off to
Joppa.

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

9The next day as Cornelius's messengers were nearing the town,
Peter went up on the flat roof to pray. It was about noon, 10and he
was hungry. But while a meal was being prepared, he fell into a
trance. 11He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was
let down by its four corners. 12In the sheet were all sorts of animals,
reptiles, and birds. 13Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill
and eat them."

14"No, Lord," Peter declared. "I have never eaten anything that our
Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean.*"

15But the voice spoke again: "Do not call something unclean if God
has made it clean." 16The same vision was repeated three times.
Then the sheet was suddenly pulled up to heaven.

17Peter was very perplexed. What could the vision mean? Just then
the men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house. Standing outside
the gate, 18they asked if a man named Simon Peter was staying
there.

19Meanwhile, as Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit
said to him, "Three men have come looking for you. 20Get up, go
downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. Don't worry, for I
have sent them."

21So Peter went down and said, "I'm the man you are looking for.
Why have you come?"

JOPPA

22They said, "We were sent by Cornelius, a Roman officer. He is a
devout and God-fearing man, well respected by all the Jews. A holy
angel instructed him to summon you to his house so that he can
hear your message." 23So Peter invited the men to stay for the night.
The next day he went with them, accompanied by some of the
brothers from Joppa.

24They arrived in Caesarea the following day. Cornelius was waiting
for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25As
Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped
him. 26But Peter pulled him up and said, "Stand up! I'm a human
being just like you!" 27So they talked together and went inside,
where many others were assembled.

28Peter told them, "You know it is against our laws for a Jewish
man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But
God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as

impure or unclean. 29So I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. Now tell me why you sent for me."

30Cornelius replied, "Four days ago I was praying in my house about this same time, three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, a man in dazzling clothes was standing in front of me. 31He told me, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been noticed by God! 32Now send messengers to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. He is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore.' 33So I sent for you at once, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here, waiting before God to hear the message the Lord has given you."

THE GENTILES HEAR THE GOOD NEWS

34Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. 35In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. 36This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. 38And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

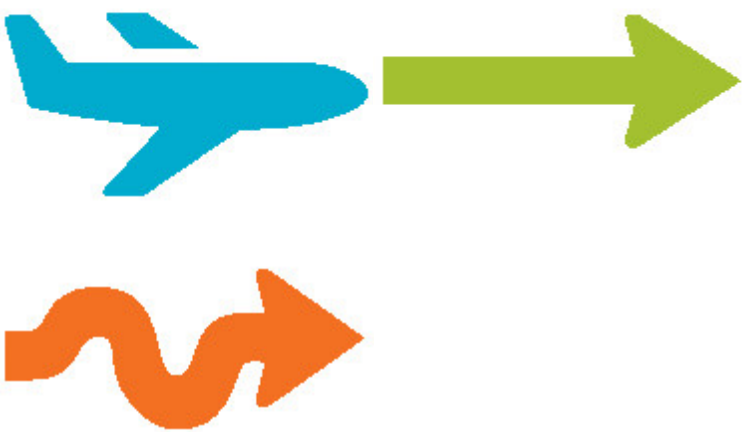
39"And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross,*40but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, 41not to the general public,* but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. 43He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his

name.”

THE GENTILES RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

44Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all
who were listening to the message. 45The Jewish believers* who
came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had
been poured out on the Gentiles, too. 46For they heard them
speaking in other tongues* and praising God.

Then Peter asked, 47“Can anyone object to their being baptized, now
that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?” 48So he gave
orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.



Acts 11

PETER EXPLAINS HIS ACTIONS

1Soon the news reached the apostles and other believers* in Judea
that the Gentiles had received the word of God. 2But when Peter
arrived back in Jerusalem, the Jewish believers* criticized him.
3“You entered the home of Gentiles* and even ate with them!” they
said.

4Then Peter told them exactly what had happened. 5"I was in the
town of Joppa," he said, "and while I was praying, I went into a
trance and saw a vision. Something like a large sheet was let down
by its four corners from the sky. And it came right down to me.
6When I looked inside the sheet, I saw all sorts of tame and wild
animals, reptiles, and birds. 7And I heard a voice say, 'Get up, Peter;
kill and eat them.'

8"'No, Lord,' I replied. 'I have never eaten anything that our Jewish
laws have declared impure or unclean.*'

9"But the voice from heaven spoke again: 'Do not call something
unclean if God has made it clean.' 10This happened three times
before the sheet and all it contained was pulled back up to heaven.

11"Just then three men who had been sent from Caesarea arrived at
the house where we were staying. 12The Holy Spirit told me to go
with them and not to worry that they were Gentiles. These six
brothers here accompanied me, and we soon entered the home of
the man who had sent for us. 13He told us how an angel had
appeared to him in his home and had told him, 'Send messengers to
Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. 14He will tell you
how you and everyone in your household can be saved!'

15"As I began to speak," Peter continued, "the Holy Spirit fell on
them, just as he fell on us at the beginning. 16Then I thought of the
Lord's words when he said, 'John baptized with* water, but you will
be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17And since God gave these
Gentiles the same gift he gave us when we believed in the Lord
Jesus Christ, who was I to stand in God's way?"

18When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began
praising God. They said, "We can see that God has also given the
Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal
life."

HOLY SPIRIT ACTS 11:19-24

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH OF SYRIA 19MEANWHILE, THE BELIEVERS WHO HAD BEEN SCATTERED DURING THE PERSECUTION AFTER STEPHEN'S DEATH TRAVELED AS FAR AS PHOENICIA, CYPRUS, AND ANTIOCH OF SYRIA. THEY PREACHED THE WORD OF GOD, BUT ONLY TO JEWS. 20HOWEVER, SOME OF THE BELIEVERS WHO WENT TO ANTIOCH FROM CYPRUS AND CYRENE BEGAN PREACHING TO THE GENTILES* ABOUT THE LORD JESUS. 21THE POWER OF THE LORD WAS WITH THEM, AND A LARGE NUMBER OF THESE GENTILES BELIEVED AND TURNED TO THE LORD.

22When the church at Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23When he arrived and saw this evidence of God's blessing, he was filled with joy, and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. 24Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord.

25Then Barnabas went on to Tarsus to look for Saul. 26When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers* were first called Christians.)

27During this time some prophets traveled from Jerusalem to
Antioch. 28One of them named Agabus stood up in one of the
meetings and predicted by the Spirit that a great famine was
coming upon the entire Roman world. (This was fulfilled during the
reign of Claudius.) 29So the believers in Antioch decided to send
relief to the brothers and sisters* in Judea, everyone giving as much
as they could. 30This they did, entrusting their gifts to Barnabas and
Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

ANGELS ACTS 12:1-19

Acts 12

JAMES IS KILLED AND PETER IS IMPRISONED

1About that time King Herod Agrippa* began to persecute some
believers in the church. 2He had the apostle James (John's brother)
killed with a sword. 3When Herod saw how much this pleased the
Jewish people, he also arrested Peter. (This took place during the
Passover celebration.*) 4Then he imprisoned him, placing him under
the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to
bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover. 5But while Peter
was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.

PETER'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM PRISON

6The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep,
fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard
at the prison gate. 7Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell,
and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him
on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the
chains fell off his wrists. 8Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and
put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and
follow me," the angel ordered.

9So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he
thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening.
10They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron
gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So
they passed through and started walking down the street, and then
the angel suddenly left him.

11Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The
Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what
the Jewish leaders* had planned to do to me!"

12When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother
of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. 13He knocked
at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to
open it. 14When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed

that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, “Peter is standing at the door!”

15“You’re out of your mind!” they said. When she insisted, they decided, “It must be his angel.”

16Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. 17He motioned for them to quiet down and told them how the Lord had led him out of prison. “Tell James and the other brothers what happened,” he said. And then he went to another place.

18At dawn there was a great commotion among the soldiers about what had happened to Peter. 19Herod Agrippa ordered a thorough search for him. When he couldn’t be found, Herod interrogated the guards and sentenced them to death. Afterward Herod left Judea to stay in Caesarea for a while.

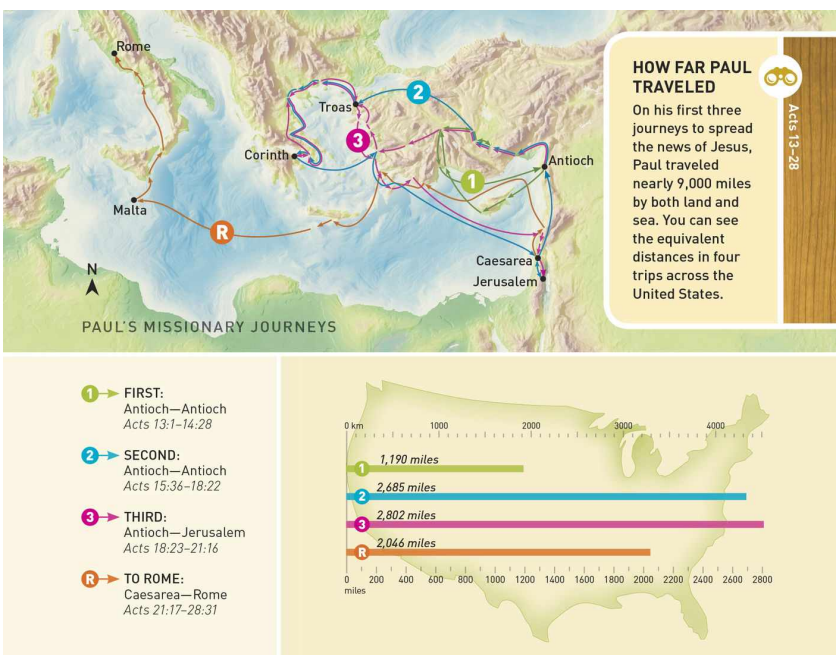
THE DEATH OF HEROD AGRIPPA

20Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they sent a delegation to make peace with him because their cities were dependent upon Herod’s country for food. The delegates won the support of Blastus, Herod’s personal assistant, 21and an appointment with Herod was granted. When the day arrived, Herod put on his royal robes, sat on his throne, and made a speech to them. 22The people gave him a great ovation, shouting, “It’s the voice of a god, not of a man!”

23Instantly, an angel of the Lord struck Herod with a sickness,
because he accepted the people's worship instead of giving the
glory to God. So he was consumed with worms and died.

24Meanwhile, the word of God continued to spread, and there were
many new believers.

25When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission to Jerusalem,
they returned,* taking John Mark with them.



HOW FAR PAUL TRAVELED

BARNABAS AND SAUL ARE COMMISSIONED

1Among the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch of Syria
were Barnabas, Simeon (called “the black man”*), Lucius (from
Cyrene), Manaen (the childhood companion of King Herod
Antipas*), and Saul. 2One day as these men were worshiping the
Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Dedicate Barnabas and Saul
for the special work to which I have called them.” 3So after more
fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them
on their way.

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

4So Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went
down to the seaport of Seleucia and then sailed for the island of
Cyprus. 5There, in the town of Salamis, they went to the Jewish
synagogues and preached the word of God. John Mark went with
them as their assistant.

6Afterward they traveled from town to town across the entire island
until finally they reached Paphos, where they met a Jewish
sorcerer, a false prophet named Bar-Jesus. 7He had attached himself
to the governor, Sergius Paulus, who was an intelligent man. The
governor invited Barnabas and Saul to visit him, for he wanted to
hear the word of God. 8But Elymas, the sorcerer (as his name means
in Greek), interfered and urged the governor to pay no attention to
what Barnabas and Saul said. He was trying to keep the governor
from believing.

9Saul, also known as Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he
looked the sorcerer in the eye. 10Then he said, "You son of the devil,
full of every sort of deceit and fraud, and enemy of all that is good!
Will you never stop perverting the true ways of the Lord? 11Watch
now, for the Lord has laid his hand of punishment upon you, and
you will be struck blind. You will not see the sunlight for some
time." Instantly mist and darkness came over the man's eyes, and he
began groping around begging for someone to take his hand and
lead him.

12When the governor saw what had happened, he became a
believer, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

PAUL PREACHES IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA 13**PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS THEN LEFT PAPHOS BY SHIP FOR PAMPHYLIA, LANDING AT THE PORT TOWN OF PERGA. THERE JOHN MARK**

LEFT THEM AND RETURNED TO JERUSALEM. 14BUT PAUL AND BARNABAS TRAVELED INLAND TO ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA.*

On the Sabbath they went to the synagogue for the services. 15After the usual readings from the books of Moses* and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them this message: "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, come and give it."

16So Paul stood, lifted his hand to quiet them, and started speaking. "Men of Israel," he said, "and you God-fearing Gentiles, listen to me.

17"The God of this nation of Israel chose our ancestors and made them multiply and grow strong during their stay in Egypt. Then with a powerful arm he led them out of their slavery. 18He put up with them* through forty years of wandering in the wilderness. 19Then he destroyed seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to Israel as an inheritance. 20All this took about 450 years.

"After that, God gave them judges to rule until the time of Samuel the prophet. 21Then the people begged for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. 22But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.'*

23"And it is one of King David's descendants, Jesus, who is God's promised Savior of Israel! 24Before he came, John the Baptist preached that all the people of Israel needed to repent of their sins and turn to God and be baptized. 25As John was finishing his ministry he asked, 'Do you think I am the Messiah? No, I am not! But he is coming soon—and I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the sandals on his feet.'

26"Brothers—you sons of Abraham, and also you God-fearing Gentiles—this message of salvation has been sent to us! 27The people in Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize Jesus as the

one the prophets had spoken about. Instead, they condemned him,
and in doing this they fulfilled the prophets' words that are read
every Sabbath. 28They found no legal reason to execute him, but
they asked Pilate to have him killed anyway.

29"When they had done all that the prophecies said about him, they
took him down from the cross* and placed him in a tomb. 30But God
raised him from the dead! 31And over a period of many days he
appeared to those who had gone with him from Galilee to
Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people of Israel.

32"And now we are here to bring you this Good News. The promise
was made to our ancestors, 33and God has now fulfilled it for us,
their descendants, by raising Jesus. This is what the second psalm
says about Jesus: 'You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.*'

34For God had promised to raise him from the dead, not leaving him
to rot in the grave. He said, 'I will give you the sacred blessings I
promised to David.'*35Another psalm explains it more fully: 'You
will not allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.'*36This is not a
reference to David, for after David had done the will of God in his
own generation, he died and was buried with his ancestors, and his
body decayed. 37No, it was a reference to someone else—someone
whom God raised and whose body did not decay.

38*"Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man
Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. 39Everyone who believes in
him is declared right with God—something the law of Moses could
never do. 40Be careful! Don't let the prophets' words apply to you.
For they said,

41'Look, you mockers, be amazed and die!

For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't
believe even if someone told you about it.'*"

42As Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue that day, the people
begged them to speak about these things again the next week.
43Many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and
Barnabas, and the two men urged them to continue to rely on the
grace of God.

PAUL TURNS TO THE GENTILES

44The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear them
preach the word of the Lord. 45But when some of the Jews saw the
crowds, they were jealous; so they slandered Paul and argued
against whatever he said.

46Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, "It was
necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But
since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of
eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles. 47For the Lord gave us
this command when he said, 'I have made you a light to the
Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.'*"

48When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked
the Lord for his message; and all who were chosen for eternal life
became believers. 49So the Lord's message spread throughout that
region.

50Then the Jews stirred up the influential religious women and the
leaders of the city, and they incited a mob against Paul and
Barnabas and ran them out of town. 51So they shook the dust from
their feet as a sign of rejection and went to the town of Iconium.
52And the believers* were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 14

PAUL AND BARNABAS IN ICONIUM

1The same thing happened in Iconium.* Paul and Barnabas went to
the Jewish synagogue and preached with such power that a great
number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. 2Some of the
Jews, however, spurned God's message and poisoned the minds of
the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas. 3But the apostles stayed
there a long time, preaching boldly about the grace of the Lord.
And the Lord proved their message was true by giving them power
to do miraculous signs and wonders. 4But the people of the town
were divided in their opinion about them. Some sided with the
Jews, and some with the apostles.

5Then a mob of Gentiles and Jews, along with their leaders, decided
to attack and stone them. 6When the apostles learned of it, they fled
to the region of Lycaonia—to the towns of Lystra and Derbe and the
surrounding area. 7And there they preached the Good News.

PAUL AND BARNABAS IN LYSTRA AND DERBE

8While they were at Lystra, Paul and Barnabas came upon a man
with crippled feet. He had been that way from birth, so he had
never walked. He was sitting 9and listening as Paul preached.
Looking straight at him, Paul realized he had faith to be healed.
10So Paul called to him in a loud voice, "Stand up!" And the man
jumped to his feet and started walking.

11When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in their
local dialect, “These men are gods in human form!” 12They decided
that Barnabas was the Greek god Zeus and that Paul was Hermes,
since he was the chief speaker. 13Now the temple of Zeus was
located just outside the town. So the priest of the temple and the
crowd brought bulls and wreaths of flowers to the town gates, and
they prepared to offer sacrifices to the apostles.

14But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard what was
happening, they tore their clothing in dismay and ran out among
the people, shouting, 15“Friends,* why are you doing this? We are
merely human beings—just like you! We have come to bring you
the Good News that you should turn from these worthless things
and turn to the living God, who made heaven and earth, the sea,
and everything in them. 16In the past he permitted all the nations to
go their own ways, 17but he never left them without evidence of
himself and his goodness. For instance, he sends you rain and good
crops and gives you food and joyful hearts.” 18But even with these
words, Paul and Barnabas could scarcely restrain the people from
sacrificing to them.

19Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and won the
crowds to their side. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of
town, thinking he was dead. 20But as the believers* gathered around
him, he got up and went back into the town. The next day he left
with Barnabas for Derbe.

PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURN TO ANTIOCH OF SYRIA
21AFTER PREACHING THE GOOD NEWS IN DERBE AND
MAKING MANY DISCIPLES, PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURNED
TO LYSTRA, ICONIUM, AND ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA, 22WHERE
THEY STRENGTHENED THE BELIEVERS. THEY ENCOURAGED
THEM TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, REMINDING THEM THAT
WE MUST SUFFER MANY HARDSHIPS TO ENTER THE
KINGDOM OF GOD. 23PAUL AND BARNABAS ALSO APPOINTED
ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH. WITH PRAYER AND FASTING,
THEY TURNED THE ELDERS OVER TO THE CARE OF THE
LORD, IN WHOM THEY HAD PUT THEIR TRUST. 24THEN THEY

TRAVELED BACK THROUGH PISIDIA TO PAMPHYLIA. 25**THEY PREACHED THE WORD IN PERGA, THEN WENT DOWN TO ATTALIA.**

26Finally, they returned by ship to Antioch of Syria, where their journey had begun. The believers there had entrusted them to the grace of God to do the work they had now completed. 27Upon arriving in Antioch, they called the church together and reported everything God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, too. 28And they stayed there with the believers for a long time.

Acts 15

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

1While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from
Judea arrived and began to teach the believers*: “Unless you are
circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.”
2Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently.
Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem,

accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question. 3The church sent the delegates to Jerusalem, and they stopped along the way in Phoenicia and Samaria to visit the believers. They told them—much to everyone's joy—that the Gentiles, too, were being converted.

4When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them. 5But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, "The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses."

6So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue. 7At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: "Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they could hear the Good News and believe. 8God knows people's hearts, and he confirmed that he accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. 9He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith. 10So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers* with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? 11We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus."

12Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

13When they had finished, James stood and said, "Brothers, listen to me. 14Peter* has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for himself. 15And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted. As it is written:

16‘Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house* of David.
I will rebuild its ruins and restore it,

17so that the rest of humanity might seek the LORD, including the
Gentiles— all those I have called to be mine.
The LORD has spoken—

18he who made these things known so long ago.’*

19“And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. 20Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from eating food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming blood. 21For these laws of Moses have been preached in Jewish synagogues in every city on every Sabbath for many generations.”

THE LETTER FOR GENTILE BELIEVERS

22Then the apostles and elders together with the whole church in Jerusalem chose delegates, and they sent them to Antioch of Syria with Paul and Barnabas to report on this decision. The men chosen were two of the church leaders*—Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas. 23This is the letter they took with them:

“This letter is from the apostles and elders, your brothers in Jerusalem. It is written to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings!

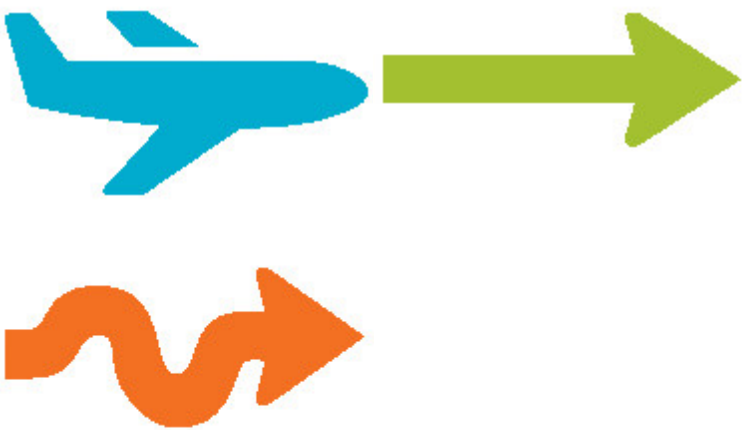
24“We understand that some men from here have troubled you and upset you with their teaching, but we did not send them! 25So we decided, having come to complete agreement, to send you official representatives, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27We are sending Judas and Silas to confirm what we have decided concerning your question.

28“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you than these few requirements: 29You must abstain

from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. If you do this, you will do well. Farewell."

30The messengers went at once to Antioch, where they called a general meeting of the believers and delivered the letter. 31And there was great joy throughout the church that day as they read this encouraging message.

32Then Judas and Silas, both being prophets, spoke at length to the believers, encouraging and strengthening their faith. 33They stayed for a while, and then the believers sent them back to the church in Jerusalem with a blessing of peace.*35Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. They and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord there.



PAUL AND BARNABAS SEPARATE

36After some time Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new believers are doing." 37Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. 38But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work. 39Their disagreement was so

sharp that they separated. Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. 40Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord's gracious care. 41Then he traveled throughout Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches there.

Acts 16

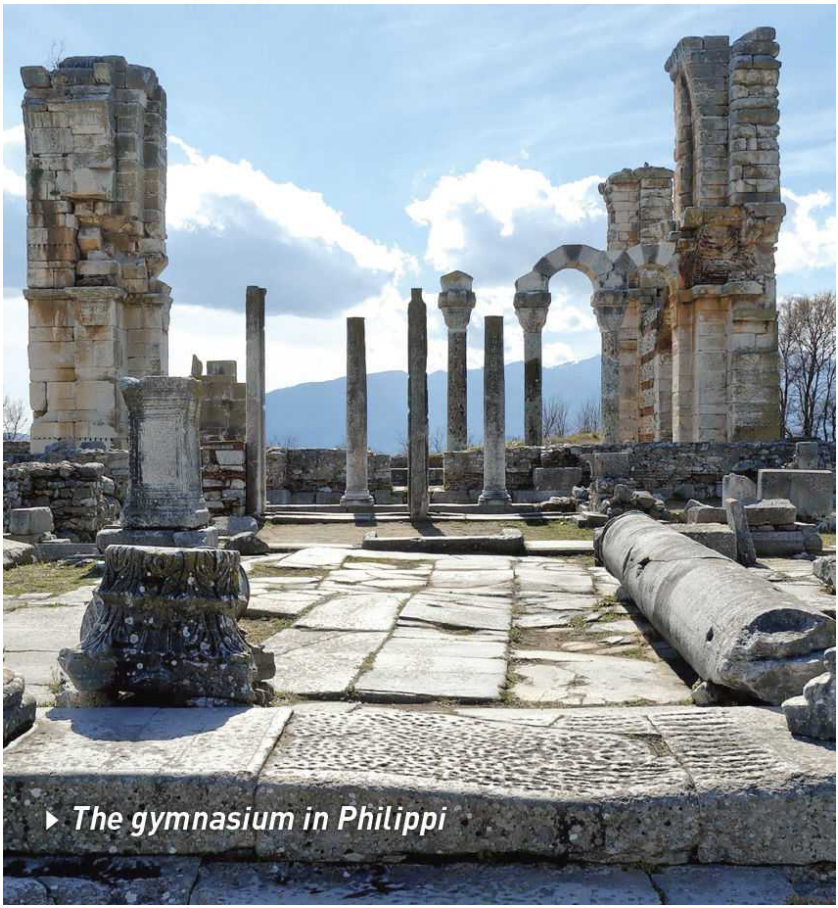
PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

1Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek. 2Timothy was well thought of by the believers* in Lystra and Iconium, 3so Paul wanted him to join them on their journey. In deference to the Jews of the area, he arranged for Timothy to be circumcised before they left, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek. 4Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. 5So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day.

A CALL FROM MACEDONIA

6Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and
Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching
the word in the province of Asia at that time. 7Then coming to the
borders of Mysia, they headed north for the province of Bithynia,*
but again the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to go there. 8So
instead, they went on through Mysia to the seaport of Troas.

9That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern
Greece was standing there, pleading with him, “Come over to
Macedonia and help us!” 10So we* decided to leave for Macedonia at
once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good
News there.



▸ *The gymnasium in Philippi*

PHILIPPI

LYDIA OF PHILIPPI BELIEVES IN JESUS

11We boarded a boat at Troas and sailed straight across to the island
of Samothrace, and the next day we landed at Neapolis. 12From
there we reached Philippi, a major city of that district of Macedonia
and a Roman colony. And we stayed there several days.

13On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a
riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer,
and we sat down to speak with some women who had gathered

there. 14One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of
expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us,
the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying.
15She and her household were baptized, and she asked us to be her
guests. “If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord,” she said,
“come and stay at my home.” And she urged us until we agreed.

PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON

16One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a
slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She
earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes. 17She
followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants
of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be
saved.”

18This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he
turned and said to the demon within her, “I command you in the
name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And instantly it left her.

19Her masters’ hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed
Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the
marketplace. 20“The whole city is in an uproar because of these
Jews!” they shouted to the city officials. 21“They are teaching
customs that are illegal for us Romans to practice.”

22A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials
ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. 23They were
severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer
was ordered to make sure they didn’t escape. 24So the jailer put
them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks.

25Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns
to God, and the other prisoners were listening. 26Suddenly, there
was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its
foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of

every prisoner fell off! 27The jailer woke up to see the prison doors
wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his
sword to kill himself. 28But Paul shouted to him, “Stop! Don’t kill
yourself! We are all here!”

29The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down
trembling before Paul and Silas. 30Then he brought them out and
asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

31They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved,
along with everyone in your household.” 32And they shared the
word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household.
33Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and
washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were
immediately baptized. 34He brought them into his house and set a
meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because
they all believed in God.

35The next morning the city officials sent the police to tell the jailer,
“Let those men go!” 36So the jailer told Paul, “The city officials have
said you and Silas are free to leave. Go in peace.”

37But Paul replied, “They have publicly beaten us without a trial
and put us in prison—and we are Roman citizens. So now they want
us to leave secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves to
release us!”

38When the police reported this, the city officials were alarmed to
learn that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. 39So they came to the
jail and apologized to them. Then they brought them out and
begged them to leave the city. 40When Paul and Silas left the prison,
they returned to the home of Lydia. There they met with the
believers and encouraged them once more. Then they left town.

THESSALONICA

Acts 17

PAUL PREACHES IN THESSALONICA

1Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and
Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish
synagogue. 2As was Paul's custom, he went to the synagogue
service, and for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to
reason with the people. 3He explained the prophecies and proved
that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. He said, "This
Jesus I'm telling you about is the Messiah." 4Some of the Jews who
listened were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many
God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women.*

5But some of the Jews were jealous, so they gathered some
troublemakers from the marketplace to form a mob and start a riot.
They attacked the home of Jason, searching for Paul and Silas so
they could drag them out to the crowd.*6Not finding them there,
they dragged out Jason and some of the other believers* instead and
took them before the city council. "Paul and Silas have caused
trouble all over the world," they shouted, "and now they are here
disturbing our city, too. 7And Jason has welcomed them into his
home. They are all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess
allegiance to another king, named Jesus."

8The people of the city, as well as the city council, were thrown into
turmoil by these reports. 9So the officials forced Jason and the other
believers to post bond, and then they released them.

PAUL AND SILAS IN BEREA

10That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When
they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11And the
people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica,

and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. 12As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men.

13But when some Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they went there and stirred up trouble. 14The believers acted at once, sending Paul on to the coast, while Silas and Timothy remained behind. 15Those escorting Paul went with him all the way to Athens; then they returned to Berea with instructions for Silas and Timothy to hurry and join him.

PAUL PREACHES IN ATHENS

16While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply troubled by all the idols he saw everywhere in the city. 17He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and he spoke daily in the public square to all who happened to be there.

18He also had a debate with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he told them about Jesus and his resurrection, they said, "What's this babbler trying to say with these strange ideas he's picked up?" Others said, "He seems to be preaching about some foreign gods."

19Then they took him to the high council of the city.* "Come and tell us about this new teaching," they said. 20"You are saying some rather strange things, and we want to know what it's all about."

21(It should be explained that all the Athenians as well as the foreigners in Athens seemed to spend all their time discussing the latest ideas.)

22So Paul, standing before the council,* addressed them as follows: "Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, 23for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: 'To an Unknown God.' This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I'm telling you about.

24"He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, 25and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. 26From one man* he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.

27"His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. 28For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your* own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' 29And since this is true, we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone.

30"God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. 31For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead."

32When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, "We want to hear more about this later." 33That ended Paul's discussion with them, 34but some joined him and became believers. Among them were

Dionysius, a member of the council,* a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Acts 18

PAUL MEETS PRISCILLA AND AQUILA IN CORINTH

1Then Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.*2There he became
acquainted with a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had
recently arrived from Italy with his wife, Priscilla. They had left
Italy when Claudius Caesar deported all Jews from Rome. 3Paul
lived and worked with them, for they were tentmakers* just as he
was.

4Each Sabbath found Paul at the synagogue, trying to convince the
Jews and Greeks alike. 5And after Silas and Timothy came down
from Macedonia, Paul spent all his time preaching the word. He
testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. 6But when they
opposed and insulted him, Paul shook the dust from his clothes and
said, “Your blood is upon your own heads—I am innocent. From
now on I will go preach to the Gentiles.”

7Then he left and went to the home of Titius Justus, a Gentile who
worshiped God and lived next door to the synagogue. 8Crispus, the
leader of the synagogue, and everyone in his household believed in
the Lord. Many others in Corinth also heard Paul, became believers,
and were baptized.

9One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him, “Don’t
be afraid! Speak out! Don’t be silent! 10For I am with you, and no
one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to
me.” 11So Paul stayed there for the next year and a half, teaching
the word of God.

12But when Gallio became governor of Achaia, some Jews rose up
together against Paul and brought him before the governor for
judgment. 13They accused Paul of “persuading people to worship
God in ways that are contrary to our law.”

14But just as Paul started to make his defense, Gallio turned to
Paul's accusers and said, "Listen, you Jews, if this were a case
involving some wrongdoing or a serious crime, I would have a
reason to accept your case. 15But since it is merely a question of
words and names and your Jewish law, take care of it yourselves. I
refuse to judge such matters." 16And he threw them out of the
courtroom.

17The crowd* then grabbed Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue,
and beat him right there in the courtroom. But Gallio paid no
attention.

**PAUL RETURNS TO ANTIOCH OF SYRIA 18PAUL STAYED IN
CORINTH FOR SOME TIME AFTER THAT, THEN SAID GOOD-
BYE TO THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS* AND WENT TO NEARBY
CENCHREA. THERE HE SHAVED HIS HEAD ACCORDING TO
JEWISH CUSTOM, MARKING THE END OF A VOW. THEN HE
SET SAIL FOR SYRIA, TAKING PRISCILLA AND AQUILA WITH
HIM.**

19They stopped first at the port of Ephesus, where Paul left the
others behind. While he was there, he went to the synagogue to
reason with the Jews. 20They asked him to stay longer, but he
declined. 21As he left, however, he said, "I will come back later,*
God willing." Then he set sail from Ephesus. 22The next stop was at
the port of Caesarea. From there he went up and visited the church
at Jerusalem* and then went back to Antioch.

23After spending some time in Antioch, Paul went back through
Galatia and Phrygia, visiting and strengthening all the believers.*

APOLLOS INSTRUCTED AT EPHESUS

24Meanwhile, a Jew named Apollos, an eloquent speaker who knew
the Scriptures well, had arrived in Ephesus from Alexandria in
Egypt. 25He had been taught the way of the Lord, and he taught
others about Jesus with an enthusiastic spirit* and with accuracy.
However, he knew only about John's baptism. 26When Priscilla and
Aquila heard him preaching boldly in the synagogue, they took him
aside and explained the way of God even more accurately.

SENDING LETTERS

27Apollos had been thinking about going to Achaia, and the
brothers and sisters in Ephesus encouraged him to go. They wrote
to the believers in Achaia, asking them to welcome him. When he
arrived there, he proved to be of great benefit to those who, by
God's grace, had believed. 28He refuted the Jews with powerful
arguments in public debate. Using the Scriptures, he explained to

them that Jesus was the Messiah.

EPHESUS

Acts 19

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

1While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior
regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found
several believers.*2"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you
believed?" he asked them.

"No," they replied, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy
Spirit."

3"Then what baptism did you experience?" he asked.

And they replied, "The baptism of John."

4Paul said, "John's baptism called for repentance from sin. But John
himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later,
meaning Jesus."

5As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the
Lord Jesus. 6Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit
came on them, and they spoke in other tongues* and prophesied.
7There were about twelve men in all.

PAUL MINISTERS IN EPHESUS

8Then Paul went to the synagogue and preached boldly for the next
three months, arguing persuasively about the Kingdom of God. 9But
some became stubborn, rejecting his message and publicly speaking
against the Way. So Paul left the synagogue and took the believers
with him. Then he held daily discussions at the lecture hall of
Tyrannus. 10This went on for the next two years, so that people
throughout the province of Asia—both Jews and Greeks—heard the
word of the Lord.

DEMONS ACTS 19:11-20

11God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. 12When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled.

13A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, “I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!” 14Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this. 15But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, “I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?” 16Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.

17The story of what happened spread quickly all through Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. A solemn fear descended on the city, and the name of the Lord Jesus was greatly honored. 18Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices. 19A number of them who had been practicing sorcery brought their incantation books and burned them at a public bonfire. The value of the books was several million dollars.*20So the message about the Lord spread widely and had a powerful effect.

21Afterward Paul felt compelled by the Spirit* to go over to Macedonia and Achaia before going to Jerusalem. “And after that,”

he said, “I must go on to Rome!” 22He sent his two assistants,
Timothy and Erastus, ahead to Macedonia while he stayed awhile
longer in the province of Asia.

THE RIOT IN EPHESUS

23About that time, serious trouble developed in Ephesus concerning
the Way. 24It began with Demetrius, a silversmith who had a large
business manufacturing silver shrines of the Greek goddess
Artemis.* He kept many craftsmen busy. 25He called them together,
along with others employed in similar trades, and addressed them
as follows: “Gentlemen, you know that our wealth comes from this
business. 26But as you have seen and heard, this man Paul has
persuaded many people that handmade gods aren’t really gods at
all. And he’s done this not only here in Ephesus but throughout the
entire province! 27Of course, I’m not just talking about the loss of
public respect for our business. I’m also concerned that the temple
of the great goddess Artemis will lose its influence and that Artemis
—this magnificent goddess worshiped throughout the province of
Asia and all around the world—will be robbed of her great
prestige!”

28At this their anger boiled, and they began shouting, “Great is
Artemis of the Ephesians!” 29Soon the whole city was filled with
confusion. Everyone rushed to the amphitheater, dragging along
Gaius and Aristarchus, who were Paul’s traveling companions from
Macedonia. 30Paul wanted to go in, too, but the believers wouldn’t
let him. 31Some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, also
sent a message to him, begging him not to risk his life by entering
the amphitheater.

32Inside, the people were all shouting, some one thing and some
another. Everything was in confusion. In fact, most of them didn’t
even know why they were there. 33The Jews in the crowd pushed
Alexander forward and told him to explain the situation. He
motioned for silence and tried to speak. 34But when the crowd
realized he was a Jew, they started shouting again and kept it up
for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! Great is

Artemis of the Ephesians!”

35At last the mayor was able to quiet them down enough to speak.
“Citizens of Ephesus,” he said. “Everyone knows that Ephesus is the
official guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, whose image
fell down to us from heaven. 36Since this is an undeniable fact, you
should stay calm and not do anything rash. 37You have brought
these men here, but they have stolen nothing from the temple and
have not spoken against our goddess.

38“If Demetrius and the craftsmen have a case against them, the
courts are in session and the officials can hear the case at once. Let
them make formal charges. 39And if there are complaints about
other matters, they can be settled in a legal assembly. 40I am afraid
we are in danger of being charged with rioting by the Roman
government, since there is no cause for all this commotion. And if
Rome demands an explanation, we won’t know what to say.”
41*Then he dismissed them, and they dispersed.

Acts 20

PAUL GOES TO MACEDONIA AND GREECE

1When the uproar was over, Paul sent for the believers* and
encouraged them. Then he said good-bye and left for Macedonia.
2While there, he encouraged the believers in all the towns he passed
through. Then he traveled down to Greece, 3where he stayed for
three months. He was preparing to sail back to Syria when he
discovered a plot by some Jews against his life, so he decided to
return through Macedonia.

4Several men were traveling with him. They were Sopater son of
Pyrrhus from Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica;
Gaius from Derbe; Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus from the
province of Asia. 5They went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.
6After the Passover* ended, we boarded a ship at Philippi in
Macedonia and five days later joined them in Troas, where we
stayed a week.

PAUL'S FINAL VISIT TO TROAS

7On the first day of the week, we gathered with the local believers
to share in the Lord's Supper.* Paul was preaching to them, and
since he was leaving the next day, he kept talking until midnight.
8The upstairs room where we met was lighted with many flickering
lamps. 9As Paul spoke on and on, a young man named Eutychus,
sitting on the windowsill, became very drowsy. Finally, he fell
sound asleep and dropped three stories to his death below. 10Paul
went down, bent over him, and took him into his arms. "Don't
worry," he said, "he's alive!" 11Then they all went back upstairs,
shared in the Lord's Supper,* and ate together. Paul continued
talking to them until dawn, and then he left. 12Meanwhile, the
young man was taken home alive and well, and everyone was
greatly relieved.

PAUL MEETS THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

13Paul went by land to Assos, where he had arranged for us to join
him, while we traveled by ship. 14He joined us there, and we sailed
together to Mitylene. 15The next day we sailed past the island of
Kios. The following day we crossed to the island of Samos, and* a
day later we arrived at Miletus.

16Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus, for he didn't want to
spend any more time in the province of Asia. He was hurrying to
get to Jerusalem, if possible, in time for the Festival of Pentecost.
17But when we landed at Miletus, he sent a message to the elders of
the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him.

18When they arrived he declared, "You know that from the day I set
foot in the province of Asia until now 19I have done the Lord's work
humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to
me from the plots of the Jews. 20I never shrank back from telling
you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. 21I
have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of
repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our
Lord Jesus.

22“And now I am bound by the Spirit* to go to Jerusalem. I don’t
know what awaits me, 23except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city
after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. 24But my life is worth
nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by
the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the
wonderful grace of God.

25“And now I know that none of you to whom I have preached the
Kingdom will ever see me again. 26I declare today that I have been
faithful. If anyone suffers eternal death, it’s not my fault,*27for I
didn’t shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know.

28“So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s
flock—his church, purchased with his own blood*—over which the
Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.*29I know that false
teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave,
not sparing the flock. 30Even some men from your own group will
rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. 31Watch
out! Remember the three years I was with you—my constant watch
and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you.

32“And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that
is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he
has set apart for himself.

33“I have never coveted anyone’s silver or gold or fine clothes. 34You
know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own
needs and even the needs of those who were with me. 35And I have
been a constant example of how you can help those in need by
working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It
is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

36When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them.
37They all cried as they embraced and kissed him good-bye. 38They
were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see
him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship.

Acts 21

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

1After saying farewell to the Ephesian elders, we sailed straight to
the island of Cos. The next day we reached Rhodes and then went
to Patara. 2There we boarded a ship sailing for Phoenicia. 3We
sighted the island of Cyprus, passed it on our left, and landed at the
harbor of Tyre, in Syria, where the ship was to unload its cargo.

4We went ashore, found the local believers,* and stayed with them a
week. These believers prophesied through the Holy Spirit that Paul
should not go on to Jerusalem. 5When we returned to the ship at the
end of the week, the entire congregation, including women* and
children, left the city and came down to the shore with us. There
we knelt, prayed, 6and said our farewells. Then we went aboard,
and they returned home.

7The next stop after leaving Tyre was Ptolemais, where we greeted
the brothers and sisters* and stayed for one day. 8The next day we
went on to Caesarea and stayed at the home of Philip the
Evangelist, one of the seven men who had been chosen to distribute
food. 9He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of
prophecy.

10Several days later a man named Agabus, who also had the gift of

prophecy, arrived from Judea. 11He came over, took Paul's belt, and bound his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit declares, 'So shall the owner of this belt be bound by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and turned over to the Gentiles.'" 12When we heard this, we and the local believers all begged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

13But he said, "Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but even to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus." 14When it was clear that we couldn't persuade him, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

PAUL ARRIVES AT JERUSALEM

15After this we packed our things and left for Jerusalem. 16Some believers from Caesarea accompanied us, and they took us to the home of Mnason, a man originally from Cyprus and one of the early believers. 17When we arrived, the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem welcomed us warmly.

18The next day Paul went with us to meet with James, and all the elders of the Jerusalem church were present. 19After greeting them, Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20After hearing this, they praised God. And then they said, "You know, dear brother, how many thousands of Jews have also believed, and they all follow the law of Moses very seriously. 21But the Jewish believers here in Jerusalem have been told that you are teaching all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn their backs on the laws of Moses. They've heard that you teach them not to circumcise their children or follow other Jewish customs. 22What should we do? They will certainly hear that you have come.

23"Here's what we want you to do. We have four men here who have completed their vow. 24Go with them to the Temple and join them in the purification ceremony, paying for them to have their

heads ritually shaved. Then everyone will know that the rumors are all false and that you yourself observe the Jewish laws.

25“As for the Gentile believers, they should do what we already told them in a letter: They should abstain from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality.”

PAUL IS ARRESTED

26So Paul went to the Temple the next day with the other men. They had already started the purification ritual, so he publicly announced the date when their vows would end and sacrifices would be offered for each of them.

27The seven days were almost ended when some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul in the Temple and roused a mob against him. They grabbed him, 28yelling, “Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who preaches against our people everywhere and tells everybody to disobey the Jewish laws. He speaks against the Temple—and even defiles this holy place by bringing in Gentiles.*” 29(For earlier that day they had seen him in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus,* and they assumed Paul had taken him into the Temple.)

30The whole city was rocked by these accusations, and a great riot followed. Paul was grabbed and dragged out of the Temple, and immediately the gates were closed behind him. 31As they were trying to kill him, word reached the commander of the Roman regiment that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32He immediately called out his soldiers and officers* and ran down among the crowd. When the mob saw the commander and the troops coming, they stopped beating Paul.

33Then the commander arrested him and ordered him bound with two chains. He asked the crowd who he was and what he had done. 34Some shouted one thing and some another. Since he couldn’t find

out the truth in all the uproar and confusion, he ordered that Paul be taken to the fortress. 35As Paul reached the stairs, the mob grew so violent the soldiers had to lift him to their shoulders to protect him. 36And the crowd followed behind, shouting, “Kill him, kill him!”

PAUL SPEAKS TO THE CROWD

37As Paul was about to be taken inside, he said to the commander, “May I have a word with you?”

“Do you know Greek?” the commander asked, surprised. 38“Aren’t you the Egyptian who led a rebellion some time ago and took 4,000 members of the Assassins out into the desert?”

39“No,” Paul replied, “I am a Jew and a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, which is an important city. Please, let me talk to these people.” 40The commander agreed, so Paul stood on the stairs and motioned to the people to be quiet. Soon a deep silence enveloped the crowd, and he addressed them in their own language, Aramaic.*

Acts 22

1“Brothers and esteemed fathers,” Paul said, “listen to me as I offer my defense.” 2When they heard him speaking in their own language,* the silence was even greater.

3Then Paul said, “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. As his student, I was carefully trained in our Jewish laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today. 4And I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison. 5The high priest and the whole council of elders can testify that this is so. For I received letters from them to our Jewish brothers in Damascus, authorizing me to bring the followers of the Way from there to Jerusalem, in chains, to be punished.

6“As I was on the road, approaching Damascus about noon, a very
bright light from heaven suddenly shone down around me. 7I fell to
the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you
persecuting me?’

8“‘Who are you, lord?’ I asked.

“And the voice replied, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene,* the one you are
persecuting.’ 9The people with me saw the light but didn’t
understand the voice speaking to me.

10“I asked, ‘What should I do, Lord?’

“And the Lord told me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there
you will be told everything you are to do.’

11“I was blinded by the intense light and had to be led by the hand
to Damascus by my companions. 12A man named Ananias lived
there. He was a godly man, deeply devoted to the law, and well
regarded by all the Jews of Damascus. 13He came and stood beside
me and said, ‘Brother Saul, regain your sight.’ And that very
moment I could see him!

14“Then he told me, ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to
know his will and to see the Righteous One and hear him speak.
15For you are to be his witness, telling everyone what you have seen
and heard. 16What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized.
Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord.’

17“After I returned to Jerusalem, I was praying in the Temple and
fell into a trance. 18I saw a vision of Jesus* saying to me, ‘Hurry!
Leave Jerusalem, for the people here won’t accept your testimony
about me.’

19"'But Lord,' I argued, 'they certainly know that in every synagogue
I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20And I was in
complete agreement when your witness Stephen was killed. I stood
by and kept the coats they took off when they stoned him.'

21"But the Lord said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the
Gentiles!'"

22The crowd listened until Paul said that word. Then they all began
to shout, "Away with such a fellow! He isn't fit to live!" 23They
yelled, threw off their coats, and tossed handfuls of dust into the
air.

PAUL REVEALS HIS ROMAN CITIZENSHIP

24The commander brought Paul inside and ordered him lashed with
whips to make him confess his crime. He wanted to find out why
the crowd had become so furious. 25When they tied Paul down to
lash him, Paul said to the officer* standing there, "Is it legal for you
to whip a Roman citizen who hasn't even been tried?"

26When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and
asked, "What are you doing? This man is a Roman citizen!"

27So the commander went over and asked Paul, "Tell me, are you a
Roman citizen?"

"Yes, I certainly am," Paul replied.

28"I am, too," the commander muttered, "and it cost me plenty!"

Paul answered, "But I am a citizen by birth!"

29The soldiers who were about to interrogate Paul quickly withdrew
when they heard he was a Roman citizen, and the commander was
frightened because he had ordered him bound and whipped.

PAUL BEFORE THE HIGH COUNCIL

30The next day the commander ordered the leading priests into
session with the Jewish high council.* He wanted to find out what
the trouble was all about, so he released Paul to have him stand
before them.

Acts 23

1Gazing intently at the high council,* Paul began: “Brothers, I have
always lived before God with a clear conscience!”

2Instantly Ananias the high priest commanded those close to Paul to
slap him on the mouth. 3But Paul said to him, “God will slap you,
you corrupt hypocrite!* What kind of judge are you to break the law
yourself by ordering me struck like that?”

4Those standing near Paul said to him, “Do you dare to insult God’s
high priest?”

5“I’m sorry, brothers. I didn’t realize he was the high priest,” Paul
replied, “for the Scriptures say, ‘You must not speak evil of any of
your rulers.’*”

6Paul realized that some members of the high council were
Sadducees and some were Pharisees, so he shouted, “Brothers, I am
a Pharisee, as were my ancestors! And I am on trial because my
hope is in the resurrection of the dead!”

7This divided the council—the Pharisees against the Sadducees—
8for the Sadducees say there is no resurrection or angels or spirits,
but the Pharisees believe in all of these. 9So there was a great

uproar. Some of the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees jumped up and began to argue forcefully. “We see nothing wrong with him,” they shouted. “Perhaps a spirit or an angel spoke to him.” 10As the conflict grew more violent, the commander was afraid they would tear Paul apart. So he ordered his soldiers to go and rescue him by force and take him back to the fortress.

11That night the Lord appeared to Paul and said, “Be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to me here in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well.”

THE PLAN TO KILL PAUL

12The next morning a group of Jews* got together and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13There were more than forty of them in the conspiracy. 14They went to the leading priests and elders and told them, “We have bound ourselves with an oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15So you and the high council should ask the commander to bring Paul back to the council again. Pretend you want to examine his case more fully. We will kill him on the way.”

16But Paul’s nephew—his sister’s son—heard of their plan and went to the fortress and told Paul. 17Paul called for one of the Roman officers* and said, “Take this young man to the commander. He has something important to tell him.”

18So the officer did, explaining, “Paul, the prisoner, called me over and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you.”

19The commander took his hand, led him aside, and asked, “What is it you want to tell me?”

20Paul’s nephew told him, “Some Jews are going to ask you to bring

Paul before the high council tomorrow, pretending they want to get some more information. 21But don't do it! There are more than forty men hiding along the way ready to ambush him. They have vowed not to eat or drink anything until they have killed him. They are ready now, just waiting for your consent."

22"Don't let anyone know you told me this," the commander warned the young man.

PAUL IS SENT TO CAESAREA

23Then the commander called two of his officers and ordered, "Get 200 soldiers ready to leave for Caesarea at nine o'clock tonight. Also take 200 spearmen and 70 mounted troops. 24Provide horses for Paul to ride, and get him safely to Governor Felix." 25Then he wrote this letter to the governor:

26"From Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings!

27"This man was seized by some Jews, and they were about to kill him when I arrived with the troops. When I learned that he was a Roman citizen, I removed him to safety. 28Then I took him to their high council to try to learn the basis of the accusations against him. 29I soon discovered the charge was something regarding their religious law—certainly nothing worthy of imprisonment or death. 30But when I was informed of a plot to kill him, I immediately sent him on to you. I have told his accusers to bring their charges before you."

31So that night, as ordered, the soldiers took Paul as far as Antipatris. 32They returned to the fortress the next morning, while the mounted troops took him on to Caesarea. 33When they arrived in Caesarea, they presented Paul and the letter to Governor Felix. 34He read it and then asked Paul what province he was from. "Cilicia," Paul answered.

35“I will hear your case myself when your accusers arrive,” the governor told him. Then the governor ordered him kept in the prison at Herod’s headquarters.*

Acts 24

PAUL APPEARS BEFORE FELIX

1Five days later Ananias, the high priest, arrived with some of the Jewish elders and the lawyer* Tertullus, to present their case against Paul to the governor. 2When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented the charges against Paul in the following address to the governor: “You have provided a long period of peace for us Jews and with foresight have enacted reforms for us. 3For all of this, Your Excellency, we are very grateful to you. 4But I don’t want to bore you, so please give me your attention for only a moment. 5We have found this man to be a troublemaker who is constantly stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the cult known as the Nazarenes. 6Furthermore, he was trying to desecrate the Temple when we arrested him.*8You can find out the truth of our accusations by examining him yourself.” 9Then the other Jews chimed in, declaring that everything Tertullus said was true.

10The governor then motioned for Paul to speak. Paul said, “I know, sir, that you have been a judge of Jewish affairs for many years, so I gladly present my defense before you. 11You can quickly discover that I arrived in Jerusalem no more than twelve days ago to worship at the Temple. 12My accusers never found me arguing with anyone in the Temple, nor stirring up a riot in any synagogue or on the streets of the city. 13These men cannot prove the things they accuse me of doing.

14“But I admit that I follow the Way, which they call a cult. I worship the God of our ancestors, and I firmly believe the Jewish law and everything written in the prophets. 15I have the same hope in God that these men have, that he will raise both the righteous

and the unrighteous. 16Because of this, I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people.

17"After several years away, I returned to Jerusalem with money to aid my people and to offer sacrifices to God. 18My accusers saw me in the Temple as I was completing a purification ceremony. There was no crowd around me and no rioting. 19But some Jews from the province of Asia were there—and they ought to be here to bring charges if they have anything against me! 20Ask these men here what crime the Jewish high council* found me guilty of, 21except for the one time I shouted out, 'I am on trial before you today because I believe in the resurrection of the dead!'"

22At that point Felix, who was quite familiar with the Way, adjourned the hearing and said, "Wait until Lysias, the garrison commander, arrives. Then I will decide the case." 23He ordered an officer* to keep Paul in custody but to give him some freedom and allow his friends to visit him and take care of his needs.

24A few days later Felix came back with his wife, Drusilla, who was Jewish. Sending for Paul, they listened as he told them about faith in Christ Jesus. 25As he reasoned with them about righteousness and self-control and the coming day of judgment, Felix became frightened. "Go away for now," he replied. "When it is more convenient, I'll call for you again." 26He also hoped that Paul would bribe him, so he sent for him quite often and talked with him.

27After two years went by in this way, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And because Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jewish people, he left Paul in prison.

Acts 25

PAUL APPEARS BEFORE FESTUS

1Three days after Festus arrived in Caesarea to take over his new

responsibilities, he left for Jerusalem, 2where the leading priests and other Jewish leaders met with him and made their accusations against Paul. 3They asked Festus as a favor to transfer Paul to Jerusalem (planning to ambush and kill him on the way). 4But Festus replied that Paul was at Caesarea and he himself would be returning there soon. 5So he said, “Those of you in authority can return with me. If Paul has done anything wrong, you can make your accusations.”

6About eight or ten days later Festus returned to Caesarea, and on the following day he took his seat in court and ordered that Paul be brought in. 7When Paul arrived, the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem gathered around and made many serious accusations they couldn’t prove.

8Paul denied the charges. “I am not guilty of any crime against the Jewish laws or the Temple or the Roman government,” he said.

9Then Festus, wanting to please the Jews, asked him, “Are you willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there?”

10But Paul replied, “No! This is the official Roman court, so I ought to be tried right here. You know very well I am not guilty of harming the Jews. 11If I have done something worthy of death, I don’t refuse to die. But if I am innocent, no one has a right to turn me over to these men to kill me. I appeal to Caesar!”

12Festus conferred with his advisers and then replied, “Very well! You have appealed to Caesar, and to Caesar you will go!”

13A few days later King Agrippa arrived with his sister, Bernice,* to pay their respects to Festus. 14During their stay of several days, Festus discussed Paul’s case with the king. “There is a prisoner here,” he told him, “whose case was left for me by Felix. 15When I was in Jerusalem, the leading priests and Jewish elders pressed

charges against him and asked me to condemn him. 16I pointed out to them that Roman law does not convict people without a trial. They must be given an opportunity to confront their accusers and defend themselves.

17"When his accusers came here for the trial, I didn't delay. I called the case the very next day and ordered Paul brought in. 18But the accusations made against him weren't any of the crimes I expected. 19Instead, it was something about their religion and a dead man named Jesus, who Paul insists is alive. 20I was at a loss to know how to investigate these things, so I asked him whether he would be willing to stand trial on these charges in Jerusalem. 21But Paul appealed to have his case decided by the emperor. So I ordered that he be held in custody until I could arrange to send him to Caesar."

22"I'd like to hear the man myself," Agrippa said.

And Festus replied, "You will—tomorrow!"

PAUL SPEAKS TO AGRIPPA

23So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived at the auditorium with great pomp, accompanied by military officers and prominent men of the city. Festus ordered that Paul be brought in. 24Then Festus said, "King Agrippa and all who are here, this is the man whose death is demanded by all the Jews, both here and in Jerusalem. 25But in my opinion he has done nothing deserving death. However, since he appealed his case to the emperor, I have decided to send him to Rome.

26"But what shall I write the emperor? For there is no clear charge against him. So I have brought him before all of you, and especially you, King Agrippa, so that after we examine him, I might have something to write. 27For it makes no sense to send a prisoner to the emperor without specifying the charges against him!"

Acts 26

1Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You may speak in your defense.”

So Paul, gesturing with his hand, started his defense: 2“I am
fortunate, King Agrippa, that you are the one hearing my defense
today against all these accusations made by the Jewish leaders, 3for
I know you are an expert on all Jewish customs and controversies.
Now please listen to me patiently!

4“As the Jewish leaders are well aware, I was given a thorough
Jewish training from my earliest childhood among my own people
and in Jerusalem. 5If they would admit it, they know that I have
been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion.
6Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God’s
promise made to our ancestors. 7In fact, that is why the twelve
tribes of Israel zealously worship God night and day, and they share
the same hope I have. Yet, Your Majesty, they accuse me for having
this hope! 8Why does it seem incredible to any of you that God can
raise the dead?

9“I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose
the very name of Jesus the Nazarene.* 10Indeed, I did just that in
Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many
believers* there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against
them when they were condemned to death. 11Many times I had
them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus.* I was
so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in
foreign cities.

12“One day I was on such a mission to Damascus, armed with the
authority and commission of the leading priests. 13About noon, Your
Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the
sun shone down on me and my companions. 14We all fell down, and
I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic,*‘Saul, Saul, why are you
persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will.*’

15"'Who are you, lord?' I asked.

"And the Lord replied, 'I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting.
16Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you
as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me, and
tell them what I will show you in the future. 17And I will rescue you
from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you
to the Gentiles 18to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness
to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive
forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people,
who are set apart by faith in me.'

19"And so, King Agrippa, I obeyed that vision from heaven. 20I
preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and
throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent
of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the
good things they do. 21Some Jews arrested me in the Temple for
preaching this, and they tried to kill me. 22But God has protected
me right up to this present time so I can testify to everyone, from
the least to the greatest. I teach nothing except what the prophets
and Moses said would happen—23that the Messiah would suffer and
be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God's
light to Jews and Gentiles alike."

24Suddenly, Festus shouted, "Paul, you are insane. Too much study
has made you crazy!"

25But Paul replied, "I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. What I
am saying is the sober truth. 26And King Agrippa knows about these
things. I speak boldly, for I am sure these events are all familiar to
him, for they were not done in a corner! 27King Agrippa, do you
believe the prophets? I know you do—"

28Agrippa interrupted him. "Do you think you can persuade me to
become a Christian so quickly?"*

29Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you

and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am,
except for these chains."

30Then the king, the governor, Bernice, and all the others stood and
left. 31As they went out, they talked it over and agreed, "This man
hasn't done anything to deserve death or imprisonment."

32And Agrippa said to Festus, "He could have been set free if he
hadn't appealed to Caesar."

ANGELS ACTS 27:1-44

Acts 27

PAUL SAILS FOR ROME

1When the time came, we set sail for Italy. Paul and several other
prisoners were placed in the custody of a Roman officer* named
Julius, a captain of the Imperial Regiment. 2Aristarchus, a
Macedonian from Thessalonica, was also with us. We left on a ship
whose home port was Adramyttium on the northwest coast of the
province of Asia;* it was scheduled to make several stops at ports
along the coast of the province.

3The next day when we docked at Sidon, Julius was very kind to
Paul and let him go ashore to visit with friends so they could
provide for his needs. 4Putting out to sea from there, we
encountered strong headwinds that made it difficult to keep the
ship on course, so we sailed north of Cyprus between the island and
the mainland. 5Keeping to the open sea, we passed along the coast
of Cilicia and Pamphylia, landing at Myra, in the province of Lycia.
6There the commanding officer found an Egyptian ship from
Alexandria that was bound for Italy, and he put us on board.

7We had several days of slow sailing, and after great difficulty we
finally neared Cnidus. But the wind was against us, so we sailed
across to Crete and along the sheltered coast of the island, past the
cape of Salmone. 8We struggled along the coast with great difficulty
and finally arrived at Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. 9We had
lost a lot of time. The weather was becoming dangerous for sea
travel because it was so late in the fall,* and Paul spoke to the ship's
officers about it.

10"Men," he said, "I believe there is trouble ahead if we go on—
shipwreck, loss of cargo, and danger to our lives as well." 11But the
officer in charge of the prisoners listened more to the ship's captain
and the owner than to Paul. 12And since Fair Havens was an
exposed harbor—a poor place to spend the winter—most of the
crew wanted to go on to Phoenix, farther up the coast of Crete, and
spend the winter there. Phoenix was a good harbor with only a

southwest and northwest exposure.

THE STORM AT SEA

13When a light wind began blowing from the south, the sailors
thought they could make it. So they pulled up anchor and sailed
close to the shore of Crete. 14But the weather changed abruptly, and
a wind of typhoon strength (called a “northeaster”) burst across the
island and blew us out to sea. 15The sailors couldn’t turn the ship
into the wind, so they gave up and let it run before the gale.

16We sailed along the sheltered side of a small island named
Cauda,* where with great difficulty we hoisted aboard the lifeboat
being towed behind us. 17Then the sailors bound ropes around the
hull of the ship to strengthen it. They were afraid of being driven
across to the sandbars of Syrtis off the African coast, so they
lowered the sea anchor to slow the ship and were driven before the
wind.

18The next day, as gale-force winds continued to batter the ship, the
crew began throwing the cargo overboard. 19The following day they
even took some of the ship’s gear and threw it overboard. 20The
terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the
stars, until at last all hope was gone.

21No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew
together and said, “Men, you should have listened to me in the first
place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage
and loss. 22But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even
though the ship will go down. 23For last night an angel of the God
to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, 24and he said,
‘Don’t be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar!
What’s more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone
sailing with you.’ 25So take courage! For I believe God. It will be
just as he said. 26But we will be shipwrecked on an island.”

THE SHIPWRECK

27About midnight on the fourteenth night of the storm, as we were
being driven across the Sea of Adria,* the sailors sensed land was
near. 28They dropped a weighted line and found that the water was
120 feet deep. But a little later they measured again and found it
was only 90 feet deep.*29At this rate they were afraid we would
soon be driven against the rocks along the shore, so they threw out
four anchors from the back of the ship and prayed for daylight.

30Then the sailors tried to abandon the ship; they lowered the
lifeboat as though they were going to put out anchors from the
front of the ship. 31But Paul said to the commanding officer and the
soldiers, “You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard.” 32So the
soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboat and let it drift away.

33Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. “You have
been so worried that you haven’t touched food for two weeks,” he
said. 34“Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair
of your heads will perish.” 35Then he took some bread, gave thanks
to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it. 36Then
everyone was encouraged and began to eat—37all 276 of us who

were on board. 38After eating, the crew lightened the ship further by throwing the cargo of wheat overboard.

39When morning dawned, they didn't recognize the coastline, but they saw a bay with a beach and wondered if they could get to shore by running the ship aground. 40So they cut off the anchors and left them in the sea. Then they lowered the rudders, raised the foresail, and headed toward shore. 41But they hit a shoal and ran the ship aground too soon. The bow of the ship stuck fast, while the stern was repeatedly smashed by the force of the waves and began to break apart.

42The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to make sure they didn't swim ashore and escape. 43But the commanding officer wanted to spare Paul, so he didn't let them carry out their plan. Then he ordered all who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land. 44The others held on to planks or debris from the broken ship.* So everyone escaped safely to shore.

MALTA

Acts 28

PAUL ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA

1Once we were safe on shore, we learned that we were on the island of Malta. 2The people of the island were very kind to us. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire on the shore to welcome us.

3As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand. 4The people of the island saw it hanging from his hand and said to each other, "A murderer, no doubt! Though he escaped the sea,

justice will not permit him to live.” 5But Paul shook off the snake
into the fire and was unharmed. 6The people waited for him to swell
up or suddenly drop dead. But when they had waited a long time
and saw that he wasn’t harmed, they changed their minds and
decided he was a god.

7Near the shore where we landed was an estate belonging to
Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us and treated
us kindly for three days. 8As it happened, Publius’s father was ill
with fever and dysentery. Paul went in and prayed for him, and
laying his hands on him, he healed him. 9Then all the other sick
people on the island came and were healed. 10As a result we were
showered with honors, and when the time came to sail, people
supplied us with everything we would need for the trip.

PAUL ARRIVES AT ROME

11It was three months after the shipwreck that we set sail on
another ship that had wintered at the island—an Alexandrian ship
with the twin gods* as its figurehead. 12Our first stop was Syracuse,*
where we stayed three days. 13From there we sailed across to
Rhegium.* A day later a south wind began blowing, so the following
day we sailed up the coast to Puteoli. 14There we found some
believers,* who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we
came to Rome.

ROME

15The brothers and sisters* in Rome had heard we were coming, and
they came to meet us at the Forum* on the Appian Way. Others
joined us at The Three Taverns.* When Paul saw them, he was
encouraged and thanked God.

16When we arrived in Rome, Paul was permitted to have his own
private lodging, though he was guarded by a soldier.

PAUL PREACHES AT ROME UNDER GUARD

17Three days after Paul's arrival, he called together the local Jewish
leaders. He said to them, "Brothers, I was arrested in Jerusalem and
handed over to the Roman government, even though I had done
nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors. 18The
Romans tried me and wanted to release me, because they found no
cause for the death sentence. 19But when the Jewish leaders
protested the decision, I felt it necessary to appeal to Caesar, even
though I had no desire to press charges against my own people. 20I
asked you to come here today so we could get acquainted and so I
could explain to you that I am bound with this chain because I
believe that the hope of Israel—the Messiah—has already come."

21They replied, “We have had no letters from Judea or reports
against you from anyone who has come here. 22But we want to hear
what you believe, for the only thing we know about this movement
is that it is denounced everywhere.”

23So a time was set, and on that day a large number of people came
to Paul’s lodging. He explained and testified about the Kingdom of
God and tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Scriptures.
Using the law of Moses and the books of the prophets, he spoke to
them from morning until evening. 24Some were persuaded by the
things he said, but others did not believe. 25And after they had
argued back and forth among themselves, they left with this final
word from Paul: “The Holy Spirit was right when he said to your
ancestors through Isaiah the prophet,

26‘Go and say to this people: When you hear what I say, you will not
understand.
When you see what I do, you will not comprehend.

27For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot
hear, and they have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see,
and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and
they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.’*

28So I want you to know that this salvation from God has also been
offered to the Gentiles, and they will accept it.”*

30For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense.*
He welcomed all who visited him, 31boldly proclaiming the
Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. And no
one tried to stop him.

Romans

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

WELCOME TO

ROMANS

The book of Romans is Paul's systematic presentation of the basic beliefs of the Christian faith—including sin, salvation, and service. He begins by exploring the universal sin of humanity. Everyone is guilty of sin, but God has opened the way for us to be reunited with him. By God's grace and through his Son, Jesus Christ, we are saved from the punishment we deserve. Because we are saved we have the opportunity to live a victorious Christian life by serving God and our neighbors. Paul also provides words of comfort and assurance that nothing can ever separate us from God's love.

Unlike most of Paul's other letters, Romans is written to a group of believers Paul has not yet met at this point in his ministry. He writes this letter from the city of Corinth at the end of his third missionary journey as a way to introduce himself to the Christians of Rome. He will arrive in Rome about three years later.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly over Romans completely, but you may want to return later to read up on Paul's important teachings about sin and salvation. Your next stop is at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

2 STOPS

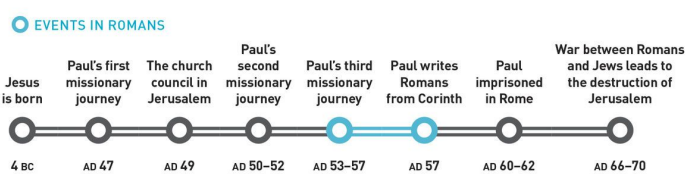
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You'll stop to read two of the most important passages in this book, both of which describe the profound blessings that are ours in Christ. Your next stop is at Romans 5:1.

3 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll encounter two of the central themes of the letter: the seriousness of sin and the power of God's saving work in Christ. Your next stop is at Romans 3:1.

FINDING JESUS IN ROMANS

In Romans, Paul shows how Jesus Christ is central to all of the Christian life. The Christian life begins with Christ—through his death and resurrection we are made right with God. Christ's great work continues as believers grow and mature to become more like him in every way. Even after life on earth ends, believers will live with Christ eternally. Paul shows how Jesus makes it possible to enter into this life with God and enables us to continue living in it. He also compares Jesus to Adam: Just as all humans received sin and death from the first Adam, so they receive salvation and life through Christ (5:12-21; see also 1 Corinthians 15:45).



THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES

Romans 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, chosen by God to
be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News. 2God promised
this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy
Scriptures. 3The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he
was born into King David's family line, 4and he was shown to be*
the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of
the Holy Spirit.* He is Jesus Christ our Lord. 5Through Christ, God
has given us the privilege* and authority as apostles to tell Gentiles
everywhere what God has done for them, so that they will believe
and obey him, bringing glory to his name.

6And you are included among those Gentiles who have been called
to belong to Jesus Christ. 7I am writing to all of you in Rome who
are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and
peace.

GOD'S GOOD NEWS

8Let me say first that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of
you, because your faith in him is being talked about all over the
world. 9God knows how often I pray for you. Day and night I bring

you and your needs in prayer to God, whom I serve with all my heart* by spreading the Good News about his Son.

10One of the things I always pray for is the opportunity, God willing, to come at last to see you. 11For I long to visit you so I can bring you some spiritual gift that will help you grow strong in the Lord. 12When we get together, I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours.

13I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters,* that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles. 14For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world,* to the educated and uneducated alike. 15So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News.

16For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.*17This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."*

GOD'S ANGER AT SIN

18But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*19They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. 20For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

21Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or

even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. 22Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. 23And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

24So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. 25They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. 26That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

28Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. 29Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. 30They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. 31They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. 32They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.

Romans 2

GOD'S JUDGMENT OF SIN

1You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as

bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things. 2And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. 3Since you judge others for doing these things, why do you think you can avoid God's judgment when you do the same things? 4Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

5But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6He will judge everyone according to what they have done. 7He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. 8But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness. 9There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil —for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.*10But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good—for the Jew first and also for the Gentile. 11For God does not show favoritism.

12When the Gentiles sin, they will be destroyed, even though they never had God's written law. And the Jews, who do have God's law, will be judged by that law when they fail to obey it. 13For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight. 14Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. 15They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. 16And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.

THE JEWS AND THE LAW

17You who call yourselves Jews are relying on God's law, and you
boast about your special relationship with him. 18You know what he
wants; you know what is right because you have been taught his
law. 19You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a
light for people who are lost in darkness. 20You think you can
instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you
are certain that God's law gives you complete knowledge and truth.

21Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You
tell others not to steal, but do you steal? 22You say it is wrong to
commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn
idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples?* 23You are
so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it.
24No wonder the Scriptures say, "The Gentiles blaspheme the name
of God because of you."*

25The Jewish ceremony of circumcision has value only if you obey
God's law. But if you don't obey God's law, you are no better off
than an uncircumcised Gentile. 26And if the Gentiles obey God's
law, won't God declare them to be his own people? 27In fact,
uncircumcised Gentiles who keep God's law will condemn you Jews
who are circumcised and possess God's law but don't obey it.

28For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish
parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of
circumcision. 29No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God.
And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law;
rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person
with a changed heart seeks praise* from God, not from people.

Romans 3

GOD REMAINS FAITHFUL

1Then what's the advantage of being a Jew? Is there any value in
the ceremony of circumcision? 2Yes, there are great benefits! First of
all, the Jews were entrusted with the whole revelation of God.*

3True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they were
unfaithful, does that mean God will be unfaithful? 4Of course not!
Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say
about him, "You will be proved right in what you say, and you will
win your case in court."*

5"But," some might say, "our sinfulness serves a good purpose, for it
helps people see how righteous God is. Isn't it unfair, then, for him
to punish us?" (This is merely a human point of view.) 6Of course
not! If God were not entirely fair, how would he be qualified to
judge the world? 7"But," someone might still argue, "how can God
condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty highlights his truthfulness
and brings him more glory?" 8And some people even slander us by
claiming that we say, "The more we sin, the better it is!" Those who

say such things deserve to be condemned.

ALL PEOPLE ARE SINNERS

9Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than
others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people,
whether Jews or Gentiles,* are under the power of sin. 10As the
Scriptures say, “No one is righteous— not even one.

11No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God.

12All have turned away; all have become useless.
No one does good, not a single one.”*

13“Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave.
Their tongues are filled with lies.”
“Snake venom drips from their lips.”*

14“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”*

15“They rush to commit murder.

16Destruction and misery always follow them.

17They don’t know where to find peace.”*

18“They have no fear of God at all.”*

19Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its
purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the
entire world is guilty before God. 20For no one can ever be made
right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply
shows us how sinful we are.

CHRIST TOOK OUR PUNISHMENT

21But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him
without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in
the writings of Moses* and the prophets long ago. 22We are made
right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true
for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

23For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious
standard. 24Yet God freely and graciously declares that we are
righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from
the penalty for our sins. 25For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice
for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that
Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows
that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those
who sinned in times past, 26for he was looking ahead and including
them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to
demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he
declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

27Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by
God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It
is based on faith. 28So we are made right with God through faith
and not by obeying the law.

29After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of
the Gentiles? Of course he is. 30There is only one God, and he makes
people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or
Gentiles.*31Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we
can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have
faith do we truly fulfill the law.

Romans 4

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

1Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish
nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? 2If
his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have
had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. 3For the
Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as
righteous because of his faith."*

4When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they
have earned. 5But people are counted as righteous, not because of
their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners.
6David also spoke of this when he described the happiness of those
who are declared righteous without working for it:

7"Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins
are put out of sight.

8Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of
sin."*

9Now, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it also for
uncircumcised Gentiles?* Well, we have been saying that Abraham
was counted as righteous by God because of his faith. 10But how did
this happen? Was he counted as righteous only after he was
circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? Clearly, God

accepted Abraham before he was circumcised!

11Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous—even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith. 12And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. 14If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. 15For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

16So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. 17That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations."* This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing.

18Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!"*19And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb.

20Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. 21He was

fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. 22And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. 23And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded 24for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

GOD LOVES YOU ROMANS 5:1-11

Romans 5

FAITH BRINGS JOY

1Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith,
we have peace* with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has
done for us. 2Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this
place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we
confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

3We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we
know that they help us develop endurance. 4And endurance
develops strength of character, and character strengthens our
confident hope of salvation. 5And this hope will not lead to
disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he
has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

6When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time
and died for us sinners. 7Now, most people would not be willing to
die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing
to die for a person who is especially good. 8But God showed his
great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still
sinners. 9And since we have been made right in God's sight by the
blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation.
10For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his
Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved

through the life of his Son. 11So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

ADAM AND CHRIST CONTRASTED

12When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. 13Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. 14Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. 15But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. 16And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. 17For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

18Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. 19Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed

God, many will be made righteous.

20God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. 21So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6

SIN'S POWER IS BROKEN

1Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? 3Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 4For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

5Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory

of God. 11So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

12Do not let sin control the way you live;* do not give in to sinful desires. 13Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. 14Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.

15Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! 16Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. 17Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. 18Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

19Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

20When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. 21And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. 22But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. 23For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

NO LONGER BOUND TO THE LAW

1Now, dear brothers and sisters*—you who are familiar with the
law—don't you know that the law applies only while a person is
living? 2For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to
her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of
marriage no longer apply to her. 3So while her husband is alive, she
would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if
her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit
adultery when she remarries.

4So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the
power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are
united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we
can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. 5When we were
controlled by our old nature,* sinful desires were at work within us,
and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of
sinful deeds, resulting in death. 6But now we have been released
from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its
power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the
letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.

GOD'S LAW REVEALS OUR SIN

7Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course
not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never
have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "You
must not covet."*8But sin used this command to arouse all kinds of
covetous desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not
have that power. 9At one time I lived without understanding the
law. But when I learned the command not to covet, for instance, the
power of sin came to life, 10and I died. So I discovered that the law's
commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual
death instead. 11Sin took advantage of those commands and
deceived me; it used the commands to kill me. 12But still, the law
itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good.

13But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my death? Of course not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation to death. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God's good commands for its own evil purposes.

STRUGGLING WITH SIN

14So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. 15I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. 16But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. 17So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

18And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.* I want to do what is right, but I can't. 19I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. 20But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

21I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22I love God's law with all my heart. 23But there is another power* within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Romans 8

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

1So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ
Jesus. 2And because you belong to him, the power* of the life-giving
Spirit has freed you* from the power of sin that leads to death. 3The
law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our
sinful nature.* So God did what the law could not do. He sent his

own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. 4He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

5Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. 6So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. 7For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. 8That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

9But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) 10And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life* because you have been made right with God. 11The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

12Therefore, dear brothers and sisters,* you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. 13For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature,* you will live. 14For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children* of God.

SUFFERING ROMANS 8:15-30

15So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves.
Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own
children.* Now we call him, "Abba, Father."*16For his Spirit joins
with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. 17And since we
are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we
are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must
also share his suffering.

THE FUTURE GLORY

18Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will
reveal to us later. 19For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future
day when God will reveal who his children really are. 20Against its
will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope,
21the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's
children in glorious freedom from death and decay. 22For we know
that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth
right up to the present time. 23And we believers also groan, even
though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future
glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and
suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will

give us our full rights as his adopted children,* including the new bodies he has promised us. 24We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope* for it. 25But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)

26And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. 27And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers* in harmony with God's own will. 28And we know that God causes everything to work together* for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. 29For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn* among many brothers and sisters. 30And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

GOD LOVES YOU ROMANS 8:31–39

NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD'S LOVE

31What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? 32Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us

everything else? 33Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for
his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with
himself. 34Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died
for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of
honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.

35Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he
no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted,
or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?
36(As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we
are being slaughtered like sheep."*) 37No, despite all these things,
overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

38And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's
love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,* neither our
fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the
powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39No power in the
sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation
will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is
revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 9

GOD'S SELECTION OF ISRAEL

1With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My
conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. 2My heart is filled with
bitter sorrow and unending grief 3for my people, my Jewish

brothers and sisters.* I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut
off from Christ!—if that would save them. 4They are the people of
Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children.* God revealed his glory
to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He
gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his
wonderful promises. 5Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors,
and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is
concerned. And he is God, the one who rules over everything and is
worthy of eternal praise! Amen.*

6Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No, for
not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of
God's people! 7Being descendants of Abraham doesn't make them
truly Abraham's children. For the Scriptures say, "Isaac is the son
through whom your descendants will be counted,"* though
Abraham had other children, too. 8This means that Abraham's
physical descendants are not necessarily children of God. Only the
children of the promise are considered to be Abraham's children.
9For God had promised, "I will return about this time next year, and
Sarah will have a son."*

10This son was our ancestor Isaac. When he married Rebekah, she
gave birth to twins.*11But before they were born, before they had
done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This
message shows that God chooses people according to his own
purposes; 12he calls people, but not according to their good or bad
works.) She was told, "Your older son will serve your younger
son."*13In the words of the Scriptures, "I loved Jacob, but I rejected
Esau."*

14Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not! 15For
God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I
will show compassion to anyone I choose."*

16So it is God who decides to show mercy. We can neither choose it
nor work for it.

17For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, “I have appointed
you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to
spread my fame throughout the earth.”*18So you see, God chooses
to show mercy to some, and he chooses to harden the hearts of
others so they refuse to listen.

19Well then, you might say, “Why does God blame people for not
responding? Haven’t they simply done what he makes them do?”

20No, don’t say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue
with God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who
created it, “Why have you made me like this?” 21When a potter
makes jars out of clay, doesn’t he have a right to use the same lump
of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage
into? 22In the same way, even though God has the right to show his
anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his
anger falls, who are destined for destruction. 23He does this to make
the riches of his glory shine even brighter on those to whom he
shows mercy, who were prepared in advance for glory. 24And we
are among those whom he selected, both from the Jews and from
the Gentiles.

25Concerning the Gentiles, God says in the prophecy of Hosea,
“Those who were not my people, I will now call my people.

And I will love those whom I did not love before.”*

26And, “Then, at the place where they were told, ‘You are not my
people,’

there they will be called ‘children of the living God.’”*

27And concerning Israel, Isaiah the prophet cried out, “Though the
people of Israel are as numerous as the sand of the seashore, only a

remnant will be saved.

28For the LORD will carry out his sentence upon the earth quickly
and with finality."*

29And Isaiah said the same thing in another place: "If the LORD of
Heaven's Armies had not spared a few of our children, we would
have been wiped out like Sodom, destroyed like Gomorrah."*

ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF

30What does all this mean? Even though the Gentiles were not
trying to follow God's standards, they were made right with God.
And it was by faith that this took place. 31But the people of Israel,
who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never
succeeded. 32Why not? Because they were trying to get right with
God by keeping the law* instead of by trusting in him. They
stumbled over the great rock in their path. 33God warned them of
this in the Scriptures when he said, "I am placing a stone in
Jerusalem* that makes people stumble, a rock that makes them fall.

But anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."*

Romans 10

1Dear brothers and sisters,* the longing of my heart and my prayer
to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. 2I know what
enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. 3For they
don't understand God's way of making people right with himself.
Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting
right with God by trying to keep the law. 4For Christ has already
accomplished the purpose for which the law was given.* As a result,
all who believe in him are made right with God.

SALVATION IS FOR EVERYONE

5For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands.*6But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth). 7And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)." 8In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart."*

And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: 9If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. 11As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."*12Jew and Gentile* are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. 13For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."*

14But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"*

16But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, "LORD, who has believed our message?"*17So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ. 18But I ask, have the people of Israel actually heard the message? Yes, they have: "The message has gone throughout the earth, and the words to all the world."*

19But I ask, did the people of Israel really understand? Yes, they did, for even in the time of Moses, God said, "I will rouse your jealousy through people who are not even a nation.

I will provoke your anger through the foolish Gentiles.”*

20And later Isaiah spoke boldly for God, saying, “I was found by
people who were not looking for me.

I showed myself to those who were not asking for me.”*

21But regarding Israel, God said, “All day long I opened my arms to
them, but they were disobedient and rebellious.”*

Romans 11

GOD’S MERCY ON ISRAEL

1I ask, then, has God rejected his own people, the nation of Israel?
Of course not! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham
and a member of the tribe of Benjamin.

2No, God has not rejected his own people, whom he chose from the
very beginning. Do you realize what the Scriptures say about this?
Elijah the prophet complained to God about the people of Israel and
said, 3“LORD, they have killed your prophets and torn down your
altars. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me,
too.”*

4And do you remember God’s reply? He said, “No, I have 7,000
others who have never bowed down to Baal!”*

5It is the same today, for a few of the people of Israel* have
remained faithful because of God’s grace—his undeserved kindness
in choosing them. 6And since it is through God’s kindness, then it is
not by their good works. For in that case, God’s grace would not be
what it really is—free and undeserved.

7So this is the situation: Most of the people of Israel have not found
the favor of God they are looking for so earnestly. A few have—the
ones God has chosen—but the hearts of the rest were hardened. 8As
the Scriptures say, “God has put them into a deep sleep.

To this day he has shut their eyes so they do not see, and closed
their ears so they do not hear.”*

9Likewise, David said, “Let their bountiful table become a snare, a
trap that makes them think all is well.

Let their blessings cause them to stumble, and let them get what
they deserve.

10Let their eyes go blind so they cannot see, and let their backs be
bent forever.”*

11Did God’s people stumble and fall beyond recovery? Of course
not! They were disobedient, so God made salvation available to the
Gentiles. But he wanted his own people to become jealous and
claim it for themselves. 12Now if the Gentiles were enriched because
the people of Israel turned down God’s offer of salvation, think how
much greater a blessing the world will share when they finally
accept it.

13I am saying all this especially for you Gentiles. God has appointed
me as the apostle to the Gentiles. I stress this, 14for I want somehow
to make the people of Israel jealous of what you Gentiles have, so I
might save some of them. 15For since their rejection meant that God
offered salvation to the rest of the world, their acceptance will be
even more wonderful. It will be life for those who were dead! 16And
since Abraham and the other patriarchs were holy, their
descendants will also be holy—just as the entire batch of dough is
holy because the portion given as an offering is holy. For if the
roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be, too.

17But some of these branches from Abraham’s tree—some of the
people of Israel—have been broken off. And you Gentiles, who were

branches from a wild olive tree, have been grafted in. So now you also receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in the rich nourishment from the root of God's special olive tree. 18But you must not brag about being grafted in to replace the branches that were broken off. You are just a branch, not the root.

19"Well," you may say, "those branches were broken off to make room for me." 20Yes, but remember—those branches were broken off because they didn't believe in Christ, and you are there because you do believe. So don't think highly of yourself, but fear what could happen. 21For if God did not spare the original branches, he won't* spare you either.

22Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is severe toward those who disobeyed, but kind to you if you continue to trust in his kindness. But if you stop trusting, you also will be cut off. 23And if the people of Israel turn from their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to graft them back into the tree. 24You, by nature, were a branch cut from a wild olive tree. So if God was willing to do something contrary to nature by grafting you into his cultivated tree, he will be far more eager to graft the original branches back into the tree where they belong.

GOD'S MERCY IS FOR EVERYONE

25I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters,* so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ. 26And so all Israel will be saved. As the Scriptures say, "The one who rescues will come from Jerusalem,*

and he will turn Israel* away from ungodliness.

27And this is my covenant with them, that I will take away their sins."*

28Many of the people of Israel are now enemies of the Good News,
and this benefits you Gentiles. Yet they are still the people he loves
because he chose their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 29For
God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn. 30Once, you
Gentiles were rebels against God, but when the people of Israel
rebelled against him, God was merciful to you instead. 31Now they
are the rebels, and God's mercy has come to you so that they, too,
will share* in God's mercy. 32For God has imprisoned everyone in
disobedience so he could have mercy on everyone.

33Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How
impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!

34For who can know the LORD's thoughts?
Who knows enough to give him advice?*

35And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back?*

36For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is
intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.

Romans 12

A LIVING SACRIFICE TO GOD

1And so, dear brothers and sisters,* I plead with you to give your
bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a
living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is
truly the way to worship him.*2Don't copy the behavior and
customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person
by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's
will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

3Because of the privilege and authority* God has given me, I give
each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really
are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring
yourselves by the faith God has given us.*4Just as our bodies have
many parts and each part has a special function, 5so it is with
Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to
each other.

6In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain
things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak
out with as much faith as God has given you. 7If your gift is serving
others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8If your gift
is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give
generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the
responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness
to others, do it gladly.

9Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is
wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10Love each other with genuine
affection,* and take delight in honoring each other. 11Never be lazy,
but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically.*12Rejoice in our
confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. 13When
God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to
practice hospitality.

14Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God
will bless them. 15Be happy with those who are happy, and weep
with those who weep. 16Live in harmony with each other. Don't be
too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think
you know it all!

17Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that
everyone can see you are honorable. 18Do all that you can to live in
peace with everyone.

19Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous
anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay
them back,”*

says the LORD.

20Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them.

If they are thirsty, give them something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their
heads.”*

21Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Romans 13

RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

1Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority
comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been
placed there by God. 2So anyone who rebels against authority is
rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be
punished. 3For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are
doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to
live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will
honor you. 4The authorities are God’s servants, sent for your good.
But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they
have the power to punish you. They are God’s servants, sent for the
very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. 5So you
must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to
keep a clear conscience.

6Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government
workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do.
7Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and
government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and
honor to those who are in authority.

LOVE FULFILLS GOD'S REQUIREMENTS

8Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one
another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements
of God's law. 9For the commandments say, "You must not commit
adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not
covet."* These—and other such commandments—are summed up in
this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*10Love
does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's
law.

11This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is
running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when
we first believed. 12The night is almost gone; the day of salvation
will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and
put on the shining armor of right living. 13Because we belong to the
day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the
darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity
and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. 14Instead, clothe
yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let
yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

Romans 14

THE DANGER OF CRITICISM

1Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with
them about what they think is right or wrong. 2For instance, one
person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer
with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. 3Those who feel
free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And
those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do,
for God has accepted them. 4Who are you to condemn someone
else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or
fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his
approval.

5In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another
day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully
convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable. 6Those who
worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. Those who
eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks
to God before eating. And those who refuse to eat certain foods also
want to please the Lord and give thanks to God. 7For we don't live
for ourselves or die for ourselves. 8If we live, it's to honor the Lord.
And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we
belong to the Lord. 9Christ died and rose again for this very purpose
—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead.

10So why do you condemn another believer*? Why do you look
down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the
judgment seat of God. 11For the Scriptures say, "'As surely as I live,'
says the LORD, 'every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will
declare allegiance to God.*'"

12Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. 13So let's stop
condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that
you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.

14I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that
no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it
is wrong, then for that person it is wrong. 15And if another believer
is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat
it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died. 16Then
you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good.
17For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink,
but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
18If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and
others will approve of you, too. 19So then, let us aim for harmony in
the church and try to build each other up.

20Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember,
all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes

another person stumble. 21It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble.*22You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right. 23But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.*

Romans 15

LIVING TO PLEASE OTHERS

1We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. 2We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. 3For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me."*4Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.

BLESSINGS ROMANS 15:5-6

5May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you

live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. 6Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory. 8Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews* to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. 9He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote: "For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name."*

10And in another place it is written, "Rejoice with his people, you Gentiles."*

11And yet again, "Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles.

Praise him, all you people of the earth."*

12And in another place Isaiah said, "The heir to David's throne* will come, and he will rule over the Gentiles.

They will place their hope on him."*

13I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

PAUL'S REASON FOR WRITING

14I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters,* that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them. 15Even so, I have been bold enough to write

about some of these points, knowing that all you need is this reminder. For by God's grace, 16I am a special messenger from Christ Jesus to you Gentiles. I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit. 17So I have reason to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God. 18Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them. 19They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God's Spirit.* In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum.*

20My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else. 21I have been following the plan spoken of in the Scriptures, where it says, "Those who have never been told about him will see, and those who have never heard of him will understand."*

22In fact, my visit to you has been delayed so long because I have been preaching in these places.

PAUL'S TRAVEL PLANS

23But now I have finished my work in these regions, and after all these long years of waiting, I am eager to visit you. 24I am planning to go to Spain, and when I do, I will stop off in Rome. And after I have enjoyed your fellowship for a little while, you can provide for my journey.

25But before I come, I must go to Jerusalem to take a gift to the believers* there. 26For you see, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia* have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem. 27They were glad to do this because they feel they owe a real debt to them. Since the Gentiles received the

spiritual blessings of the Good News from the believers in Jerusalem, they feel the least they can do in return is to help them financially. 28As soon as I have delivered this money and completed this good deed of theirs, I will come to see you on my way to Spain. 29And I am sure that when I come, Christ will richly bless our time together.

30Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to join in my struggle by praying to God for me. Do this because of your love for me, given to you by the Holy Spirit. 31Pray that I will be rescued from those in Judea who refuse to obey God. Pray also that the believers there will be willing to accept the donation* I am taking to Jerusalem. 32Then, by the will of God, I will be able to come to you with a joyful heart, and we will be an encouragement to each other.

33And now may God, who gives us his peace, be with you all. Amen.*

Romans 16

PAUL GREETS HIS FRIENDS

1I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. 2Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.

3Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus. 4In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches. 5Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ. 6Give my greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for your benefit. 7Greet

Andronicus and Junia,* my fellow Jews,* who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did. 8Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. 9Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

10Greet Apelles, a good man whom Christ approves. And give my greetings to the believers from the household of Aristobulus. 11Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.* Greet the Lord's people from the household of Narcissus. 12Give my greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, the Lord's workers, and to dear Persis, who has worked so hard for the Lord. 13Greet Rufus, whom the Lord picked out to be his very own; and also his dear mother, who has been a mother to me.

14Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters* who meet with them. 15Give my greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas and all the believers* who meet with them. 16Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

17And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. 18Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people. 19But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong. 20The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus* be with you.

21Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, as do Lucius,

Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow Jews.

22I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, send my greetings,
too, as one of the Lord's followers.

23Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to
the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his
greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.*

25Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my
Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed his
plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time.
26But now as the prophets* foretold and as the eternal God has
commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles
everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him. 27All
glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.*

1 Corinthians

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

WELCOME TO

1 CORINTHIANS

The church in Corinth has some problems. Just to name a few, they are questioning Paul's right to be an apostle, gorging themselves on the Lord's Supper, going to court against one another, and overlooking immorality. The young Corinthian church needs Paul's encouragement and instruction to correct their internal problems and to stand firm against their city's immoral culture. Paul feels he must deal with the situation, or else the church in Corinth could fall to pieces. As Paul addresses their problems (many of which still

exist today in some form), he touches upon many of the fundamental teachings of the faith, including the wisdom of God, the importance of love, and the truth of the Resurrection.

1 STOP

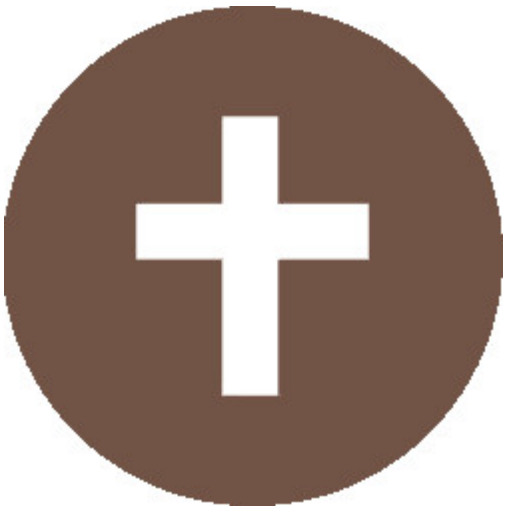
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll make one stop in 1 Corinthians to read one of the most famous passages in the New Testament—Paul's teaching on love. Your next stop is at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your only stop in this book will give you a better understanding of love: its characteristics, its power, and its importance to the Christian faith. Your next stop is at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

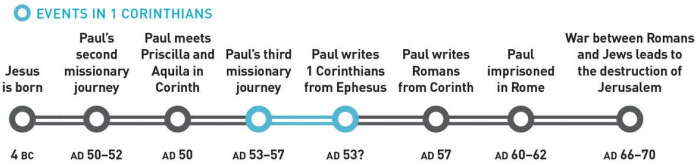
4 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your four stops in 1 Corinthians will give you an overview of Paul's teachings on marriage, spiritual gifts, love, and the significance of Christ's resurrection. Your next stop is at 1 Corinthians 7:1.



FINDING JESUS IN 1 CORINTHIANS

We can clearly see Jesus when Christians are united together as the body of Christ—the church. Unfortunately, many Christians can act like the Corinthians—divided over disagreements among themselves. As Paul exhorted the Corinthians to live in harmony with each other, he pointed them to Christ as "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1:24). Understanding our salvation in Christ leaves no room for the kind of boasting that causes division (1:30-31). He also encouraged them to be united as they celebrated the Lord's Supper (11:17-34). This celebration is entirely focused on Jesus, bringing believers together to remember his death and reaffirm the unity with God and each other that has resulted from it.



1 Corinthians 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle
of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes.

CORINTH

2I am writing to God's church in Corinth,* to you who have been
called by God to be his own holy people. He made you holy by
means of Christ Jesus,* just as he did for all people everywhere who
call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

3May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and
peace.

PAUL GIVES THANKS TO GOD

4I always thank my God for you and for the gracious gifts he has
given you, now that you belong to Christ Jesus. 5Through him, God
has enriched your church in every way—with all of your eloquent
words and all of your knowledge. 6This confirms that what I told
you about Christ is true. 7Now you have every spiritual gift you
need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8He
will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all
blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns. 9God will do
this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you
into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH

10I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters,* by the authority of our
Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be
no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in
thought and purpose. 11For some members of Chloe's household
have told me about your quarrels, my dear brothers and sisters.
12Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul." Others are
saying, "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Peter,*" or "I follow only
Christ."

13Has Christ been divided into factions? Was I, Paul, crucified for
you? Were any of you baptized in the name of Paul? Of course not!
14I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and

Gaius, 15for now no one can say they were baptized in my name.
16(Oh yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas, but I don't
remember baptizing anyone else.) 17For Christ didn't send me to
baptize, but to preach the Good News—and not with clever speech,
for fear that the cross of Christ would lose its power.

THE WISDOM OF GOD

18The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for
destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power
of God. 19As the Scriptures say, "I will destroy the wisdom of the
wise and discard the intelligence of the intelligent."*

20So where does this leave the philosophers, the scholars, and the
world's brilliant debaters? God has made the wisdom of this world
look foolish. 21Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world
would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our
foolish preaching to save those who believe. 22It is foolish to the
Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks,
who seek human wisdom. 23So when we preach that Christ was
crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all
nonsense.

24But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles,*
Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25This foolish
plan of God is wiser than the wisest of human plans, and God's
weakness is stronger than the greatest of human strength.

26Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in
the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy* when God called you.
27Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to
shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are
powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28God chose things
despised by the world,* things counted as nothing at all, and used
them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. 29As a

result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.

30God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made
him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us
pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. 31Therefore, as the
Scriptures say, “If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD.”*

1 Corinthians 2

PAUL’S MESSAGE OF WISDOM

1When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters,* I didn’t use
lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God’s secret
plan.*2For I decided that while I was with you I would forget
everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. 3I came
to you in weakness—timid and trembling. 4And my message and my
preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive
speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. 5I did this so
you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.

6Yet when I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of
wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to
the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten. 7No, the wisdom
we speak of is the mystery of God*—his plan that was previously
hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the
world began. 8But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if
they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord. 9That is
what the Scriptures mean when they say, “No eye has seen, no ear
has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for
those who love him.”*

10But* it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For
his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God’s deep secrets.
11No one can know a person’s thoughts except that person’s own

spirit, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit.
12And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we
can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.

13When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come
from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the
Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths.*14But
people who aren't spiritual* can't receive these truths from God's
Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for
only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.
15Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things, but they
themselves cannot be evaluated by others. 16For, "Who can know
the LORD's thoughts?

Who knows enough to teach him?"*

But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 3

PAUL AND APOLLOS, SERVANTS OF CHRIST

1Dear brothers and sisters,* when I was with you I couldn't talk to
you as I would to spiritual people.* I had to talk as though you
belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ. 2I
had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't
ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, 3for you are
still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another
and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled
by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?
4When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says,
"I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world?

5After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants
through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the
work the Lord gave us. 6I planted the seed in your hearts, and
Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. 7It's not

important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow. 8The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. 9For we are both God's workers. And you are God's field. You are God's building.

10Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. 11For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.

12Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. 13But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. 14If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. 15But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

16Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in* you? 17God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

18Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise. 19For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As the Scriptures say, "He traps the wise in the snare of their own cleverness."*

20And again, "The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise; he knows they are worthless."*

21So don't boast about following a particular human leader. For

everything belongs to you—22whether Paul or Apollos or Peter,* or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, 23and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

1 Corinthians 4

PAUL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CORINTHIANS

1So look at Apollos and me as mere servants of Christ who have been put in charge of explaining God's mysteries. 2Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful. 3As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point. 4My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide.

5So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time—before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.

6Dear brothers and sisters,* I have used Apollos and myself to illustrate what I've been saying. If you pay attention to what I have quoted from the Scriptures,* you won't be proud of one of your leaders at the expense of another. 7For what gives you the right to make such a judgment? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?

8You think you already have everything you need. You think you are already rich. You have begun to reign in God's kingdom without us! I wish you really were reigning already, for then we would be reigning with you. 9Instead, I sometimes think God has put us apostles on display, like prisoners of war at the end of a victor's parade, condemned to die. We have become a spectacle to the

entire world—to people and angels alike.

10Our dedication to Christ makes us look like fools, but you claim to
be so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are so powerful! You are
honored, but we are ridiculed. 11Even now we go hungry and
thirsty, and we don't have enough clothes to keep warm. We are
often beaten and have no home. 12We work wearily with our own
hands to earn our living. We bless those who curse us. We are
patient with those who abuse us. 13We appeal gently when evil
things are said about us. Yet we are treated like the world's
garbage, like everybody's trash—right up to the present moment.

14I am not writing these things to shame you, but to warn you as
my beloved children. 15For even if you had ten thousand others to
teach you about Christ, you have only one spiritual father. For I
became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News
to you. 16So I urge you to imitate me.

17That's why I have sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in
the Lord. He will remind you of how I follow Christ Jesus, just as I
teach in all the churches wherever I go.

18Some of you have become arrogant, thinking I will not visit you
again. 19But I will come—and soon—if the Lord lets me, and then
I'll find out whether these arrogant people just give pretentious
speeches or whether they really have God's power. 20For the
Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power.
21Which do you choose? Should I come with a rod to punish you, or
should I come with love and a gentle spirit?

1 Corinthians 5

PAUL CONDEMNS SPIRITUAL PRIDE

1I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going

on among you—something that even pagans don't do. I am told that a man in your church is living in sin with his stepmother.*2You are so proud of yourselves, but you should be mourning in sorrow and shame. And you should remove this man from your fellowship.

3Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit.* And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man 4in the name of the Lord Jesus. You must call a meeting of the church.* I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus. 5Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed* and he himself* will be saved on the day the Lord* returns.

6Your boasting about this is terrible. Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? 7Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.*8So let us celebrate the festival, not with the old bread* of wickedness and evil, but with the new bread* of sincerity and truth.

9When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. 10But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. 11I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer* yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people.

12It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. 13God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."*

1 Corinthians 6

AVOIDING LAWSUITS WITH CHRISTIANS

1When one of you has a dispute with another believer, how dare
you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter
instead of taking it to other believers*! 2Don't you realize that
someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are
going to judge the world, can't you decide even these little things
among yourselves? 3Don't you realize that we will judge angels? So
you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life. 4If
you have legal disputes about such matters, why go to outside
judges who are not respected by the church? 5I am saying this to
shame you. Isn't there anyone in all the church who is wise enough
to decide these issues? 6But instead, one believer* sues another—
right in front of unbelievers!

7Even to have such lawsuits with one another is a defeat for you.
Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let
yourselves be cheated? 8Instead, you yourselves are the ones who
do wrong and cheat even your fellow believers.*

9Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the
Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in
sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male
prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, 10or are thieves, or greedy
people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of
these will inherit the Kingdom of God. 11Some of you were once like
that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made
right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and
by the Spirit of our God.

AVOIDING SEXUAL SIN

12You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is
good for you. And even though “I am allowed to do anything,” I
must not become a slave to anything. 13You say, “Food was made
for the stomach, and the stomach for food.” (This is true, though
someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can’t say
that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made
for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. 14And God will
raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from
the dead.

15Don’t you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ?
Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a
prostitute? Never! 16And don’t you realize that if a man joins
himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the
Scriptures say, “The two are united into one.”*17But the person who
is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

18Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as
this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body.
19Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit,
who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong
to yourself, 20for God bought you with a high price. So you must
honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 7

INSTRUCTION ON MARRIAGE

1 Now regarding the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is
good to abstain from sexual relations.* 2 But because there is so much
sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each
woman should have her own husband.

3 The husband should fulfill his wife's sexual needs, and the wife
should fulfill her husband's needs. 4 The wife gives authority over
her body to her husband, and the husband gives authority over his
body to his wife.

5 Do not deprive each other of sexual relations, unless you both
agree to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time so you can
give yourselves more completely to prayer. Afterward, you should
come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt you
because of your lack of self-control. 6 I say this as a concession, not
as a command. 7 But I wish everyone were single, just as I am. Yet
each person has a special gift from God, of one kind or another.

8 So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to
stay unmarried, just as I am. 9 But if they can't control themselves,
they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn
with lust.

10 But for those who are married, I have a command that comes not
from me, but from the Lord.* A wife must not leave her husband.
11 But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else be
reconciled to him. And the husband must not leave his wife.

12Now, I will speak to the rest of you, though I do not have a direct
command from the Lord. If a fellow believer* has a wife who is not
a believer and she is willing to continue living with him, he must
not leave her. 13And if a believing woman has a husband who is not
a believer and he is willing to continue living with her, she must
not leave him. 14For the believing wife brings holiness to her
marriage, and the believing husband* brings holiness to his
marriage. Otherwise, your children would not be holy, but now
they are holy. 15(But if the husband or wife who isn't a believer
insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the believing husband
or wife* is no longer bound to the other, for God has called you* to
live in peace.) 16Don't you wives realize that your husbands might
be saved because of you? And don't you husbands realize that your
wives might be saved because of you?

17Each of you should continue to live in whatever situation the Lord
has placed you, and remain as you were when God first called you.
This is my rule for all the churches. 18For instance, a man who was
circumcised before he became a believer should not try to reverse
it. And the man who was uncircumcised when he became a believer
should not be circumcised now. 19For it makes no difference
whether or not a man has been circumcised. The important thing is
to keep God's commandments.

20Yes, each of you should remain as you were when God called you.
21Are you a slave? Don't let that worry you—but if you get a chance
to be free, take it. 22And remember, if you were a slave when the
Lord called you, you are now free in the Lord. And if you were free
when the Lord called you, you are now a slave of Christ. 23God paid
a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world.*24Each of
you, dear brothers and sisters,* should remain as you were when
God first called you.

25Now regarding your question about the young women who are
not yet married. I do not have a command from the Lord for them.
But the Lord in his mercy has given me wisdom that can be trusted,
and I will share it with you. 26Because of the present crisis,* I think

it is best to remain as you are. 27If you have a wife, do not seek to
end the marriage. If you do not have a wife, do not seek to get
married. 28But if you do get married, it is not a sin. And if a young
woman gets married, it is not a sin. However, those who get
married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you
those problems.

29But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that
remains is very short. So from now on, those with wives should not
focus only on their marriage. 30Those who weep or who rejoice or
who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping or their
joy or their possessions. 31Those who use the things of the world
should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it
will soon pass away.

32I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried
man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to
please him. 33But a married man has to think about his earthly
responsibilities and how to please his wife. 34His interests are
divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has
never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body
and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly
responsibilities and how to please her husband. 35I am saying this
for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do
whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as few distractions
as possible.

36But if a man thinks that he's treating his fiancée improperly and
will inevitably give in to his passion, let him marry her as he
wishes. It is not a sin. 37But if he has decided firmly not to marry
and there is no urgency and he can control his passion, he does well
not to marry. 38So the person who marries his fiancée does well, and
the person who doesn't marry does even better.

39A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If her husband

dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but only if he loves the Lord.*40But in my opinion it would be better for her to stay single, and I think I am giving you counsel from God's Spirit when I say this.

1 Corinthians 8

FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

1Now regarding your question about food that has been offered to idols. Yes, we know that "we all have knowledge" about this issue. But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church. 2Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. 3But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes.*

4So, what about eating meat that has been offered to idols? Well, we all know that an idol is not really a god and that there is only one God. 5There may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods and many lords. 6But for us, There is one God, the Father, by whom all things were created, and for whom we live.

And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live.

7However, not all believers know this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated. 8It's true that we can't win

God's approval by what we eat. We don't lose anything if we don't eat it, and we don't gain anything if we do.

9But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble. 10For if others see you—with your "superior knowledge"—eating in the temple of an idol, won't they be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been offered to an idol? 11So because of your superior knowledge, a weak believer* for whom Christ died will be destroyed. 12And when you sin against other believers* by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ. 13So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live—for I don't want to cause another believer to stumble.

1 Corinthians 9

PAUL GIVES UP HIS RIGHTS

1Am I not as free as anyone else? Am I not an apostle? Haven't I seen Jesus our Lord with my own eyes? Isn't it because of my work that you belong to the Lord? 2Even if others think I am not an apostle, I certainly am to you. You yourselves are proof that I am the Lord's apostle.

3This is my answer to those who question my authority.* 4Don't we have the right to live in your homes and share your meals? 5Don't we have the right to bring a believing wife* with us as the other apostles and the Lord's brothers do, and as Peter* does? 6Or is it only Barnabas and I who have to work to support ourselves?

7What soldier has to pay his own expenses? What farmer plants a vineyard and doesn't have the right to eat some of its fruit? What shepherd cares for a flock of sheep and isn't allowed to drink some of the milk? 8Am I expressing merely a human opinion, or does the

law say the same thing? 9For the law of Moses says, “You must not muzzle an ox to keep it from eating as it treads out the grain.”* Was God thinking only about oxen when he said this? 10Wasn’t he actually speaking to us? Yes, it was written for us, so that the one who plows and the one who threshes the grain might both expect a share of the harvest.

11Since we have planted spiritual seed among you, aren’t we entitled to a harvest of physical food and drink? 12If you support others who preach to you, shouldn’t we have an even greater right to be supported? But we have never used this right. We would rather put up with anything than be an obstacle to the Good News about Christ.

13Don’t you realize that those who work in the temple get their meals from the offerings brought to the temple? And those who serve at the altar get a share of the sacrificial offerings. 14In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the Good News should be supported by those who benefit from it. 15Yet I have never used any of these rights. And I am not writing this to suggest that I want to start now. In fact, I would rather die than lose my right to boast about preaching without charge. 16Yet preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do it. How terrible for me if I didn’t preach the Good News!

17If I were doing this on my own initiative, I would deserve payment. But I have no choice, for God has given me this sacred trust. 18What then is my pay? It is the opportunity to preach the Good News without charging anyone. That’s why I never demand my rights when I preach the Good News.

19Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. 20When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. 21When I am with the

Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law,* I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.

22When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. 23I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

24Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! 25All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. 26So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. 27I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 10

LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY

1I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters,* about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. 2In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses. 3All of them ate the same spiritual food, 4and all of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. 5Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

6These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, 7or worship idols as some of them did. As the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry."*8And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day.

9Nor should we put Christ* to the test, as some of them did and then
died from snakebites. 10And don't grumble as some of them did, and
then were destroyed by the angel of death. 11These things happened
to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us
who live at the end of the age.

12If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. 13The
temptations in your life are no different from what others
experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to
be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show
you a way out so that you can endure.

14So, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. 15You are
reasonable people. Decide for yourselves if what I am saying is true.
16When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in
the blood of Christ? And when we break the bread, aren't we
sharing in the body of Christ? 17And though we are many, we all eat
from one loaf of bread, showing that we are one body. 18Think
about the people of Israel. Weren't they united by eating the
sacrifices at the altar?

19What am I trying to say? Am I saying that food offered to idols
has some significance, or that idols are real gods? 20No, not at all. I
am saying that these sacrifices are offered to demons, not to God.
And I don't want you to participate with demons. 21You cannot
drink from the cup of the Lord and from the cup of demons, too.
You cannot eat at the Lord's Table and at the table of demons, too.
22What? Do we dare to rouse the Lord's jealousy? Do you think we
are stronger than he is?

23You say, "I am allowed to do anything"*—but not everything is
good for you. You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not
everything is beneficial. 24Don't be concerned for your own good
but for the good of others.

25So you may eat any meat that is sold in the marketplace without raising questions of conscience. 26For “the earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it.”*

27If someone who isn’t a believer asks you home for dinner, accept the invitation if you want to. Eat whatever is offered to you without raising questions of conscience. 28(But suppose someone tells you, “This meat was offered to an idol.” Don’t eat it, out of consideration for the conscience of the one who told you. 29It might not be a matter of conscience for you, but it is for the other person.) For why should my freedom be limited by what someone else thinks? 30If I can thank God for the food and enjoy it, why should I be condemned for eating it?

31So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32Don’t give offense to Jews or Gentiles* or the church of God. 33I, too, try to please everyone in everything I do. I don’t just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved.

11:1And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.*

1 Corinthians 11

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP

2I am so glad that you always keep me in your thoughts, and that you are following the teachings I passed on to you. 3But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*4A man dishonors his head* if he covers his head while praying or prophesying. 5But a woman dishonors her head* if she prays or prophesies without a covering on her head, for this is the same as shaving her head. 6Yes, if she refuses to wear a head covering, she should cut off all her

hair! But since it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut or her head shaved, she should wear a covering.*

7A man should not wear anything on his head when worshiping, for man is made in God's image and reflects God's glory. And woman reflects man's glory. 8For the first man didn't come from woman, but the first woman came from man. 9And man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man. 10For this reason, and because the angels are watching, a woman should wear a covering on her head to show she is under authority.*

11But among the Lord's people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. 12For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God.

13Judge for yourselves. Is it right for a woman to pray to God in public without covering her head? 14Isn't it obvious that it's disgraceful for a man to have long hair? 15And isn't long hair a woman's pride and joy? For it has been given to her as a covering. 16But if anyone wants to argue about this, I simply say that we have no other custom than this, and neither do God's other churches.

ORDER AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

17But in the following instructions, I cannot praise you. For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. 18First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it. 19But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God's approval will be recognized!

20When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord's Supper. 21For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while

others get drunk. 22What? Don't you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God's church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this!

23For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread 24and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you.* Do this to remember me." 25In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it." 26For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.

27So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against* the body and blood of the Lord. 28That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. 29For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ,* you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. 30That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

31But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. 32Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

33So, my dear brothers and sisters,* when you gather for the Lord's Supper, wait for each other. 34If you are really hungry, eat at home so you won't bring judgment upon yourselves when you meet together. I'll give you instructions about the other matters after I arrive.

1 Corinthians 12

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1Now, dear brothers and sisters,* regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. 2You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. 3So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

4There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

7A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice*; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge.*9The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the

one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages,* while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

ONE BODY WITH MANY PARTS

12The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles,* some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.*

14Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. 15If the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? 17If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

18But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.”

22In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. 23And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, 24while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God

has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. 25This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad.

27All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. 28Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages.

29Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? 30Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! 31So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts.

But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.

1 Corinthians 13

LOVE IS THE GREATEST

1If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't
love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2If I
had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret
plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I
could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing.
3If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my
body, I could boast about it;* but if I didn't love others, I would
have gained nothing.

4Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud
5or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it
keeps no record of being wronged. 6It does not rejoice about
injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7Love never gives
up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every
circumstance.

8Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages* and special
knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever! 9Now our
knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy
reveals only part of the whole picture! 10But when the time of
perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.

11When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child.
But when I grew up, I put away childish things. 12Now we see things
imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will
see everything with perfect clarity.* All that I know now is partial
and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as
God now knows me completely.

13Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the
greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 14

TONGUES AND PROPHECY

1Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the
special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy.
2For if you have the ability to speak in tongues,* you will be talking
only to God, since people won't be able to understand you. You will
be speaking by the power of the Spirit,* but it will all be mysterious.
3But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and
comforts them. 4A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened
personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the
entire church.

5I wish you could all speak in tongues, but even more I wish you could all prophesy. For prophecy is greater than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church will be strengthened.

6Dear brothers and sisters,* if I should come to you speaking in an unknown language,* how would that help you? But if I bring you a revelation or some special knowledge or prophecy or teaching, that will be helpful. 7Even lifeless instruments like the flute or the harp must play the notes clearly, or no one will recognize the melody. 8And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear call, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle?

9It's the same for you. If you speak to people in words they don't understand, how will they know what you are saying? You might as well be talking into empty space.

10There are many different languages in the world, and every language has meaning. 11But if I don't understand a language, I will be a foreigner to someone who speaks it, and the one who speaks it will be a foreigner to me. 12And the same is true for you. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.

13So anyone who speaks in tongues should pray also for the ability to interpret what has been said. 14For if I pray in tongues, my spirit is praying, but I don't understand what I am saying.

15Well then, what shall I do? I will pray in the spirit,* and I will also pray in words I understand. I will sing in the spirit, and I will also sing in words I understand. 16For if you praise God only in the spirit, how can those who don't understand you praise God along with you? How can they join you in giving thanks when they don't understand what you are saying? 17You will be giving thanks very

well, but it won't strengthen the people who hear you.

18I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you. 19But in a church meeting I would rather speak five understandable words to help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language.

20Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but be mature in understanding matters of this kind. 21It is written in the Scriptures*: "I will speak to my own people through strange languages and through the lips of foreigners.

But even then, they will not listen to me,"*
says the LORD.

22So you see that speaking in tongues is a sign, not for believers, but for unbelievers. Prophecy, however, is for the benefit of believers, not unbelievers. 23Even so, if unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your church meeting and hear everyone speaking in an unknown language, they will think you are crazy. 24But if all of you are prophesying, and unbelievers or people who don't understand these things come into your meeting, they will be convicted of sin and judged by what you say. 25As they listen, their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall to their knees and worship God, declaring, "God is truly here among you."

A CALL TO ORDERLY WORSHIP

26Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you.

27No more than two or three should speak in tongues. They must speak one at a time, and someone must interpret what they say.

28But if no one is present who can interpret, they must be silent in
your church meeting and speak in tongues to God privately.

29Let two or three people prophesy, and let the others evaluate what
is said. 30But if someone is prophesying and another person receives
a revelation from the Lord, the one who is speaking must stop. 31In
this way, all who prophesy will have a turn to speak, one after the
other, so that everyone will learn and be encouraged. 32Remember
that people who prophesy are in control of their spirit and can take
turns. 33For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the
meetings of God's holy people.*

34Women should be silent during the church meetings. It is not
proper for them to speak. They should be submissive, just as the
law says. 35If they have any questions, they should ask their
husbands at home, for it is improper for women to speak in church
meetings.*

36Or do you think God's word originated with you Corinthians? Are
you the only ones to whom it was given? 37If you claim to be a
prophet or think you are spiritual, you should recognize that what I
am saying is a command from the Lord himself. 38But if you do not
recognize this, you yourself will not be recognized.*

39So, my dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't
forbid speaking in tongues. 40But be sure that everything is done
properly and in order.

EASTER 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-22

1 Corinthians 15

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

1Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters,* of the Good
News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still
stand firm in it. 2It is this Good News that saves you if you continue
to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed
something that was never true in the first place.*

3I passed on to you what was most important and what had also
been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures
said. 4He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third
day, just as the Scriptures said. 5He was seen by Peter* and then by
the Twelve. 6After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his
followers* at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some
have died. 7Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.
8Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw
him. 9For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even
worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's
church.

10But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his
special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked
harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who
was working through me by his grace. 11So it makes no difference
whether I preach or they preach, for we all preach the same
message you have already believed.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

12But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead,
why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the
dead? 13For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has
not been raised either. 14And if Christ has not been raised, then all
our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. 15And we apostles
would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised
Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no
resurrection of the dead. 16And if there is no resurrection of the
dead, then Christ has not been raised. 17And if Christ has not been
raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins.
18In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! 19And
if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied
than anyone in the world.

20But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of
a great harvest of all who have died.

21So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now
the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man.
22Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone
who belongs to Christ will be given new life. 23But there is an order
to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest;
then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

24After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over
to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and
power. 25For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies
beneath his feet. 26And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.
27For the Scriptures say, "God has put all things under his
authority."* (Of course, when it says "all things are under his
authority," that does not include God himself, who gave Christ his
authority.) 28Then, when all things are under his authority, the Son
will put himself under God's authority, so that God, who gave his
Son authority over all things, will be utterly supreme over
everything everywhere.

29If the dead will not be raised, what point is there in people being
baptized for those who are dead? Why do it unless the dead will
someday rise again?

30And why should we ourselves risk our lives hour by hour? 31For I
swear, dear brothers and sisters, that I face death daily. This is as
certain as my pride in what Christ Jesus our Lord has done in you.
32And what value was there in fighting wild beasts—those people of
Ephesus*—if there will be no resurrection from the dead? And if
there is no resurrection, "Let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we
die!"*33Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad
company corrupts good character." 34Think carefully about what is
right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you

don’t know God at all.

THE FUTURE 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-55

THE RESURRECTION BODY

35But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind
of bodies will they have?” 36What a foolish question! When you put
a seed into the ground, it doesn’t grow into a plant unless it dies
first. 37And what you put in the ground is not the plant that will
grow, but only a bare seed of wheat or whatever you are planting.
38Then God gives it the new body he wants it to have. A different
plant grows from each kind of seed. 39Similarly there are different
kinds of flesh—one kind for humans, another for animals, another
for birds, and another for fish.

40There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The
glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the glory of the
earthly bodies. 41The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and
stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each
other in their glory.

42It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly
bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be
raised to live forever. 43Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but
they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they

will be raised in strength. 44They are buried as natural human
bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there
are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.

45The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living
person.”* But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit.
46What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body
comes later. 47Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the
earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. 48Earthly
people are like the earthly man, and heavenly people are like the
heavenly man. 49Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will
someday be like* the heavenly man.

50What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical
bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies
cannot inherit what will last forever.

51But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die,
but we will all be transformed! 52It will happen in a moment, in the
blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the
trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever.
And we who are living will also be transformed. 53For our dying
bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our
mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

54Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies
that will never die,* this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is
swallowed up in victory.*

55O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?*”

56For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its

power. 57But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

1 Corinthians 16

THE COLLECTION FOR JERUSALEM

1Now regarding your question about the money being collected for God's people in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. 2On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once. 3When I come, I will write letters of recommendation for the messengers you choose to deliver your gift to Jerusalem. 4And if it seems appropriate for me to go along, they can travel with me.

PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

5I am coming to visit you after I have been to Macedonia,* for I am planning to travel through Macedonia. 6Perhaps I will stay awhile with you, possibly all winter, and then you can send me on my way to my next destination. 7This time I don't want to make just a short visit and then go right on. I want to come and stay awhile, if the

Lord will let me. 8In the meantime, I will be staying here at Ephesus
until the Festival of Pentecost. 9There is a wide-open door for a
great work here, although many oppose me.

10When Timothy comes, don't intimidate him. He is doing the
Lord's work, just as I am. 11Don't let anyone treat him with
contempt. Send him on his way with your blessing when he returns
to me. I expect him to come with the other believers.*

12Now about our brother Apollos—I urged him to visit you with the
other believers, but he was not willing to go right now. He will see
you later when he has the opportunity.

13Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous.* Be strong.
14And do everything with love.

15You know that Stephanas and his household were the first of the
harvest of believers in Greece,* and they are spending their lives in
service to God's people. I urge you, dear brothers and sisters,*16to
submit to them and others like them who serve with such devotion.
17I am very glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus have
come here. They have been providing the help you weren't here to
give me. 18They have been a wonderful encouragement to me, as
they have been to you. You must show your appreciation to all who
serve so well.

PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

19The churches here in the province of Asia* send greetings in the
Lord, as do Aquila and Priscilla* and all the others who gather in
their home for church meetings. 20All the brothers and sisters here
send greetings to you. Greet each other with a sacred kiss.

21HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING—PAUL.

22If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed. Our Lord, come!*

23May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

24My love to all of you in Christ Jesus.*

2 Corinthians

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

WELCOME TO

2 CORINTHIANS

Paul writes this letter to the church in Corinth a short time after writing 1 Corinthians. The problems in the church have escalated. False teachers have infiltrated the young church, slandering Paul and his message and attempting to turn the church against him. Paul begins this letter with an impassioned defense of his calling and authority as an apostle, and he includes a reminder about the central message of the Good News. He then goes on to encourage the believers in Corinth to give generously in order to provide for suffering Christians in Jerusalem. Paul finishes the letter with a renewed defense of his authority and credentials as an apostle, which are proven by Paul's own suffering.

In this letter, Paul shows his great love for the Corinthian church and states his deep concern for all the churches he has established. He exhibits the heart of a pastor who deeply cares about the members of the church.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You won't be stopping in 2 Corinthians. Read parts of this letter during your next trip through the Bible. Your next stop is at Philippians 2:1.

1 STOP

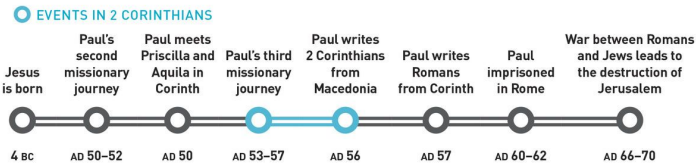
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: One quick stop in 2 Corinthians will familiarize you with Paul's great confidence in the God who comforts his people in the midst of their troubles. Your next stop is at 2 Corinthians 1:1.

4 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your four stops in 2 Corinthians will include Paul's teachings about generosity and his defense of his ministry as God's apostle. Your next stop is at 2 Corinthians 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN 2 CORINTHIANS

Jesus can be seen in his followers; this is Paul's message in 2 Corinthians. The power of Christ's life, death, and resurrection transforms the lives of believers as they live by the Spirit: "Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person" (5:17). Paul continually pointed the Corinthians back to these realities. For Paul and the Corinthians, imitating Christ meant that they were ambassadors for him (5:20). As the people of God, we represent Christ wherever we go.



2 Corinthians 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle
of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy.

I am writing to God's church in Corinth and to all of his holy people
throughout Greece.*

2May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

GOD OFFERS COMFORT TO ALL

3All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. 5For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. 6Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. 7We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us.

ASIA

8We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters,* about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. 9In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead. 10And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us. 11And you are helping us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety.

PAUL'S CHANGE OF PLANS

12We can say with confidence and a clear conscience that we have
lived with a God-given holiness* and sincerity in all our dealings.
We have depended on God's grace, not on our own human wisdom.
That is how we have conducted ourselves before the world, and
especially toward you. 13Our letters have been straightforward, and
there is nothing written between the lines and nothing you can't
understand. I hope someday you will fully understand us, 14even if
you don't understand us now. Then on the day when the Lord
Jesus* returns, you will be proud of us in the same way we are
proud of you.

15Since I was so sure of your understanding and trust, I wanted to
give you a double blessing by visiting you twice—16first on my way
to Macedonia and again when I returned from Macedonia.* Then
you could send me on my way to Judea.

17You may be asking why I changed my plan. Do you think I make
my plans carelessly? Do you think I am like people of the world
who say "Yes" when they really mean "No"? 18As surely as God is
faithful, our word to you does not waver between "Yes" and "No."
19For Jesus Christ, the Son of God, does not waver between "Yes"
and "No." He is the one whom Silas,* Timothy, and I preached to
you, and as God's ultimate "Yes," he always does what he says.
20For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a
resounding "Yes!" And through Christ, our "Amen" (which means
"Yes") ascends to God for his glory.

21It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ.
He has commissioned us, 22and he has identified us as his own by
placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that
guarantees everything he has promised us.

23Now I call upon God as my witness that I am telling the truth. The
reason I didn't return to Corinth was to spare you from a severe
rebuke. 24But that does not mean we want to dominate you by
telling you how to put your faith into practice. We want to work
together with you so you will be full of joy, for it is by your own
faith that you stand firm.

2 Corinthians 2

1So I decided that I would not bring you grief with another painful
visit. 2For if I cause you grief, who will make me glad? Certainly not
someone I have grieved. 3That is why I wrote to you as I did, so that
when I do come, I won't be grieved by the very ones who ought to
give me the greatest joy. Surely you all know that my joy comes
from your being joyful. 4I wrote that letter in great anguish, with a
troubled heart and many tears. I didn't want to grieve you, but I
wanted to let you know how much love I have for you.

FORGIVENESS FOR THE SINNER

5I am not overstating it when I say that the man who caused all the
trouble hurt all of you more than he hurt me. 6Most of you opposed
him, and that was punishment enough. 7Now, however, it is time to
forgive and comfort him. Otherwise he may be overcome by
discouragement. 8So I urge you now to reaffirm your love for him.

9I wrote to you as I did to test you and see if you would fully
comply with my instructions. 10When you forgive this man, I forgive
him, too. And when I forgive whatever needs to be forgiven, I do so
with Christ's authority for your benefit, 11so that Satan will not
outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes.

12When I came to the city of Troas to preach the Good News of
Christ, the Lord opened a door of opportunity for me. 13But I had no
peace of mind because my dear brother Titus hadn't yet arrived
with a report from you. So I said good-bye and went on to
Macedonia to find him.

MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT

14But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead
us along in Christ's triumphal procession. Now he uses us to spread
the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. 15Our
lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance
is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those
who are perishing. 16To those who are perishing, we are a dreadful
smell of death and doom. But to those who are being saved, we are
a life-giving perfume. And who is adequate for such a task as this?

17You see, we are not like the many hucksters* who preach for
personal profit. We preach the word of God with sincerity and with
Christ's authority, knowing that God is watching us.

2 Corinthians 3

1Are we beginning to praise ourselves again? Are we like others,
who need to bring you letters of recommendation, or who ask you
to write such letters on their behalf? Surely not! 2The only letter of
recommendation we need is you yourselves. Your lives are a letter
written in our* hearts; everyone can read it and recognize our good
work among you. 3Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the
result of our ministry among you. This "letter" is written not with
pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not
on tablets of stone, but on human hearts.

4We are confident of all this because of our great trust in God

through Christ. 5It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. 6He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT

7The old way,* with laws etched in stone, led to death, though it began with such glory that the people of Israel could not bear to look at Moses' face. For his face shone with the glory of God, even though the brightness was already fading away. 8Shouldn't we expect far greater glory under the new way, now that the Holy Spirit is giving life? 9If the old way, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new way, which makes us right with God! 10In fact, that first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new way. 11So if the old way, which has been replaced, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new, which remains forever!

12Since this new way gives us such confidence, we can be very bold. 13We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away. 14But the people's minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. 15Yes, even today when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not understand.

16But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

2 Corinthians 4

TREASURE IN FRAGILE CLAY JARS

1Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way,* we never give up. 2We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this.

3If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. 4Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

5You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. 6For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

7We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are
like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure.* This makes it
clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

8We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed.
We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. 9We are hunted down,
but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not
destroyed. 10Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the
death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our
bodies.

11Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve
Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies.
12So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life
for you.

13But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith
the psalmist had when he said, “I believed in God, so I spoke.”*14We
know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus,* will also raise us with
Jesus and present us to himself together with you. 15All of this is for
your benefit. And as God’s grace reaches more and more people,
there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and
more glory.

16That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our
spirits are* being renewed every day. 17For our present troubles are
small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that
vastly outweighs them and will last forever! 18So we don’t look at
the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that
cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but
the things we cannot see will last forever.

AFTERLIFE 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-10

2 Corinthians 5

NEW BODIES

1For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down
(that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a
house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and
not by human hands. 2We grow weary in our present bodies, and we
long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. 3For we will
put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without
bodies.*4While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh,
but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that
clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these
dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. 5God himself has
prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy
Spirit.

6So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as
we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. 7For we
live by believing and not by seeing. 8Yes, we are fully confident,
and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then
we will be at home with the Lord. 9So whether we are here in this
body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. 10For we
must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive
whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this
earthly body.

WE ARE GOD'S AMBASSADORS

11Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we
work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I
hope you know this, too. 12Are we commending ourselves to you
again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us,* so you
can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry
rather than having a sincere heart. 13If it seems we are crazy, it is to
bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your
benefit. 14Either way, Christ's love controls us.* Since we believe
that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our
old life.*15He died for everyone so that those who receive his new
life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for
Christ, who died and was raised for them.

16So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of
view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point
of view. How differently we know him now! 17This means that
anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old
life is gone; a new life has begun!

18And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself
through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people
to him. 19For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no
longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this
wonderful message of reconciliation. 20So we are Christ's

ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” 21For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin,* so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

2 Corinthians 6

1As God’s partners,* we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God’s kindness and then ignore it. 2For God says, “At just the right time, I heard you.

On the day of salvation, I helped you.”*

Indeed, the “right time” is now. Today is the day of salvation.

PAUL’S HARDSHIPS

3We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. 4In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. 5We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. 6We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us,* and by our sincere love. 7We faithfully preach the truth. God’s power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. 8We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. 9We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. 10Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

11Oh, dear Corinthian friends! We have spoken honestly with you, and our hearts are open to you. 12There is no lack of love on our

part, but you have withheld your love from us. 13I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us!

THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD

14Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? 15What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil*? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? 16And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

17Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD.
Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you.*

18And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.*"

2 Corinthians 7

1Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.

2Please open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong to anyone, nor led anyone astray, nor taken advantage of anyone. 3I'm not saying this to condemn you. I said before that you are in our hearts, and we live or die together with you. 4I have the highest confidence in you, and I take great pride in you. You have greatly encouraged me and made me happy despite all our troubles.

PAUL'S JOY AT THE CHURCH'S REPENTANCE

5When we arrived in Macedonia, there was no rest for us. We faced
conflict from every direction, with battles on the outside and fear
on the inside. 6But God, who encourages those who are discouraged,
encouraged us by the arrival of Titus. 7His presence was a joy, but
so was the news he brought of the encouragement he received from
you. When he told us how much you long to see me, and how sorry
you are for what happened, and how loyal you are to me, I was
filled with joy!

8I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was
sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while.
9Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the
pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of
sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us
in any way. 10For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience
leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for
that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance,
results in spiritual death.

11Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such
earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation,
such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness
to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything
necessary to make things right. 12My purpose, then, was not to write
about who did the wrong or who was wronged. I wrote to you so
that in the sight of God you could see for yourselves how loyal you
are to us. 13We have been greatly encouraged by this.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially
delighted to see how happy Titus was about the way all of you
welcomed him and set his mind* at ease. 14I had told him how
proud I was of you—and you didn't disappoint me. I have always
told you the truth, and now my boasting to Titus has also proved
true! 15Now he cares for you more than ever when he remembers
the way all of you obeyed him and welcomed him with such fear
and deep respect. 16I am very happy now because I have complete

confidence in you.

2 Corinthians 8

A CALL TO GENEROUS GIVING

1Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters,* what God in
his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. 2They
are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they
are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich
generosity.

3For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford,
but far more. And they did it of their own free will. 4They begged us
again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the
believers in Jerusalem.*5They even did more than we had hoped,
for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us,
just as God wanted them to do.

6So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first
place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of
giving. 7Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted
speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us*
—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.

8I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine
your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other
churches.

9You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he
was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty
he could make you rich.

10Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you

started a year ago. Last year you were the first who wanted to give,
and you were the first to begin doing it. 11Now you should finish
what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be
matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have.
12Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give
according to what you have, not what you don't have. 13Of course, I
don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard
for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality.
14Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need.
Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need
it. In this way, things will be equal. 15As the Scriptures say, "Those
who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered
only a little had enough."*

TITUS AND HIS COMPANIONS

16But thank God! He has given Titus the same enthusiasm for you
that I have. 17Titus welcomed our request that he visit you again. In
fact, he himself was very eager to go and see you. 18We are also
sending another brother with Titus. All the churches praise him as a
preacher of the Good News. 19He was appointed by the churches to
accompany us as we take the offering to Jerusalem*—a service that
glorifies the Lord and shows our eagerness to help.

20We are traveling together to guard against any criticism for the
way we are handling this generous gift. 21We are careful to be
honorable before the Lord, but we also want everyone else to see
that we are honorable.

22We are also sending with them another of our brothers who has
proven himself many times and has shown on many occasions how
eager he is. He is now even more enthusiastic because of his great
confidence in you. 23If anyone asks about Titus, say that he is my
partner who works with me to help you. And the brothers with him
have been sent by the churches,* and they bring honor to Christ.
24So show them your love, and prove to all the churches that our
boasting about you is justified.

MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA

2 Corinthians 9

THE COLLECTION FOR CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM

1I really don't need to write to you about this ministry of giving for
the believers in Jerusalem.*2For I know how eager you are to help,
and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in
Greece* were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was
your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers
to begin giving.

3But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as
I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I
don't want to be wrong in my boasting about you. 4We would be
embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some
Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren't
ready after all I had told them! 5So I thought I should send these

brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly.

6Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. 7You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."* 8And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. 9As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor.

Their good deeds will be remembered forever."*

10For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity* in you.

11Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. 12So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem* will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God.

13As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. 14And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. 15Thank God for this gift* too wonderful for words!

2 Corinthians 10

PAUL DEFENDS HIS AUTHORITY

1Now I, Paul, appeal to you with the gentleness and kindness of
Christ—though I realize you think I am timid in person and bold
only when I write from far away. 2Well, I am begging you now so
that when I come I won't have to be bold with those who think we
act from human motives.

3We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. 4*We use
God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the
strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments.
5We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing
God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey
Christ. 6And after you have become fully obedient, we will punish
everyone who remains disobedient.

7Look at the obvious facts.* Those who say they belong to Christ
must recognize that we belong to Christ as much as they do. 8I may
seem to be boasting too much about the authority given to us by
the Lord. But our authority builds you up; it doesn't tear you down.
So I will not be ashamed of using my authority.

9I'm not trying to frighten you by my letters. 10For some say, "Paul's
letters are demanding and forceful, but in person he is weak, and
his speeches are worthless!" 11Those people should realize that our
actions when we arrive in person will be as forceful as what we say
in our letters from far away.

12Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful
as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they
are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as

the standard of measurement. How ignorant!

13We will not boast about things done outside our area of authority. We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us, which includes our working with you. 14We are not reaching beyond these boundaries when we claim authority over you, as if we had never visited you. For we were the first to travel all the way to Corinth with the Good News of Christ.

15Nor do we boast and claim credit for the work someone else has done. Instead, we hope that your faith will grow so that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended. 16Then we will be able to go and preach the Good News in other places far beyond you, where no one else is working. Then there will be no question of our boasting about work done in someone else's territory. 17As the Scriptures say, "If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD."*

18When people commend themselves, it doesn't count for much. The important thing is for the Lord to commend them.

2 Corinthians 11

PAUL AND THE FALSE APOSTLES

1I hope you will put up with a little more of my foolishness. Please bear with me. 2For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride* to one husband—Christ. 3But I fear that somehow your pure and undivided devotion to Christ will be corrupted, just as Eve was deceived by the cunning ways of the serpent. 4You happily put up with whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus than the one we preach, or a different kind of Spirit than the one you received, or a different kind of gospel than the one you believed.

5But I don’t consider myself inferior in any way to these “super
apostles” who teach such things. 6I may be unskilled as a speaker,
but I’m not lacking in knowledge. We have made this clear to you
in every possible way.

7Was I wrong when I humbled myself and honored you by
preaching God’s Good News to you without expecting anything in
return? 8I “robbed” other churches by accepting their contributions
so I could serve you at no cost. 9And when I was with you and
didn’t have enough to live on, I did not become a financial burden
to anyone. For the brothers who came from Macedonia brought me
all that I needed. I have never been a burden to you, and I never
will be. 10As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, no one in all of
Greece* will ever stop me from boasting about this. 11Why? Because
I don’t love you? God knows that I do.

12But I will continue doing what I have always done. This will
undercut those who are looking for an opportunity to boast that
their work is just like ours. 13These people are false apostles. They
are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ.
14But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel
of light. 15So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise
themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the
punishment their wicked deeds deserve.

PAUL'S MANY TRIALS

16Again I say, don't think that I am a fool to talk like this. But even
if you do, listen to me, as you would to a foolish person, while I
also boast a little. 17Such boasting is not from the Lord, but I am
acting like a fool. 18And since others boast about their human
achievements, I will, too. 19After all, you think you are so wise, but
you enjoy putting up with fools! 20You put up with it when someone
enslaves you, takes everything you have, takes advantage of you,
takes control of everything, and slaps you in the face. 21I'm ashamed
to say that we've been too "weak" to do that!

But whatever they dare to boast about—I'm talking like a fool again
—I dare to boast about it, too. 22Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are
they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.
23Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I
have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison
more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death
again and again. 24Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me
thirty-nine lashes. 25Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was
stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night
and a day adrift at sea. 26I have traveled on many long journeys. I
have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced
danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles.
I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas.
And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but
are not.*27I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless
nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without
food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep
me warm.

28Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for
all the churches. 29Who is weak without my feeling that weakness?
Who is led astray, and I do not burn with anger?

30If I must boast, I would rather boast about the things that show
how weak I am. 31God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, who is worthy

of eternal praise, knows I am not lying. 32When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas kept guards at the city gates to catch me. 33I had to be lowered in a basket through a window in the city wall to escape from him.

2 Corinthians 12

PAUL'S VISION AND HIS THORN IN THE FLESH

1This boasting will do no good, but I must go on. I will reluctantly tell about visions and revelations from the Lord. 2I* was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don't know—only God knows. 3Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I do know 4that I was caught up* to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell.

5That experience is worth boasting about, but I'm not going to do it. I will boast only about my weaknesses. 6If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because I would be telling the truth. But I won't do it, because I don't want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message, 7even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.

8Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 10That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE CORINTHIANS

11You have made me act like a fool. You ought to be writing
commendations for me, for I am not at all inferior to these "super
apostles," even though I am nothing at all. 12When I was with you, I
certainly gave you proof that I am an apostle. For I patiently did
many signs and wonders and miracles among you. 13The only thing
I failed to do, which I do in the other churches, was to become a
financial burden to you. Please forgive me for this wrong!

14Now I am coming to you for the third time, and I will not be a
burden to you. I don't want what you have—I want you. After all,
children don't provide for their parents. Rather, parents provide for
their children. 15I will gladly spend myself and all I have for you,
even though it seems that the more I love you, the less you love me.

16Some of you admit I was not a burden to you. But others still
think I was sneaky and took advantage of you by trickery. 17But
how? Did any of the men I sent to you take advantage of you?
18When I urged Titus to visit you and sent our other brother with
him, did Titus take advantage of you? No! For we have the same
spirit and walk in each other's steps, doing things the same way.

19Perhaps you think we're saying these things just to defend
ourselves. No, we tell you this as Christ's servants, and with God as
our witness. Everything we do, dear friends, is to strengthen you.
20For I am afraid that when I come I won't like what I find, and you
won't like my response. I am afraid that I will find quarreling,
jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, arrogance, and
disorderly behavior. 21Yes, I am afraid that when I come again, God

will humble me in your presence. And I will be grieved because many of you have not given up your old sins. You have not repented of your impurity, sexual immorality, and eagerness for lustful pleasure.

2 Corinthians 13

PAUL'S FINAL ADVICE

1This is the third time I am coming to visit you (and as the Scriptures say, "The facts of every case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses"*). 2I have already warned those who had been sinning when I was there on my second visit. Now I again warn them and all others, just as I did before, that next time I will not spare them.

3I will give you all the proof you want that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not weak when he deals with you; he is powerful among you. 4Although he was crucified in weakness, he now lives by the power of God. We, too, are weak, just as Christ was, but when we deal with you we will be alive with him and will have God's power.

5Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you*; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith. 6As you test yourselves, I hope you will recognize that we have not failed the test of apostolic authority.

7We pray to God that you will not do what is wrong by refusing our correction. I hope we won't need to demonstrate our authority when we arrive. Do the right thing before we come—even if that makes it look like we have failed to demonstrate our authority. 8For we cannot oppose the truth, but must always stand for the truth. 9We are glad to seem weak if it helps show that you are actually strong. We pray that you will become mature.

10I am writing this to you before I come, hoping that I won't need to deal severely with you when I do come. For I want to use the authority the Lord has given me to strengthen you, not to tear you down.

PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

11Dear brothers and sisters,* I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

12Greet each other with a sacred kiss. 13All of God's people here send you their greetings.

BLESSINGS 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14

14*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Galatians

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6

WELCOME TO

GALATIANS

Paul writes this letter to several churches that he founded in the region of Galatia during his first missionary journey. Soon after Paul's departure, a group of false teachers have come behind him, claiming that Gentile Christians needed to submit to Jewish law in order to be true followers of Jesus. Paul now writes to defend the gospel he preached and to clarify the fact that salvation is through faith in Jesus alone, not through works of any kind. Churches in every time and place often need to be reminded that salvation is a free gift from God because he loves us. Nothing we do on our own can save us. Salvation is what God does, not what we do. God frees us from our old ways to live a life of love by the power of the Holy Spirit.

0 STOPS

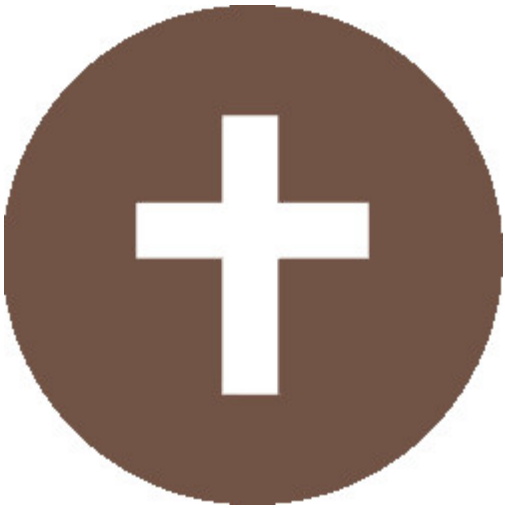
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly over Galatians on this route. Your next stop is at Philippians 2:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your stop in Galatians will teach you about the characteristics of a Spirit-filled life. Your next stop is at Galatians 5:16.

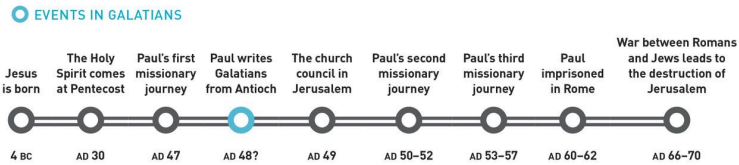
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll stop twice in this book to read Paul's defense of the Good News and his description of what it means to live by the Spirit's power. Your next stop is at Galatians 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN GALATIANS

In all of his letters to the churches, Paul wrote about the Good News and Jesus. He reminded the Galatians that they were saved by faith in Jesus, not by any of their own efforts. Through Jesus, God graciously provides freedom from sin and the law. Jesus is the one who sets us free.



Galatians 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, an apostle. I was not appointed by any group of people or any human authority, but by Jesus Christ himself and by God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead.

GALATIA

2All the brothers and sisters* here join me in sending this letter to the churches of Galatia.

3May God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ* give you grace and peace. 4Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live. 5All glory to God forever and ever! Amen.

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOOD NEWS

6I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ.* You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News 7but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ.

8Let God's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. 9I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.

10Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.

PAUL'S MESSAGE COMES FROM CHRIST

11Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning. 12I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ.*

13You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion—
how I violently persecuted God's church. I did my best to destroy it.
14I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of
my ancestors.

15But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his
marvelous grace. Then it pleased him 16to reveal his Son to me* so
that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles.

When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human
being.*17Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who
were apostles before I was. Instead, I went away into Arabia, and
later I returned to the city of Damascus.

18Then three years later I went to Jerusalem to get to know Peter,*
and I stayed with him for fifteen days. 19The only other apostle I
met at that time was James, the Lord's brother. 20I declare before
God that what I am writing to you is not a lie.

21After that visit I went north into the provinces of Syria and Cilicia.
22And still the churches in Christ that are in Judea didn't know me
personally. 23All they knew was that people were saying, "The one
who used to persecute us is now preaching the very faith he tried to
destroy!" 24And they praised God because of me.

Galatians 2

THE APOSTLES ACCEPT PAUL

1Then fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem again, this time
with Barnabas; and Titus came along, too. 2I went there because
God revealed to me that I should go. While I was there I met
privately with those considered to be leaders of the church and
shared with them the message I had been preaching to the Gentiles.
I wanted to make sure that we were in agreement, for fear that all
my efforts had been wasted and I was running the race for nothing.

3And they supported me and did not even demand that my companion Titus be circumcised, though he was a Gentile.*

4Even that question came up only because of some so-called believers there—false ones, really*—who were secretly brought in. They sneaked in to spy on us and take away the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to enslave us and force us to follow their Jewish regulations. 5But we refused to give in to them for a single moment. We wanted to preserve the truth of the gospel message for you.

6And the leaders of the church had nothing to add to what I was preaching. (By the way, their reputation as great leaders made no difference to me, for God has no favorites.) 7Instead, they saw that God had given me the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as he had given Peter the responsibility of preaching to the Jews. 8For the same God who worked through Peter as the apostle to the Jews also worked through me as the apostle to the Gentiles.

9In fact, James, Peter,* and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers. They encouraged us to keep preaching to the Gentiles, while they continued their work with the Jews. 10Their only suggestion was that we keep on helping the poor, which I have always been eager to do.

PAUL CONFRONTS PETER

11But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face,
for what he did was very wrong. 12When he first arrived, he ate
with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But
afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat
with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these
people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. 13As a result,
other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even
Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

14When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel
message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew
by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a
Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the
Jewish traditions?

15"You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. 16Yet
we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus
Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ
Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith
in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever
be made right with God by obeying the law."*

17But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in
Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned
the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not!
18Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already
tore down. 19For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So
I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so
that I might live for God. 20My old self has been crucified with
Christ.* It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in
this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and
gave himself for me. 21I do not treat the grace of God as
meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God,
then there was no need for Christ to die.

Galatians 3

THE LAW AND FAITH IN CHRIST

1Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the
meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you
had seen a picture of his death on the cross. 2Let me ask you this
one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of
Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed
the message you heard about Christ. 3How foolish can you be? After
starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to
become perfect by your own human effort? 4Have you experienced*
so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it?

5I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work
miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is
because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

6In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as
righteous because of his faith."*7The real children of Abraham,
then, are those who put their faith in God.

8What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God
would declare the Gentiles to be righteous because of their faith.
God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said,
"All nations will be blessed through you."*9So all who put their
faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of
his faith.

10But those who depend on the law to make them right with God
are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who
does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in
God's Book of the Law."*11So it is clear that no one can be made
right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It
is through faith that a righteous person has life."*12This way of faith
is very different from the way of law, which says, "It is through

obeying the law that a person has life.”*

13But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”*14Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised* Holy Spirit through faith.

THE LAW AND GOD’S PROMISE

15Dear brothers and sisters,* here’s an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. 16God gave the promises to Abraham and his child.* And notice that the Scripture doesn’t say “to his children,*” as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says “to his child”—and that, of course, means Christ. 17This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be canceled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise. 18For if the inheritance could be received by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God’s promise. But God graciously gave it to Abraham as a promise.

19Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised. God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people. 20Now a mediator is helpful if more than one party must reach an agreement. But God, who is one, did not use a mediator when he gave his promise to Abraham.

21Is there a conflict, then, between God’s law and God’s promises?* Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. 22But the Scriptures declare that we

are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

GOD'S CHILDREN THROUGH FAITH

23Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed.

24Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. 25And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.

26For you are all children* of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes.*28There is no longer Jew or Gentile,* slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children* of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

Galatians 4

1Think of it this way. If a father dies and leaves an inheritance for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father had. 2They have to obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father set. 3And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles* of this world.

4But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. 5God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own

children.*6And because we* are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.”*7Now you are no longer a slave but God’s own child.* And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

PAUL’S CONCERN FOR THE GALATIANS

8Before you Gentiles knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. 9So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world? 10You are trying to earn favor with God by observing certain days or months or seasons or years. 11I fear for you. Perhaps all my hard work with you was for nothing. 12Dear brothers and sisters,* I plead with you to live as I do in freedom from these things, for I have become like you Gentiles—free from those laws.

You did not mistreat me when I first preached to you. 13Surely you remember that I was sick when I first brought you the Good News. 14But even though my condition tempted you to reject me, you did not despise me or turn me away. No, you took me in and cared for me as though I were an angel from God or even Christ Jesus himself. 15Where is that joyful and grateful spirit you felt then? I am sure you would have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if it had been possible. 16Have I now become your enemy because I am telling you the truth?

17Those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay attention only to them. 18If someone is eager to do good things for you, that’s all right; but let them do it all the time, not just when I’m with you.

19Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I’m going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives. 20I wish I were with you right now so I could change my tone. But at this distance I don’t know how else to help you.

ABRAHAM'S TWO CHILDREN

21Tell me, you who want to live under the law, do you know what
the law actually says? 22The Scriptures say that Abraham had two
sons, one from his slave wife and one from his freeborn wife.*23The
son of the slave wife was born in a human attempt to bring about
the fulfillment of God's promise. But the son of the freeborn wife
was born as God's own fulfillment of his promise.

24These two women serve as an illustration of God's two covenants.
The first woman, Hagar, represents Mount Sinai where people
received the law that enslaved them. 25And now Jerusalem is just
like Mount Sinai in Arabia,* because she and her children live in
slavery to the law. 26But the other woman, Sarah, represents the
heavenly Jerusalem. She is the free woman, and she is our mother.
27As Isaiah said, "Rejoice, O childless woman, you who have never
given birth!

Break into a joyful shout, you who have never been in labor!
For the desolate woman now has more children than the woman
who lives with her husband!"*

28And you, dear brothers and sisters, are children of the promise,
just like Isaac. 29But you are now being persecuted by those who
want you to keep the law, just as Ishmael, the child born by human
effort, persecuted Isaac, the child born by the power of the Spirit.

30But what do the Scriptures say about that? "Get rid of the slave
and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the
inheritance with the free woman's son."*31So, dear brothers and
sisters, we are not children of the slave woman; we are children of
the free woman.

Galatians 5

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

1So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free,
and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.

2Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to
make you right with God, then Christ will be of no benefit to you.
3I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being
circumcised, you must obey every regulation in the whole law of
Moses. 4For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by
keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen
away from God's grace.

5But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the
righteousness God has promised to us. 6For when we place our faith
in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being
uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.

7You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from
following the truth? 8It certainly isn't God, for he is the one who
called you to freedom. 9This false teaching is like a little yeast that
spreads through the whole batch of dough! 10I am trusting the Lord
to keep you from believing false teachings. God will judge that
person, whoever he is, who has been confusing you.

11Dear brothers and sisters,* if I were still preaching that you must
be circumcised—as some say I do—why am I still being persecuted?
If I were no longer preaching salvation through the cross of Christ,
no one would be offended. 12I just wish that those troublemakers
who want to mutilate you by circumcision would mutilate
themselves.*

13For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and
sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature.
Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. 14For the
whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your
neighbor as yourself."*15But if you are always biting and devouring
one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER

16So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be
doing what your sinful nature craves. 17The sinful nature wants to
do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the
Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature
desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you
are not free to carry out your good intentions. 18But when you are

directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

19When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, 21envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

22But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. 26Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

Galatians 6

WE HARVEST WHAT WE PLANT

1Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer* is overcome by some sin, you who are godly* should gently and humbly help that person

back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. 2Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. 3If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

4Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won't need to compare yourself to anyone else. 5For we are each responsible for our own conduct.

6Those who are taught the word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them.

7Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. 8Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. 9So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. 10Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

PAUL'S FINAL ADVICE

11NOTICE WHAT LARGE LETTERS I USE AS I WRITE THESE CLOSING WORDS IN MY OWN HANDWRITING.

12Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised want to look

good to others. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the cross of Christ alone can save. 13And even those who advocate circumcision don't keep the whole law themselves. They only want you to be circumcised so they can boast about it and claim you as their disciples.

14As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross,* my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died. 15It doesn't matter whether we have been circumcised or not. What counts is whether we have been transformed into a new creation. 16May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; they are the new people of God.*

17From now on, don't let anyone trouble me with these things. For I bear on my body the scars that show I belong to Jesus.

18Dear brothers and sisters,* may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Ephesians

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6

WELCOME TO

EPHESIANS

Paul writes to the Christians in Ephesus when he is a prisoner in Rome, hundreds of miles away. He wants to comfort and encourage them. This is a letter full of joy, praise, and thanksgiving for all that God has done for his people. Paul reviews God's great plan to save his people and unite Jews and Gentiles within the church, the body

of Christ.

Paul presents an overview of history, beginning in the past, moving to the present, and then looking to the future: In the beginning, God knew his plans for the world; now God is saving those who trust Christ; and someday all evil will be overcome. Paul then explains how these big ideas influence the Christian life as it is lived out in everyday relationships between husbands and wives, children and parents, and slaves and masters. These general teachings encourage the believers in Ephesus.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll skip over this letter for now. Put it on your "to visit" list for your next journey through the Bible. Your next stop is at Philippians 2:1.

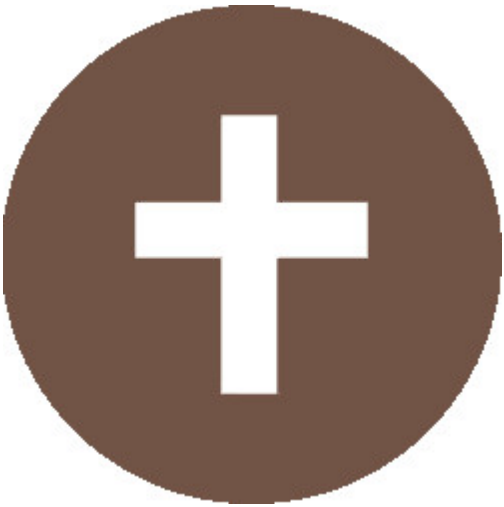
1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The one stop on your route highlights Paul's teachings on how believers can imitate God's love in their own lives. Your next stop is at Ephesians 5:1.

2 STOPS

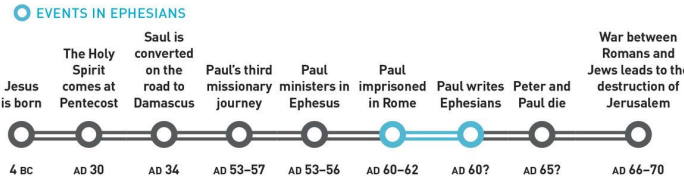
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your two stops in Ephesians focus on the

unity of the church, the beauty of a life that shines with God's love, and the importance of resisting evil. Your next stop is at Ephesians 4:1.



FINDING JESUS IN EPHESIANS

Jesus is the focus of Ephesians. Paul's letter is saturated with references to Jesus, mentioning that he gives us spiritual gifts, is the cornerstone of the church, and is Lord of our lives and relationships. Because Jesus has broken the bonds of sin and death, we can find peace in life and in death. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we are free from sin and are united with him. We can rest securely, knowing that, through Jesus, God has adopted us into his family.



EPHESUS

Ephesians 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle
of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus,* who are faithful
followers of Christ Jesus.

2May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and
peace.

GOD LOVES YOU EPHESIANS 1:3-11

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

3All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has
blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms
because we are united with Christ. 4Even before he made the world,
God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in
his eyes. 5God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family
by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he
wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6So we praise God for
the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear
Son.*7He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our
freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8He has
showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and
understanding.

9God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a
plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. 10And this is the plan: At the
right time he will bring everything together under the authority of
Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. 11Furthermore, because
we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from
God,* for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work
out according to his plan.

12God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in
Christ would bring praise and glory to God. 13And now you Gentiles
have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And
when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own* by giving
you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. 14The Spirit is

God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL WISDOM

15Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere,*16I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, 17asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom* and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. 18I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.*

19I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. 21Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. 22God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. 23And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Ephesians 2

MADE ALIVE WITH CHRIST

1Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world.* He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject

to God's anger, just like everyone else.

4But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5that even
though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he
raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have
been saved!) 6For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and
seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united
with Christ Jesus. 7So God can point to us in all future ages as
examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward
us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ
Jesus.

8God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take
credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9Salvation is not a reward for
the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.
10For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ
Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

ONENESS AND PEACE IN CHRIST

11Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were
called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of
their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not
their hearts. 12In those days you were living apart from Christ. You
were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you
did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You
lived in this world without God and without hope. 13But now you
have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from
God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood
of Christ.

14For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and
Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he
broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15He did this by
ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations.

He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself
one new people from the two groups. 16Together as one body, Christ
reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross,
and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

17He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far
away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. 18Now all of
us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of
what Christ has done for us.

A TEMPLE FOR THE LORD

19So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You
are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of
God's family. 20Together, we are his house, built on the foundation
of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus
himself. 21We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy
temple for the Lord. 22Through him you Gentiles are also being
made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

Ephesians 3

GOD'S MYSTERIOUS PLAN REVEALED

1When I think of all this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the
benefit of you Gentiles* . . . 2assuming, by the way, that you know
God gave me the special responsibility of extending his grace to you
Gentiles. 3As I briefly wrote earlier, God himself revealed his
mysterious plan to me. 4As you read what I have written, you will
understand my insight into this plan regarding Christ. 5God did not
reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has
revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.

6And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the
Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children.

Both are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.*7By God's grace and mighty power, I have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News.

8Though I am the least deserving of all God's people, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ. 9I was chosen to explain to everyone* this mysterious plan that God, the Creator of all things, had kept secret from the beginning.

10God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord.

12Because of Christ and our faith in him,* we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence. 13So please don't lose heart because of my trials here. I am suffering for you, so you should feel honored.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

14When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father,*15the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.*16I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. 17Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

20Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at
work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or
think. 21Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all
generations forever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 4

UNITY IN THE BODY

1Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life
worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2Always be
humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance
for each other's faults because of your love. 3Make every effort to
keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together
with peace. 4For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have
been called to one glorious hope for the future.

5There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living
through all.

7However, he has given each one of us a special gift* through the generosity of Christ. 8That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.”*

9Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world.*10And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

11Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

14Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

LIVING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

17With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19They

have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

20But that isn't what you learned about Christ. 21Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

25So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. 26And "don't sin by letting anger control you."* Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

28If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. 29Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

30And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own,* guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

31Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Ephesians 5

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

1Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his
dear children. 2Live a life filled with love, following the example of
Christ. He loved us* and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a
pleasing aroma to God.

3Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you.
Such sins have no place among God's people. 4Obscene stories,
foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let
there be thankfulness to God. 5You can be sure that no immoral,
impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of
God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of
this world.

6Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger
of God will fall on all who disobey him. 7Don't participate in the
things these people do. 8For once you were full of darkness, but now
you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! 9For this
light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

10Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. 11Take no part in the
worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. 12It is
shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in
secret. 13But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light
shines on them, 14for the light makes everything visible. This is why
it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will
give you light."

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER

15So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those
who are wise. 16Make the most of every opportunity in these evil
days. 17Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants
you to do. 18Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your
life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, 19singing psalms and
hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to

the Lord in your hearts. 20And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SPIRIT-GUIDED RELATIONSHIPS: WIVES AND HUSBANDS

21And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. 24As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

25For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.* 27He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. 28In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. 29No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. 30And we are members of his body.

31As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one."* 32This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. 33So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 6

CHILDREN AND PARENTS

1Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord,* for

this is the right thing to do. 2“Honor your father and mother.” This
is the first commandment with a promise: 3If you honor your father
and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long
life on the earth.”*

4Fathers,* do not provoke your children to anger by the way you
treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and
instruction that comes from the Lord.

SLAVES AND MASTERS

5Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve
them sincerely as you would serve Christ. 6Try to please them all
the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ,
do the will of God with all your heart. 7Work with enthusiasm, as
though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.
8Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good
we do, whether we are slaves or free.

9Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don’t threaten them;
remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no
favorites.

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

10A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11Put
on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against
all strategies of the devil. 12For we* are not fighting against flesh-

and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

13Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. 14Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.* 16In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.* 17Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.*

19And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike.* 20I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

FINAL GREETINGS

21To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work. 22I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

23Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters,* and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. 24May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians

Introduction 1 2 3 4

WELCOME TO

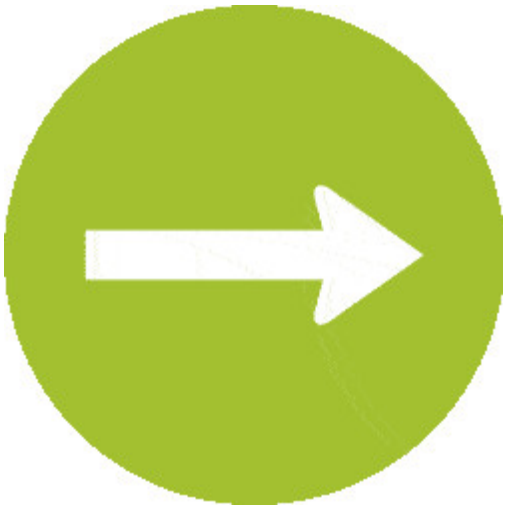
PHILIPPIANS

Paul writes this letter to the church in Philippi as a prisoner awaiting trial in Rome. But the letter doesn't dwell on Paul's current situation; rather, it's filled with joy, demonstrating that Christians should be joyful in spite of any circumstances they are currently facing. The church in Philippi has generously provided for Paul's needs, and he writes to thank them, to encourage them, and to instruct them about the Christian life.

Paul begins the letter with his usual greetings and describes his circumstances. He then encourages the believers to live with a Christlike attitude, to shine brightly for Christ, to be filled with joy, and to vigorously reject false teachings. Paul urges the Philippians to follow his own example as he follows Christ. Finally, he provides them with timeless advice: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done" (4:6).

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Your only stop in Philippians will show you how to live for Jesus: by imitating him. Your next stop is at Philippians 2:1.



2 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You'll make two stops in Philippians.

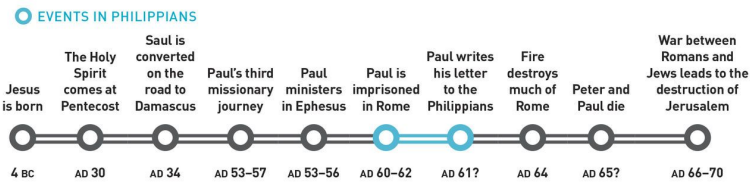
Both readings will encourage you to persevere in living a life of active faith. Your next stop is at Philippians 2:1.

2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your readings in Philippians will show you Paul's deep affection for the Philippian believers, which leads him to encourage them to persevere during difficult times. Your next stop is at Philippians 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN PHILIPPIANS

In Philippians, Jesus is placed center-stage in the “Christ hymn” (2:6-11). This passage is a significant witness of what the early church believed about Jesus: Though he was God, he humbled himself by becoming human and serving all people, even suffering a humiliating death. However, “God elevated him to the place of highest honor.” Throughout Philippians, Jesus’ life is presented as the model for our own lives. Paul encouraged his readers to shape their lives with humility and service, to be willing to suffer, and to trust that God would glorify them in the last day.



PHILIPPI

Philippians 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the elders* and deacons.

2May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

PAUL'S THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

3Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. 4Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, 5for you have been

my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. 6And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

7So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. 8God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.

9I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. 10For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. 11May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ*—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

SKIP TO 2:1

PAUL'S JOY THAT CHRIST IS PREACHED

12And I want you to know, my dear brothers and sisters,* that everything that has happened to me here has helped to spread the Good News. 13For everyone here, including the whole palace guard,* knows that I am in chains because of Christ. 14And because of my imprisonment, most of the believers* here have gained confidence and boldly speak God's message* without fear.

15It's true that some are preaching out of jealousy and rivalry. But others preach about Christ with pure motives. 16They preach because they love me, for they know I have been appointed to defend the Good News. 17Those others do not have pure motives as they preach about Christ. They preach with selfish ambition, not sincerely, intending to make my chains more painful to me. 18But

that doesn't matter. Whether their motives are false or genuine, the message about Christ is being preached either way, so I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice. 19For I know that as you pray for me and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me, this will lead to my deliverance.

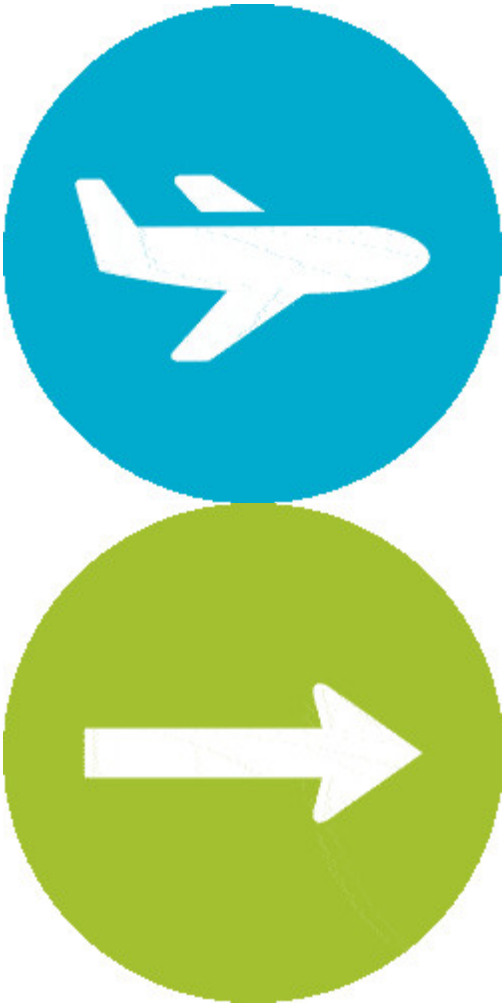
PAUL'S LIFE FOR CHRIST

20For I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die. 21For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. 22But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. 23I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. 24But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live.

25Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith. 26And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me.

LIVE AS CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

27Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing together with one spirit and one purpose, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News. 28Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself. 29For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him. 30We are in this struggle together. You have seen my struggle in the past, and you know that I am still in the midst of it.



Philippians 2

HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST

1Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort
from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your
hearts tender and compassionate? 2Then make me truly happy by
agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and
working together with one mind and purpose.

3Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of
others as better than yourselves. 4Don’t look out only for your own
interests, but take an interest in others, too.

5You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

SONGS PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11

6Though he was God,*
he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.

7Instead, he gave up his divine privileges*; he took the humble
position of a slave*
and was born as a human being.
When he appeared in human form,*

8he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s
death on a cross.

9Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and
gave him the name above all other names,

10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and
on earth and under the earth,

11and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of
God the Father.

SHINE BRIGHTLY FOR CHRIST

12Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was
with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work
hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep
reverence and fear. 13For God is working in you, giving you the
desire and the power to do what pleases him.

14Do everything without complaining and arguing, 15so that no one
can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God,
shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse
people. 16Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's
return, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that
my work was not useless. 17But I will rejoice even if I lose my life,
pouring it out like a liquid offering to God,* just like your faithful
service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to share that joy.
18Yes, you should rejoice, and I will share your joy.

PAUL COMMENDS TIMOTHY

19If the Lord Jesus is willing, I hope to send Timothy to you soon for
a visit. Then he can cheer me up by telling me how you are getting
along. 20I have no one else like Timothy, who genuinely cares about
your welfare. 21All the others care only for themselves and not for
what matters to Jesus Christ. 22But you know how Timothy has
proved himself. Like a son with his father, he has served with me in
preaching the Good News. 23I hope to send him to you just as soon
as I find out what is going to happen to me here. 24And I have

confidence from the Lord that I myself will come to see you soon.

PAUL COMMENDS EPAPHRODITUS

25Meanwhile, I thought I should send Epaphroditus back to you. He is a true brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier. And he was your messenger to help me in my need. 26I am sending him because he has been longing to see you, and he was very distressed that you heard he was ill. 27And he certainly was ill; in fact, he almost died. But God had mercy on him—and also on me, so that I would not have one sorrow after another.

28So I am all the more anxious to send him back to you, for I know you will be glad to see him, and then I will not be so worried about you. 29Welcome him in the Lord's love* and with great joy, and give him the honor that people like him deserve. 30For he risked his life for the work of Christ, and he was at the point of death while doing for me what you couldn't do from far away.

Philippians 3

THE PRICELESS VALUE OF KNOWING CHRIST

1Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters,* rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.

2Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved. 3For we who worship by the Spirit of God* are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort, 4though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!

5I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded

citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. 6I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

7I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ.* For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. 10I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, 11so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

12I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or
that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that
perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13No, dear
brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it,* but I focus on this one
thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,
14I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly
prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

15Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you
disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you.
16But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.

17Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn
from those who follow our example. 18For I have told you often
before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many
whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ.
19They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they
brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here
on earth. 20But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus
Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our

Savior. 21He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

Philippians 4

1Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters,* stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

2Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. 3And I ask you, my true partner,* to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in telling others the Good News. They worked along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life.

4Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! 5Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.*

6Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. 7Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live

in Christ Jesus.

8And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your
thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and
lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and
worthy of praise. 9Keep putting into practice all you learned and
received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me
doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

PAUL'S THANKS FOR THEIR GIFTS

10How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I
know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have
the chance to help me. 11Not that I was ever in need, for I have
learned how to be content with whatever I have. 12I know how to
live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret
of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or
empty, with plenty or little. 13For I can do everything through
Christ,* who gives me strength. 14Even so, you have done well to
share with me in my present difficulty.

15As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me
financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then
traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. 16Even when
I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. 17I don't say
this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a
reward for your kindness.

18At the moment I have all I need—and more! I am generously
supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a
sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God.
19And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your
needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in
Christ Jesus.

20Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen.

PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

21Give my greetings to each of God's holy people—all who belong
to Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you their
greetings. 22And all the rest of God's people send you greetings, too,
especially those in Caesar's household.

23May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.*

Colossians

Introduction 1 2 3 4

WELCOME TO

COLOSSIANS

Even though he has traveled to many cities nearby, Paul has never been to Colosse. He has friends there, however, and now he writes to combat some strange teachings that are creeping into the church. The Colossians are distorting their view of Christ by incorporating some aspects of Judaism and even paganism into their faith. While imprisoned in Rome, Paul writes to correct their errors by teaching that Christ is the eternal God (2:9). The Colossians need to live in a way that acknowledges Christ's status and authority. Paul provides practical instructions concerning Christian living so the believers can apply his teachings to their lives.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You don't have to stop in Colossians on this route. Fly over and land at your next stop at Hebrews 11:1.

1 STOP

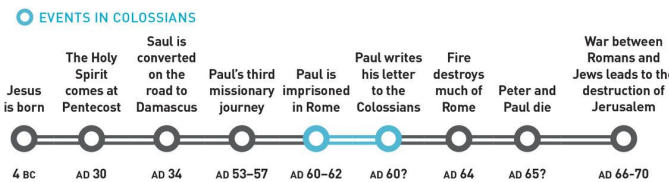
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Paul explains the freedom believers have in Christ, telling the Colossians to let the joy of this freedom fill their lives and spur them on toward obedience. Your next stop is at Colossians 2:6.

2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll read almost the entire book of Colossians in two stops. In the first reading, Paul teaches that Christ is supreme over all things. The second reading includes specific instructions for living a holy life. Your next stop is at Colossians 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN COLOSSIANS

In Colossians, Jesus “is supreme over all creation” and “holds all creation together” (1:15, 17). There is nothing about his work or his person that is less than perfect or complete. Anyone who tries to add to Jesus’ work or who claims that Jesus was anything less than fully God corrupts the Good News. The book of Colossians gives us a beautiful picture of the glory of Jesus Christ and calls on Christians to love him and let his love and peace be reflected in our lives (3:14-15).



Colossians 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle
of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy.

COLOSSE

2We are writing to God's holy people in the city of Colosse, who are
faithful brothers and sisters* in Christ.

May God our Father give you grace and peace.

PAUL'S THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

3We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of

our Lord Jesus Christ. 4For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people, 5which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News.

6This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.

7You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker. He is Christ's faithful servant, and he is helping us on your behalf.* 8He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you.

9So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

11We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy,* 12always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. 13For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, 14who purchased our freedom* and forgave our sins.

CHRIST IS SUPREME

15Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,*

16for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth.
He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.
Everything was created through him and for him.

17He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

18Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body.
He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead.*
So he is first in everything.

19For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ,

20and through him God reconciled everything to himself.
He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

21This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.
22Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

23But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.

PAUL'S WORK FOR THE CHURCH

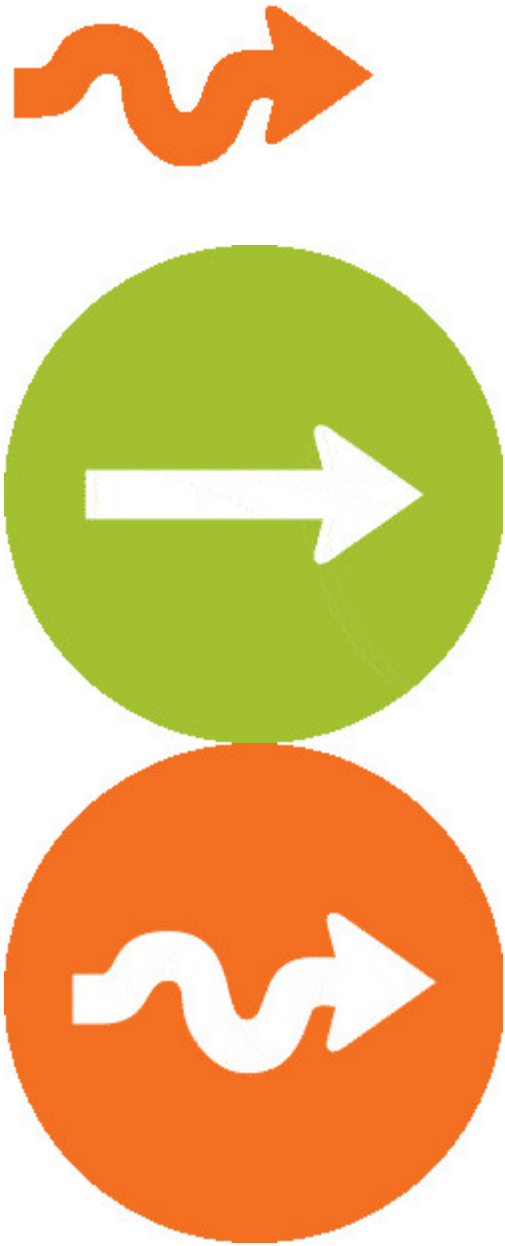
24I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating
in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church.
25God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by
proclaiming his entire message to you. 26This message was kept
secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been
revealed to God's people. 27For God wanted them to know that the
riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the
secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his
glory.

28So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching
everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present
them to God, perfect* in their relationship to Christ. 29That's why I
work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that
works within me.

Colossians 2

1I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the
church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never
met me personally. 2I want them to be encouraged and knit together
by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that
they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. 3In
him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted
arguments. 5For though I am far away from you, my heart is with
you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your
faith in Christ is strong.



FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

6And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must
continue to follow him. 7Let your roots grow down into him, and let
your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the
truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

8Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-
sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the
spiritual powers* of this world, rather than from Christ. 9For in
Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.*10So you also
are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over
every ruler and authority.

11When you came to Christ, you were "circumcised," but not by a
physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the
cutting away of your sinful nature.*12For you were buried with
Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to
new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised
Christ from the dead.

13You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful
nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ,
for he forgave all our sins. 14He canceled the record of the charges
against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. 15In this way,
he disarmed* the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them
publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

16So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for
not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or
Sabbaths. 17For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to
come. And Christ himself is that reality. 18Don't let anyone condemn
you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels,*
saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds
have made them proud, 19and they are not connected to Christ, the
head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its
joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.

20You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, 21“Don’t handle! Don’t taste! Don’t touch!”? 22Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. 23These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person’s evil desires.

Colossians 3

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

1Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. 2Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. 3For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. 4And when Christ, who is your* life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

5So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. 6Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.*7You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. 8But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. 10Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. 11In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile,* circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized,* slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

12Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must

clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. 15And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

16Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 17And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS

18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

20Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. 21Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you.

Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord.
23Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working
for the Lord rather than for people. 24Remember that the Lord will
give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are
serving is Christ.*25But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid
back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites.

Colossians 4

1Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also
have a Master—in heaven.

AN ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PRAYER

2Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful
heart. 3Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to
speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am
here in chains. 4Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I
should.

5Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most
of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be gracious and
attractive* so that you will have the right response for everyone.

PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS

7Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along.
He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in

the Lord's work. 8I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. 9I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here.

10Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. 11Jesus (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have been!

12Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. 13I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

14Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas. 15Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters* at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house.

16After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them.

17And say to Archippus, "Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you."

18HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING—PAUL.

Remember my chains.

May God's grace be with you.

1 Thessalonians

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5

WELCOME TO

1 THESSALONIANS

Paul first met the Thessalonians during his second missionary journey, but he was forced to flee the city because some angry Jewish leaders started a riot over his preaching (Acts 17:1-9). Eventually he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to check on the church while Paul traveled south to Athens and Corinth. Soon he receives a report from Timothy that the believers are remaining strong in their faith despite opposition.

Paul writes this letter from Corinth to defend his motives and ministry, comfort the young believers, and encourage them to continue living lives that are pleasing to God. He also writes to affirm their faith in some basic doctrines concerning God the Father, the Holy Spirit, Christian living, Christ, and especially Christ's second coming. Some Thessalonian Christians are concerned that believers who have already died will miss out on the resurrection at Christ's return. On the contrary, Paul assures them—the dead in Christ will rise first (4:16).

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll skip over 1 Thessalonians this time. However, you may want to take a moment to read the last two chapters of this book, in which Paul teaches that we can rest in the certainty that one day all believers will be resurrected from the dead. Your next stop is at Hebrews 11:1.

1 STOP

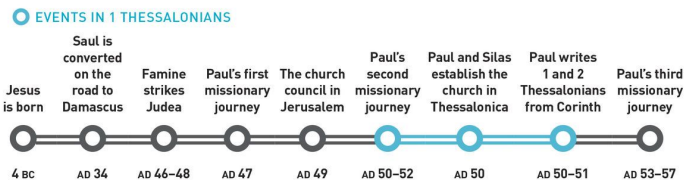
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your reading in 1 Thessalonians includes Paul's words of hope about the resurrection of the body. Your next stop is at 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll make two stops in this book. The first reading will give you an idea of the great love that Paul had for the beleaguered Thessalonians. The second will give you insights into the hope of the Lord's return. Your next stop is at 1 Thessalonians 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN 1 THESSALONIANS

Jesus is the believer's hope for renewal in this life and resurrection when he comes again. He is the one who gives life and provides us with the strength to love others. Jesus gives us endurance to face difficulties while we wait for his glorious return.



1 Thessalonians 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, Silas,* and Timothy.

We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God give you grace and peace.

THE FAITH OF THE THESSALONIAN BELIEVERS

2We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly.
3As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4We know, dear brothers and sisters,* that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people. 5For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance* that what we said was true.

And you know of our concern for you from the way we lived when we were with you. 6So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you. In this way, you imitated both us and the Lord. 7As a result, you have become an example to all the believers in Greece—throughout both Macedonia and Achaia.*

8And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God. We don't need to tell them about it, 9for they keep talking about the wonderful welcome you gave us and how you turned away from idols to serve the living and true God. 10And they speak of how you are looking forward to the coming of God's Son from heaven—Jesus, whom God raised from the dead. He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgment.

1 Thessalonians 2

PAUL REMEMBERS HIS VISIT

1You yourselves know, dear brothers and sisters,* that our visit to you was not a failure. 2You know how badly we had been treated at Philippi just before we came to you and how much we suffered there. Yet our God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, in spite of great opposition. 3So you can see we were not preaching with any deceit or impure motives or trickery.

4For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts. 5Never once did we try to win you with flattery, as you well know. And God is our witness that we were not pretending to be your friends just to get your money! 6As for human praise, we have never sought it from you or anyone else.

7As apostles of Christ we certainly had a right to make some

demands of you, but instead we were like children* among you. Or we were like a mother feeding and caring for her own children. 8We loved you so much that we shared with you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too.

9Don't you remember, dear brothers and sisters, how hard we worked among you? Night and day we toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached God's Good News to you. 10You yourselves are our witnesses—and so is God—that we were devout and honest and faultless toward all of you believers. 11And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. 12We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory.

13Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.

14And then, dear brothers and sisters, you suffered persecution from your own countrymen. In this way, you imitated the believers in God's churches in Judea who, because of their belief in Christ Jesus, suffered from their own people, the Jews. 15For some of the Jews killed the prophets, and some even killed the Lord Jesus. Now they have persecuted us, too. They fail to please God and work against all humanity 16as they try to keep us from preaching the Good News of salvation to the Gentiles. By doing this, they continue to pile up their sins. But the anger of God has caught up with them at last.

TIMOTHY'S GOOD REPORT ABOUT THE CHURCH

17Dear brothers and sisters, after we were separated from you for a little while (though our hearts never left you), we tried very hard to come back because of our intense longing to see you again. 18We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and

again, but Satan prevented us. 19After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! 20Yes, you are our pride and joy.

1 Thessalonians 3

1Finally, when we could stand it no longer, we decided to stay alone in Athens, 2and we sent Timothy to visit you. He is our brother and God's co-worker* in proclaiming the Good News of Christ. We sent him to strengthen you, to encourage you in your faith, 3and to keep you from being shaken by the troubles you were going through. But you know that we are destined for such troubles. 4Even while we were with you, we warned you that troubles would soon come—and they did, as you well know. 5That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the tempter had gotten the best of you and that our work had been useless.

6But now Timothy has just returned, bringing us good news about your faith and love. He reports that you always remember our visit with joy and that you want to see us as much as we want to see you. 7So we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering, dear brothers and sisters,* because you have remained strong in your faith. 8It gives us new life to know that you are standing firm in the Lord.

9How we thank God for you! Because of you we have great joy as we enter God's presence. 10Night and day we pray earnestly for you, asking God to let us see you again to fill the gaps in your faith.

11May God our Father and our Lord Jesus bring us to you very soon.
12And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all
people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. 13May
he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you
stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with
all his holy people. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 4

LIVE TO PLEASE GOD

1Finally, dear brothers and sisters,* we urge you in the name of the
Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you.
You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even
more. 2For you remember what we taught you by the authority of
the Lord Jesus.

3God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin.
4Then each of you will control his own body* and live in holiness
and honor—5not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know
God and his ways. 6Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this
matter by violating his wife,* for the Lord avenges all such sins, as
we have solemnly warned you before. 7God has called us to live
holy lives, not impure lives. 8Therefore, anyone who refuses to live
by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting
God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

9But we don't need to write to you about the importance of loving
each other,* for God himself has taught you to love one another.
10Indeed, you already show your love for all the believers*
throughout Macedonia. Even so, dear brothers and sisters, we urge
you to love them even more.

11Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business

and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before.
12Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live,
and you will not need to depend on others.

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

13And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what
will happen to the believers who have died* so you will not grieve
like people who have no hope. 14For since we believe that Jesus
died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus
returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.

15We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living
when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have
died.*16For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a
commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the
trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died* will rise
from their graves. 17Then, together with them, we who are still alive
and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the
Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. 18So
encourage each other with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5

1Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers
and sisters,* we don't really need to write you. 2For you know quite
well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a
thief in the night. 3When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful
and secure," then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a
pregnant woman's labor pains begin. And there will be no escape.

4But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and
sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes
like a thief.*5For you are all children of the light and of the day; we
don't belong to darkness and night. 6So be on your guard, not asleep
like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded. 7Night is the time
when people sleep and drinkers get drunk. 8But let us who live in
the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love,
and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.

9For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to
pour out his anger on us. 10Christ died for us so that, whether we
are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever.
11So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are
already doing.

PAUL'S FINAL ADVICE

12Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the
Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual
guidance. 13Show them great respect and wholehearted love
because of their work. And live peacefully with each other.

14Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy.
Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are
weak. Be patient with everyone.

15See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good
to each other and to all people.

16Always be joyful. 17Never stop praying. 18Be thankful in all
circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ
Jesus.

19Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. 20Do not scoff at prophecies, 21but
test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. 22Stay away
from every kind of evil.

PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

23Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may
your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our
Lord Jesus Christ comes again. 24God will make this happen, for he
who calls you is faithful.

25Dear brothers and sisters, pray for us.

26Greet all the brothers and sisters with a sacred kiss.

27I command you in the name of the Lord to read this letter to all
the brothers and sisters.

28May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Thessalonians

Introduction 1 2 3

WELCOME TO

2 THESSALONIANS

Paul writes his second letter to the church in Thessalonica about six months after the first one. This letter is short but of great importance because the believers have misinterpreted Paul's teaching about Christ's return. Thinking Christ's coming is imminent, they have stopped working and are simply waiting for the event to happen. Perhaps adding to the confusion is the continuing persecution that they are suffering.

Paul writes to correct them, assuring them that Christ will certainly return to comfort them and to punish those who are persecuting them; but he also firmly encourages them to be diligent in their daily work since no one knows precisely when Jesus will return. Paul's letter gives his readers confidence that God is in control, even when chaos appears to reign. Christ is on the throne. He reigns over all things now, and at the end he will triumph.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly over 2 Thessalonians without making a landing. Your next stop is at Hebrews 11:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your reading encompasses about half of this letter to the Thessalonians. Paul gives instructions to stand firm

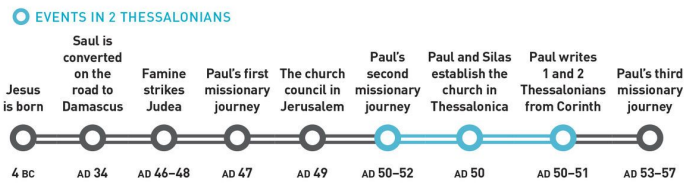
in the faith and stay busy. Your next stop is at 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

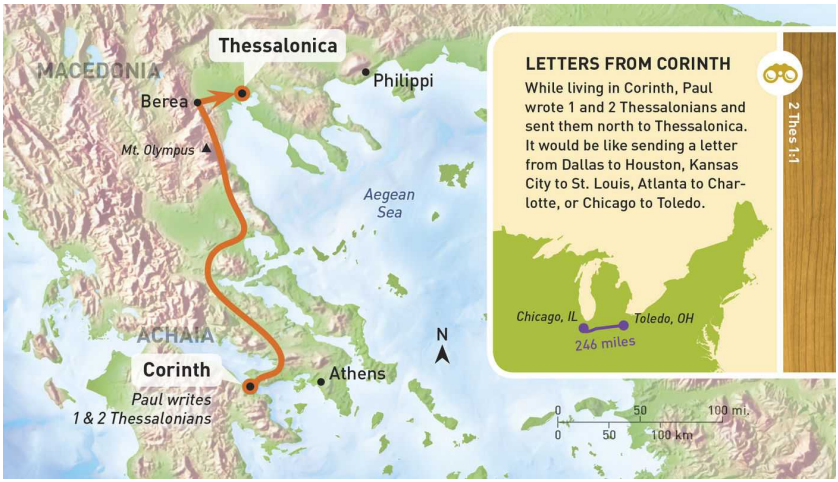
1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll be encouraged to keep your faith strong, work hard, and do what is right. God will comfort and strengthen you as you do this. Your next stop is at 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

FINDING JESUS IN 2 THESSALONIANS

Jesus' second coming is a major focus of this book. He will return from heaven to earth with an entourage of angels. He will receive honor and glory from his followers. He will gladly receive those who know God and have believed the Good News, but he will judge and punish all who have not.





LETTERS FROM CORINTH

2 Thessalonians 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, Silas,* and Timothy.

We are writing to the church in Thessalonica, to you who belong to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2May God our Father* and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

ENCOURAGEMENT DURING PERSECUTION

3Dear brothers and sisters,* we can't help but thank God for you, because your faith is flourishing and your love for one another is growing. 4We proudly tell God's other churches about your endurance and faithfulness in all the persecutions and hardships you are suffering. 5And God will use this persecution to show his

justice and to make you worthy of his Kingdom, for which you are suffering. 6In his justice he will pay back those who persecute you.

7And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, 8in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. 9They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power. 10When he comes on that day, he will receive glory from his holy people—praise from all who believe. And this includes you, for you believed what we told you about him.

11So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. 12Then the name of our Lord Jesus will be honored because of the way you live, and you will be honored along with him. This is all made possible because of the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

2 Thessalonians 2

EVENTS PRIOR TO THE LORD'S SECOND COMING

1Now, dear brothers and sisters,* let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him. 2Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. 3Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness* is revealed—the one who brings destruction.*4He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.

5Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with

you? 6And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. 7For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way. 8Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.

9This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. 10He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. 11So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. 12Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.

BELIEVERS SHOULD STAND FIRM

13As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear brothers and
sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose
you to be among the first* to experience salvation—a salvation that
came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your
belief in the truth. 14He called you to salvation when we told you
the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus
Christ.

15With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm
and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in
person and by letter.

16Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who
loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful
hope, 17comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do
and say.

2 Thessalonians 3

PAUL'S REQUEST FOR PRAYER

1Finally, dear brothers and sisters,* we ask you to pray for us. Pray
that the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored
wherever it goes, just as when it came to you. 2Pray, too, that we
will be rescued from wicked and evil people, for not everyone is a
believer. 3But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard
you from the evil one.*4And we are confident in the Lord that you
are doing and will continue to do the things we commanded you.
5May the Lord lead your hearts into a full understanding and
expression of the love of God and the patient endurance that comes
from Christ.

AN EXHORTATION TO PROPER LIVING

6And now, dear brothers and sisters, we give you this command in
the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stay away from all believers*
who live idle lives and don't follow the tradition they received*
from us. 7For you know that you ought to imitate us. We were not
idle when we were with you. 8We never accepted food from anyone
without paying for it. We worked hard day and night so we would
not be a burden to any of you. 9We certainly had the right to ask
you to feed us, but we wanted to give you an example to follow.
10Even while we were with you, we gave you this command: "Those
unwilling to work will not get to eat."

11Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to
work and meddling in other people's business. 12We command such
people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to settle
down and work to earn their own living. 13As for the rest of you,
dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good.

14Take note of those who refuse to obey what we say in this letter.
Stay away from them so they will be ashamed. 15Don't think of
them as enemies, but warn them as you would a brother or sister.*

PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

16Now may the Lord of peace himself give you his peace at all times
and in every situation. The Lord be with you all.

17HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING—PAUL. I
DO THIS IN ALL MY LETTERS TO PROVE THEY ARE FROM ME.

18May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

1 Timothy

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6

WELCOME TO

1 TIMOTHY

Paul writes this letter near the end of his life to his close friend and coworker Timothy. This personal letter is filled with Paul's encouraging words and wise counsel for this young leader. After working with him in Ephesus, Paul has assigned Timothy to lead the Ephesian church. Since this church is struggling with doctrine, religious practice, church government, and various aspects of Christian living, Timothy is in a difficult position as he tries to navigate his way through these issues. Paul clarifies some practical issues concerning church leadership; worship; and the conduct of widows, the elderly, slaves, and masters. Paul also writes to encourage Timothy to live wholeheartedly for the glory of God and not to become weary in his Christian life.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Your route through 1 Timothy doesn't require any stops. Your next stop is at Hebrews 11:1.

1 STOP

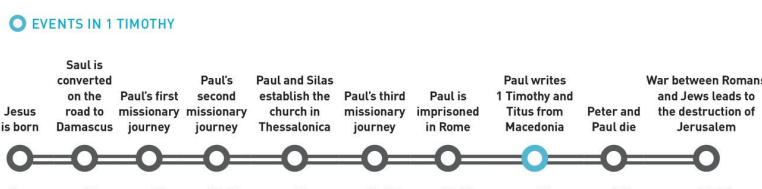
ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your one reading in this book will give you advice for living a life pleasing to God. Your next stop is at 1 Timothy 4:1.

3 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your three stops in 1 Timothy will cover the majority of this letter. You'll read Paul's instructions for worship, guidelines for leaders, and exhortations to be content. Your next stop is at 1 Timothy 2:1.

FINDING JESUS IN 1 TIMOTHY

Jesus' identity as Savior and Mediator has a central role in 1 Timothy: "There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus" (2:5). Jesus, who was fully God and fully human, acted as a go-between ("Mediator") for God and humanity. He made it possible for humans to have a relationship with God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth.



1 Timothy 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, appointed by
the command of God our Savior and Christ Jesus, who gives us
hope.

2I am writing to Timothy, my true son in the faith.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace,
mercy, and peace.

WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHINGS

3When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus
and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth. 4Don't let
them waste their time in endless discussion of myths and spiritual
pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations,*
which don't help people live a life of faith in God.*

5The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled
with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and
genuine faith. 6But some people have missed this whole point. They
have turned away from these things and spend their time in
meaningless discussions. 7They want to be known as teachers of the
law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about,
even though they speak so confidently.

8We know that the law is good when used correctly. 9For the law
was not intended for people who do what is right. It is for people
who are lawless and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful, who
consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who kill their
father or mother or commit other murders. 10The law is for people
who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are
slave traders,* liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that
contradicts the wholesome teaching 11that comes from the glorious
Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God.

PAUL'S GRATITUDE FOR GOD'S MERCY

12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his
work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve
him, 13even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my
insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me
because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. 14Oh, how generous and
gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that
come from Christ Jesus.

15This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it:
"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I am the
worst of them all. 16But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus
could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even
the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can
believe in him and receive eternal life. 17All honor and glory to God
forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never
dies; he alone is God. Amen.

TIMOTHY'S RESPONSIBILITY

18Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you, based on the
prophetic words spoken about you earlier. May they help you fight
well in the Lord's battles. 19Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep
your conscience clear. For some people have deliberately violated
their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked.
20Hymenaeus and Alexander are two examples. I threw them out
and handed them over to Satan so they might learn not to
blaspheme God.

1 Timothy 2

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT WORSHIP

1I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them;
intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. 2Pray this way
for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful
and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. 3This is good and
pleases God our Savior, 4who wants everyone to be saved and to
understand the truth. 5For,

There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and
humanity—the man Christ Jesus. 6He gave his life to purchase
freedom for everyone.

This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.
7And I have been chosen as a preacher and apostle to teach the
Gentiles this message about faith and truth. I'm not exaggerating—
just telling the truth.

8In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands
lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.

9And I want women to be modest in their appearance.* They should
wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to
themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or
pearls or expensive clothes. 10For women who claim to be devoted
to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they
do.

11Women should learn quietly and submissively. 12I do not let
women teach men or have authority over them.* Let them listen
quietly. 13For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve.
14And it was not Adam who was deceived by Satan. The woman
was deceived, and sin was the result. 15But women will be saved
through childbearing,* assuming they continue to live in faith, love,
holiness, and modesty.

1 Timothy 3

LEADERS IN THE CHURCH

1This is a trustworthy saying: “If someone aspires to be an elder,* he
desires an honorable position.” 2So an elder must be a man whose
life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife.* He must
exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He
must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach.
3He must not be a heavy drinker* or be violent. He must be gentle,
not quarrelsome, and not love money. 4He must manage his own
family well, having children who respect and obey him. 5For if a
man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of
God’s church?

6An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become
proud, and the devil would cause him to fall.*7Also, people outside
the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced
and fall into the devil’s trap.

8In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have
integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with
money. 9They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now
revealed and must live with a clear conscience. 10Before they are
appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the
test, then let them serve as deacons.

11In the same way, their wives* must be respected and must not
slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in
everything they do.

12A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his
children and household well. 13Those who do well as deacons will
be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased
confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

THE TRUTHS OF OUR FAITH

14I am writing these things to you now, even though I hope to be
with you soon, 15so that if I am delayed, you will know how people
must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the
church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the
truth.

16Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith*:

Christ* was revealed in a human body
and vindicated by the Spirit.*
He was seen by angels
and announced to the nations.
He was believed in throughout the world
and taken to heaven in glory.

1 Timothy 4

WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

1Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will
turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and
teachings that come from demons. 2These people are hypocrites and
liars, and their consciences are dead.*

3They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain
foods. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by
faithful people who know the truth. 4Since everything God created
is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks.
5For we know it is made acceptable* by the word of God and
prayer.

A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS

6If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters,* Timothy,
you will be a worthy servant of Christ Jesus, one who is nourished
by the message of faith and the good teaching you have followed.
7Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales.
Instead, train yourself to be godly. 8"Physical training is good, but
training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life
and in the life to come." 9This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone
should accept it. 10This is why we work hard and continue to
struggle,* for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all
people and particularly of all believers.

11Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them. 12Don't let
anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to
all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your
faith, and your purity. 13Until I get there, focus on reading the
Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching
them.

14Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the
prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their
hands on you. 15Give your complete attention to these matters.

Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. 16Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.

1 Timothy 5

ADVICE ABOUT WIDOWS, ELDERS, AND SLAVES

1Never speak harshly to an older man,* but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. 2Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters.

3Take care of* any widow who has no one else to care for her. 4But if she has children or grandchildren, their first responsibility is to show godliness at home and repay their parents by taking care of them. This is something that pleases God.

5Now a true widow, a woman who is truly alone in this world, has placed her hope in God. She prays night and day, asking God for his help. 6But the widow who lives only for pleasure is spiritually dead even while she lives. 7Give these instructions to the church so that no one will be open to criticism.

8But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are

worse than unbelievers.

9A widow who is put on the list for support must be a woman who
is at least sixty years old and was faithful to her husband.* 10She
must be well respected by everyone because of the good she has
done. Has she brought up her children well? Has she been kind to
strangers and served other believers humbly?* Has she helped those
who are in trouble? Has she always been ready to do good?

11The younger widows should not be on the list, because their
physical desires will overpower their devotion to Christ and they
will want to remarry. 12Then they would be guilty of breaking their
previous pledge. 13And if they are on the list, they will learn to be
lazy and will spend their time gossiping from house to house,
meddling in other people's business and talking about things they
shouldn't. 14So I advise these younger widows to marry again, have
children, and take care of their own homes. Then the enemy will
not be able to say anything against them. 15For I am afraid that
some of them have already gone astray and now follow Satan.

16If a woman who is a believer has relatives who are widows, she
must take care of them and not put the responsibility on the church.
Then the church can care for the widows who are truly alone.

17Elders who do their work well should be respected and paid well,*
especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching.
18For the Scripture says, "You must not muzzle an ox to keep it
from eating as it treads out the grain." And in another place, "Those
who work deserve their pay!"*

19Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is
confirmed by two or three witnesses. 20Those who sin should be
reprimanded in front of the whole church; this will serve as a strong
warning to others.

21I solemnly command you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus
and the highest angels to obey these instructions without taking
sides or showing favoritism to anyone.

22Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader.* Do not
share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

23Don't drink only water. You ought to drink a little wine for the
sake of your stomach because you are sick so often.

24Remember, the sins of some people are obvious, leading them to
certain judgment. But there are others whose sins will not be
revealed until later. 25In the same way, the good deeds of some
people are obvious. And the good deeds done in secret will someday
come to light.

1 Timothy 6

1All slaves should show full respect for their masters so they will
not bring shame on the name of God and his teaching. 2If the

masters are believers, that is no excuse for being disrespectful. Those slaves should work all the harder because their efforts are helping other believers* who are well loved.

FALSE TEACHING AND TRUE RICHES

Teach these things, Timothy, and encourage everyone to obey them.
3Some people may contradict our teaching, but these are the wholesome teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These teachings promote a godly life. 4Anyone who teaches something different is arrogant and lacks understanding. Such a person has an unhealthy desire to quibble over the meaning of words. This stirs up arguments ending in jealousy, division, slander, and evil suspicions.
5These people always cause trouble. Their minds are corrupt, and they have turned their backs on the truth. To them, a show of godliness is just a way to become wealthy.

6Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. 7After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. 8So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.

9But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

BLESSINGS 1 TIMOTHY 6:15-16

PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

11But you, Timothy, are a man of God; so run from all these evil
things. Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love,
perseverance, and gentleness. 12Fight the good fight for the true
faith. Hold tightly to the eternal life to which God has called you,
which you have declared so well before many witnesses. 13And I
charge you before God, who gives life to all, and before Christ
Jesus, who gave a good testimony before Pontius Pilate, 14that you
obey this command without wavering. Then no one can find fault
with you from now until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. 15For,

At just the right time Christ will be revealed from heaven by the
blessed and only almighty God, the King of all kings and Lord of all
lords. 16He alone can never die, and he lives in light so brilliant that
no human can approach him. No human eye has ever seen him, nor
ever will. All honor and power to him forever! Amen.

17Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to
trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in
God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18Tell them
to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works
and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with
others. 19By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a
good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

20Timothy, guard what God has entrusted to you. Avoid godless,
foolish discussions with those who oppose you with their so-called
knowledge. 21Some people have wandered from the faith by
following such foolishness.

May God's grace be with you all.

2 Timothy

Introduction 1 2 3 4

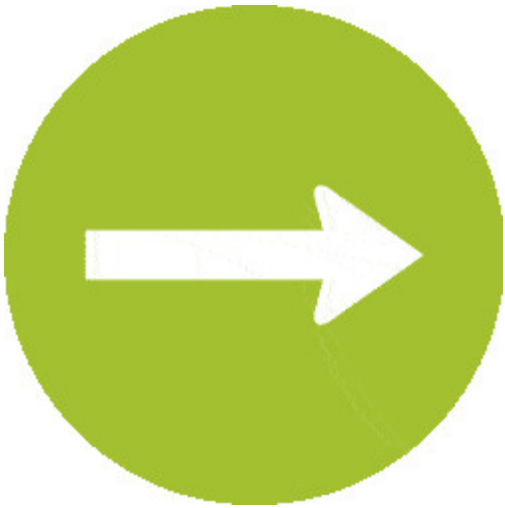
WELCOME TO

2 TIMOTHY

Paul writes a second letter—probably the last letter he will write before his death—to Timothy from prison in Rome. Because Timothy is a close friend to Paul, this is a highly personal letter that expresses some of Paul's deepest feelings. Paul testifies of God's faithfulness in leading him throughout his entire life. Paul also looks to the future, at what Timothy may face. He provides encouragement to Timothy, outlines the characteristics of a faithful minister, and commissions Timothy to carry on Paul's work of spreading the Good News. He instructs the young leader to stand firm in the face of coming persecutions. Although Paul knows his life and ministry are coming to an end, he faces his circumstances with faith and hope.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: On this route, you will fly over 2 Timothy on your way to the book of Hebrews. Your next stop is at Hebrews 11:1.



1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your one reading in this book will

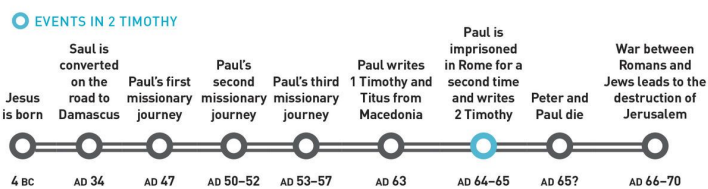
encourage you to be faithful to God and endure whatever difficult circumstances might come your way. Your next stop is at 2 Timothy 1:1.

2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll read Paul's entire letter to Timothy. In the first part, Paul encourages Timothy to remain faithful to God. In the second, he urges Timothy to live in a way that God will approve—preaching the gospel and preparing for the Lord's return. Your next stop is at 2 Timothy 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN 2 TIMOTHY

In this book, Paul points to Jesus as the one who gives strength and grace to endure every hardship a Christian might face—even martyrdom. Paul places his trust in Jesus' power over death, confident that "the Lord . . . will bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom" (4:18). Jesus is "the Lord, the righteous Judge" who will give a crown of righteousness to "all who eagerly look forward to his appearing" (4:8).



2 Timothy 1

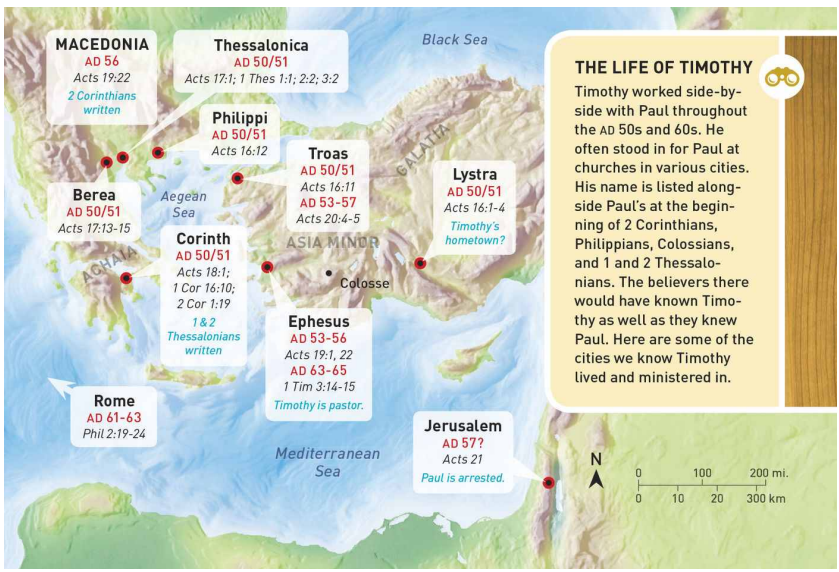
GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle
of Christ Jesus. I have been sent out to tell others about the life he
has promised through faith in Christ Jesus.

2I am writing to Timothy, my dear son.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord give you grace,
mercy, and peace.

DON'T FEAR 2 TIMOTHY 1:3-11



THE LIFE OF TIMOTHY

ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE FAITHFUL

3Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear
conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly
remember you in my prayers. 4I long to see you again, for I
remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy
when we are together again.

5I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first
filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know
that same faith continues strong in you. 6This is why I remind you
to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my
hands on you. 7For God has not given us a spirit of fear and
timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

8So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don't be
ashamed of me, either, even though I'm in prison for him. With the
strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of
the Good News. 9For God saved us and called us to live a holy life.
He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his
plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace
through Christ Jesus. 10And now he has made all of this plain to us
by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Savior. He broke the power of
death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the
Good News. 11And God chose me to be a preacher, an apostle, and a
teacher of this Good News.

12That is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of
it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able
to guard what I have entrusted to him* until the day of his return.

13Hold on to the pattern of wholesome teaching you learned from
me—a pattern shaped by the faith and love that you have in Christ
Jesus. 14Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us,
carefully guard the precious truth that has been entrusted to you.

15As you know, everyone from the province of Asia has deserted me
—even Phygelus and Hermogenes.

16May the Lord show special kindness to Onesiphorus and all his
family because he often visited and encouraged me. He was never
ashamed of me because I was in chains. 17When he came to Rome,
he searched everywhere until he found me. 18May the Lord show

him special kindness on the day of Christ's return. And you know very well how helpful he was in Ephesus.

2 Timothy 2

A GOOD SOLDIER OF CHRIST JESUS

1Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus. 2You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

3Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them. 5And athletes cannot win the prize unless they follow the rules. 6And hardworking farmers should be the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. 7Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand all these things.

8Always remember that Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David, was raised from the dead. This is the Good News I preach. 9And because I preach this Good News, I am suffering and have been chained like a criminal. But the word of God cannot be chained. 10So I am willing to endure anything if it will bring salvation and eternal glory in Christ Jesus to those God has chosen.

11This is a trustworthy saying:

If we die with him,
we will also live with him.

12If we endure hardship,
we will reign with him.
If we deny him,

he will deny us.

13If we are unfaithful,
he remains faithful,
for he cannot deny who he is.

14Remind everyone about these things, and command them in God's presence to stop fighting over words. Such arguments are useless, and they can ruin those who hear them.

AN APPROVED WORKER

15Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. 16Avoid worthless,

foolish talk that only leads to more godless behavior. 17This kind of talk spreads like cancer,* as in the case of Hymenaeus and Philetus. 18They have left the path of truth, claiming that the resurrection of the dead has already occurred; in this way, they have turned some people away from the faith.

19But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The LORD knows those who are his,"* and "All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil."*

20In a wealthy home some utensils are made of gold and silver, and some are made of wood and clay. The expensive utensils are used for special occasions, and the cheap ones are for everyday use. 21If you keep yourself pure, you will be a special utensil for honorable use. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.

22Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

23Again I say, don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. 24A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. 25Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. 26Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

2 Timothy 3

THE DANGERS OF THE LAST DAYS

1You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. 3They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. 4They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 5They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!

6They are the kind who work their way into people's homes and win the confidence of* vulnerable women who are burdened with the guilt of sin and controlled by various desires. 7(Such women are forever following new teachings, but they are never able to understand the truth.) 8These teachers oppose the truth just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. They have depraved minds and a counterfeit faith. 9But they won't get away with this for long. Someday everyone will recognize what fools they are, just as with Jannes and Jambres.

PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

10But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance. 11You know how much persecution and suffering I have endured. You know all about how I was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra—but the Lord rescued me from all of it. 12Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived.

14But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. 15You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is

inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 17God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

2 Timothy 4

1I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: 2Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.

3For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. 4They will reject the truth and chase after myths.

5But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

6As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. 8And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

PAUL'S FINAL WORDS

9Timothy, please come as soon as you can. 10Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia. 11Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you when you

come, for he will be helpful to me in my ministry. 12I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13When you come, be sure to bring the coat I left with Carpus at Troas. Also bring my books, and especially my papers.*

14Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm, but the Lord will judge him for what he has done. 15Be careful of him, for he fought against everything we said.

16The first time I was brought before the judge, no one came with me. Everyone abandoned me. May it not be counted against them. 17But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the Gentiles to hear. And he rescued me from certain death.*18Yes, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom. All glory to God forever and ever! Amen.

PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

19Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila and those living in the household of Onesiphorus. 20Erastus stayed at Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick at Miletus.

21Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus sends you greetings, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters.*

22May the Lord be with your spirit. And may his grace be with all of you.

Titus

Introduction 1 2 3

WELCOME TO

TITUS

Paul writes this letter to a young pastor, Titus, who is in charge of the church on the island of Crete. Titus was one of Paul's coworkers in spreading the gospel among the Gentiles, but he has stayed in Crete to strengthen and instruct the believers there while Paul continues his ministry elsewhere. Paul gives him instructions for selecting elders and leaders who will promote true Christian teaching. He emphasizes the importance of living out the faith in every aspect of life—a person's spirituality must be evident in all they say and do. And he encourages Titus by promising to send him people to help with the ministry on Crete.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over Titus, never making a stop. Your next stop is at Hebrews 11:1.

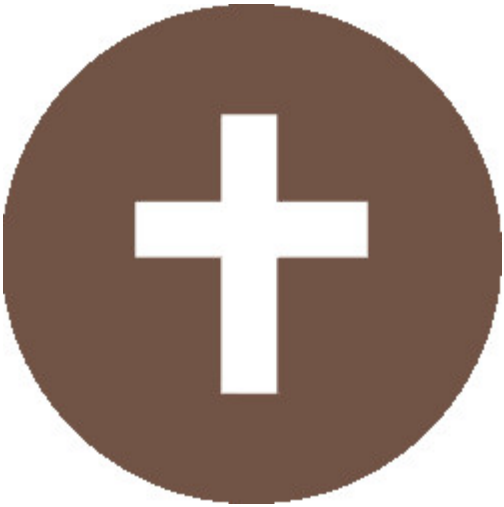
1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The one stop on this route for Titus will encourage you to pursue virtue. Your next stop is at Titus 3:1.

1 STOP

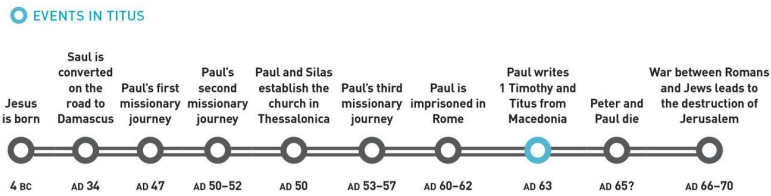
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Only one stop is necessary to read much of this letter. Paul's key point is the importance of doing good in

every aspect of life. Your next stop is at Titus 2:11.



FINDING JESUS IN TITUS

In Titus, Jesus is the one who saves us from our sins, but he is also the one who gives us the power and desire to do good work in his name. Jesus' death on the cross formed God's people into a community that is "totally committed to doing good deeds" (2:14). And through Christ, the Spirit came "so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to doing good" (3:8). This good work can happen in daily, ordinary, routine ways that are often overlooked, but it happens because Jesus has opened the way and given us the strength to walk in it.



Titus 1

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus
Christ. I have been sent to proclaim faith to* those God has chosen
and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live
godly lives. 2This truth gives them confidence that they have eternal
life, which God—who does not lie—promised them before the
world began. 3And now at just the right time he has revealed this
message, which we announce to everyone. It is by the command of
God our Savior that I have been entrusted with this work for him.

4I am writing to Titus, my true son in the faith that we share.

May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior give you grace and
peace.

CRETE

TITUS'S WORK IN CRETE

5I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work

there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you. 6An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife,* and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. 7An elder* is a manager of God's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker,* violent, or dishonest with money.

8Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. 9He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

10For there are many rebellious people who engage in useless talk and deceive others. This is especially true of those who insist on circumcision for salvation. 11They must be silenced, because they are turning whole families away from the truth by their false teaching. And they do it only for money. 12Even one of their own men, a prophet from Crete, has said about them, "The people of Crete are all liars, cruel animals, and lazy gluttons."*13This is true. So reprimand them sternly to make them strong in the faith. 14They must stop listening to Jewish myths and the commands of people who have turned away from the truth.

15Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are corrupted. 16Such people claim they know God, but they deny him by the way they live. They are detestable and disobedient, worthless for doing anything good.

Titus 2

PROMOTE RIGHT TEACHING

1As for you, Titus, promote the kind of living that reflects

wholesome teaching. 2Teach the older men to exercise self-control,
to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have sound
faith and be filled with love and patience.

3Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God.
They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers.* Instead, they
should teach others what is good. 4These older women must train
the younger women to love their husbands and their children, 5to
live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes,* to do good, and to
be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on
the word of God.

6In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely. 7And
you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of
every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and
seriousness of your teaching. 8Teach the truth so that your teaching
can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and
have nothing bad to say about us.

9Slaves must always obey their masters and do their best to please
them. They must not talk back 10or steal, but must show themselves
to be entirely trustworthy and good. Then they will make the
teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way.

11For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all
people. 12And we are instructed to turn from godless living and
sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom,
righteousness, and devotion to God, 13while we look forward with
hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and
Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. 14He gave his life to free us
from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own
people, totally committed to doing good deeds.

15You must teach these things and encourage the believers to do
them. You have the authority to correct them when necessary, so
don't let anyone disregard what you say.

Titus 3

DO WHAT IS GOOD

1Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers.
They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. 2They
must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they
should be gentle and show true humility to everyone.

3Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and
became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of
evil and envy, and we hated each other. 4But—

When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, 5he saved us,
not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his
mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life
through the Holy Spirit.*6He generously poured out the Spirit upon
us through Jesus Christ our Savior. 7Because of his grace he
declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit
eternal life.

8This is a trustworthy saying, and I want you to insist on these
teachings so that all who trust in God will devote themselves to
doing good. These teachings are good and beneficial for everyone.

9Do not get involved in foolish discussions about spiritual
pedigrees* or in quarrels and fights about obedience to Jewish laws.
These things are useless and a waste of time. 10If people are causing
divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that,
have nothing more to do with them. 11For people like that have
turned away from the truth, and their own sins condemn them.

PAUL'S FINAL REMARKS AND GREETINGS

12I am planning to send either Artemas or Tychicus to you. As soon
as one of them arrives, do your best to meet me at Nicopolis, for I
have decided to stay there for the winter. 13Do everything you can
to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos with their trip. See that they
are given everything they need. 14Our people must learn to do good
by meeting the urgent needs of others; then they will not be
unproductive.

15Everybody here sends greetings. Please give my greetings to the
believers—all who love us.

May God's grace be with you all.

Philemon

WELCOME TO

PHILEMON

Philemon is a Christian and slave owner in the city of Colosse. His slave Onesimus has run away, and found his way to Rome. There, Onesimus hears the Good News from Paul and he too becomes a believer. Now Paul writes this letter to encourage Philemon to take Onesimus back, not only as a slave but as a Christian brother. Paul hopes to make Onesimus , whose name means “useful,” truly useful to both Philemon and the ministry of Christ’s gospel.

Paul sees more in these circumstances than just a reinstatement of the social order. He sees the broken agreement between slave and master and the need for forgiveness and reconciliation as a picture of Christ’s own work in reconciling humanity with God. Paul also is aware that the people in Colosse who see Philemon reconcile with Onesimus will witness the transforming power of the Good News.

0 STOPS

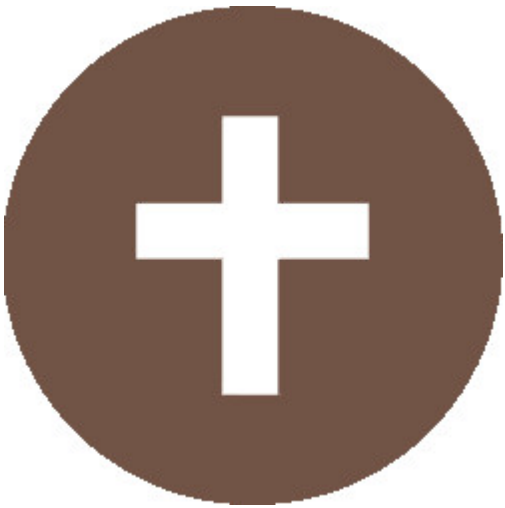
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly right over this short letter. Your next stop is at Hebrews 11:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You'll read the entire letter to Philemon in one stop, seeing how Christian love transcends cultural conventions. Your next stop is at Philemon 1:1.

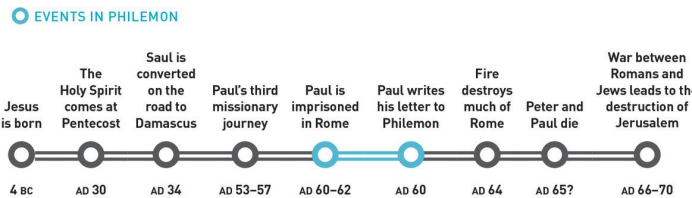
1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your one stop in Philemon will allow you to read the entire letter, in which Paul appeals to Philemon to reconcile with Onesimus as a brother in Christ. Your next stop is at Philemon 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN PHILEMON

Jesus is at the core of this letter. Paul stresses that because Christ has forgiven us, we must forgive others, especially fellow Christians. Paul's work as mediator between Philemon and the slave Onesimus echoes what Christ has done for us with God the Father. By forgiving us, Jesus restores our relationship with God.



WHO, ME? PHILEMON 1:1-25

PHILEMON AND THE COLOSSIANS

GREETINGS FROM PAUL

1This letter is from Paul, a prisoner for preaching the Good News about Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy.

I am writing to Philemon, our beloved co-worker, 2and to our sister
Apphia, and to our fellow soldier Archippus, and to the church that
meets in your* house.

3May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and
peace.

PAUL'S THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

4I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, 5because I
keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for
all of God's people. 6And I am praying that you will put into action
the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and
experience all the good things we have in Christ. 7Your love has
given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has
often refreshed the hearts of God's people.

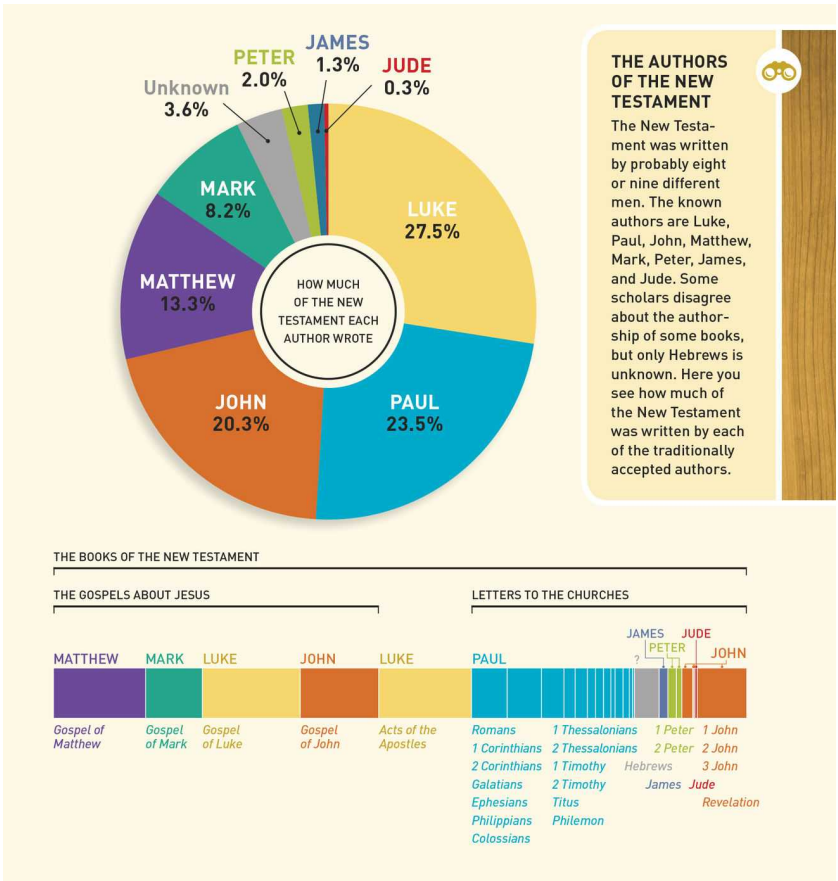
PAUL'S APPEAL FOR ONESIMUS

8That is why I am boldly asking a favor of you. I could demand it in
the name of Christ because it is the right thing for you to do. 9But
because of our love, I prefer simply to ask you. Consider this as a
request from me—Paul, an old man and now also a prisoner for the
sake of Christ Jesus.*

10I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus. I became
his father in the faith while here in prison. 11Onesimus* hasn't been
of much use to you in the past, but now he is very useful to both of
us. 12I am sending him back to you, and with him comes my own
heart.

13I wanted to keep him here with me while I am in these chains for
preaching the Good News, and he would have helped me on your
behalf. 14But I didn't want to do anything without your consent. I
wanted you to help because you were willing, not because you were
forced. 15It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you
could have him back forever. 16He is no longer like a slave to you.

He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he will mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.



THE AUTHORS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

17So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to me. 19I, PAUL, WRITE THIS WITH MY OWN HAND: I WILL REPAY IT. AND I WON'T MENTION THAT YOU

OWE ME YOUR VERY SOUL!

20Yes, my brother, please do me this favor* for the Lord's sake. Give
me this encouragement in Christ.

21I am confident as I write this letter that you will do what I ask and
even more! 22One more thing—please prepare a guest room for me,
for I am hoping that God will answer your prayers and let me
return to you soon.

PAUL'S FINAL GREETINGS

23Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you his
greetings. 24So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my co-
workers.

25May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

WELCOME TO

HEBREWS

Hebrews is written to Jewish Christians who are thinking of returning to the old laws of Judaism. The author sets out to show that Christ has fulfilled the purposes of Judaism and that Judaism had nothing more to offer the believer. The time of fulfillment has arrived, and the old life is far surpassed by the new life found in Christ. This letter encourages the Jewish believers to hold on to Christ and move on to a mature faith.

By engaging with Jewish history and beliefs, the writer of Hebrews shows that Christ is superior in every way to these traditions and laws. Christ has offered a better sacrifice to God and now mediates a better covenant between God and humanity. The Christian's life of faith is also better than life under the law's sacrificial system. The author offers as proof the numerous Old Testament heroes who led lives of faith, believing in God's promises long before Jesus came to earth.

1 STOP

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll stop once in Hebrews to read a historical who's who of great heroes of the faith. Your next stop is at Hebrews 11:1.

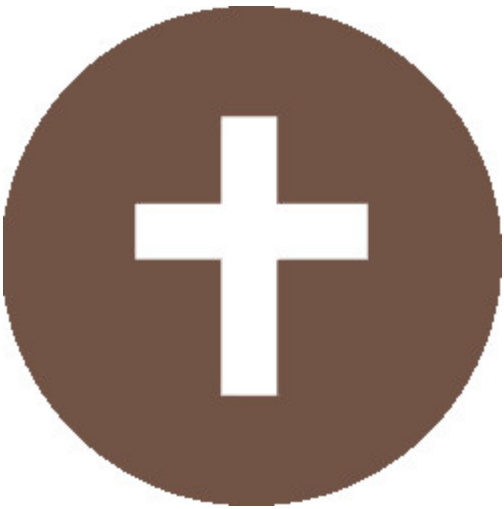
1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your stop in Hebrews will show you a lineup of biblical figures who are renowned for their trust in God. Your next stop is at Hebrews 11:1.

5 STOPS

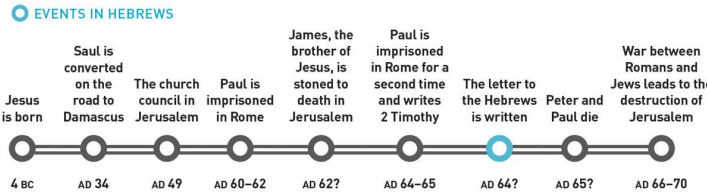
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your journey through Hebrews will take

you on an exploration of Christ's exalted status and the long tradition of faith in God's grace. Your next stop is at Hebrews 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN HEBREWS

In Hebrews, Jesus is revealed as the perfect prophet, priest, and sacrifice. He is superior to everything and everyone. He is superior to angels (1:5-14), Moses (3:1-6), and the Jewish high priests (5:1-10; 7:1-28). Jesus is superior first and foremost because he is God's Son (1:1-4). He is the perfect reflection and the very expression of God. Jesus sustains the whole world by his command, and he remains unchanging and reliable from beginning to end (13:8).



Hebrews 1

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD'S SON

1Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our
ancestors through the prophets. 2And now in these final days, he
has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the
Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.
3The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character
of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his
command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in
the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.
4This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the

name God gave him is greater than their names.

THE SON IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS

5For God never said to any angel what he said to Jesus: “You are
my Son.

Today I have become your Father.*”

God also said, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.”*

6And when he brought his supreme* Son into the world, God said,*

“Let all of God’s angels worship him.”*

7Regarding the angels, he says, “He sends his angels like the winds,
his servants like flames of fire.”*

8But to the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, endures forever and
ever.

You rule with a scepter of justice.

9You love justice and hate evil.
Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you, pouring out the oil of
joy on you more than on anyone else.”*

10He also says to the Son, “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the
foundation of the earth and made the heavens with your hands.

11They will perish, but you remain forever.
They will wear out like old clothing.

12You will fold them up like a cloak and discard them like old

clothing.
But you are always the same; you will live forever.”*

13And God never said to any of the angels, “Sit in the place of honor
at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a
footstool under your feet.”*

14Therefore, angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people
who will inherit salvation.

Hebrews 2

A WARNING AGAINST DRIFTING AWAY

1So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we
may drift away from it. 2For the message God delivered through
angels has always stood firm, and every violation of the law and
every act of disobedience was punished. 3So what makes us think
we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first
announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by
those who heard him speak? 4And God confirmed the message by
giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy
Spirit whenever he chose.

JESUS, THE MAN

5And furthermore, it is not angels who will control the future world
we are talking about. 6For in one place the Scriptures say, “What are

mere mortals that you should think about them, or a son of man*
that you should care for him?

7Yet you made them only a little lower than the angels and crowned
them with glory and honor.*

8You gave them authority over all things.”*

Now when it says “all things,” it means nothing is left out. But we
have not yet seen all things put under their authority. 9What we do
see is Jesus, who was given a position “a little lower than the
angels”; and because he suffered death for us, he is now “crowned
with glory and honor.” Yes, by God’s grace, Jesus tasted death for
everyone. 10God, for whom and through whom everything was
made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only
right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect
leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.

11So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father.
That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and
sisters.*12For he said to God, “I will proclaim your name to my
brothers and sisters.

I will praise you among your assembled people.”*

13He also said, “I will put my trust in him,”

that is, “I and the children God has given me.”*

14Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and
blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human
being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of
the devil, who had* the power of death. 15Only in this way could he
set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

16We also know that the Son did not come to help angels; he came
to help the descendants of Abraham. 17Therefore, it was necessary
for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and
sisters,* so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest
before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away
the sins of the people. 18Since he himself has gone through suffering
and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

Hebrews 3

JESUS IS GREATER THAN MOSES

1And so, dear brothers and sisters who belong to God and* are
partners with those called to heaven, think carefully about this
Jesus whom we declare to be God's messenger* and High Priest.
2For he was faithful to God, who appointed him, just as Moses
served faithfully when he was entrusted with God's entire* house.

3But Jesus deserves far more glory than Moses, just as a person who
builds a house deserves more praise than the house itself. 4For every
house has a builder, but the one who built everything is God.

5Moses was certainly faithful in God's house as a servant. His work
was an illustration of the truths God would reveal later. 6But Christ,
as the Son, is in charge of God's entire house. And we are God's
house, if we keep our courage and remain confident in our hope in
Christ.*

7That is why the Holy Spirit says, "Today when you hear his voice,

8don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled, when
they tested me in the wilderness.

9There your ancestors tested and tried my patience, even though
they saw my miracles for forty years.

10So I was angry with them, and I said, ‘Their hearts always turn
away from me.
They refuse to do what I tell them.’

11So in my anger I took an oath: ‘They will never enter my place of
rest.’”*

12Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters.* Make sure that your
own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the
living God. 13You must warn each other every day, while it is still
“today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened
against God. 14For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as
firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to
Christ. 15Remember what it says: “Today when you hear his voice,
don’t harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled.”*

16And who was it who rebelled against God, even though they
heard his voice? Wasn’t it the people Moses led out of Egypt? 17And
who made God angry for forty years? Wasn’t it the people who
sinned, whose corpses lay in the wilderness? 18And to whom was
God speaking when he took an oath that they would never enter his
rest? Wasn’t it the people who disobeyed him? 19So we see that
because of their unbelief they were not able to enter his rest.

Hebrews 4

PROMISED REST FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

1God’s promise of entering his rest still stands, so we ought to
tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it. 2For
this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been
announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good
because they didn’t share the faith of those who listened to
God.*3For only we who believe can enter his rest. As for the others,
God said, “In my anger I took an oath: ‘They will never enter my
place of rest,’”*

even though this rest has been ready since he made the world. 4We know it is ready because of the place in the Scriptures where it mentions the seventh day: “On the seventh day God rested from all his work.”* 5But in the other passage God said, “They will never enter my place of rest.”*

6So God’s rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God. 7So God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today. God announced this through David much later in the words already quoted: “Today when you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts.”*

8Now if Joshua had succeeded in giving them this rest, God would not have spoken about another day of rest still to come. 9So there is a special rest* still waiting for the people of God. 10For all who have entered into God’s rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. 11So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.

12For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. 13Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

SUFFERING HEBREWS 4:14-16

CHRIST IS OUR HIGH PRIEST

14So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered
heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe.
15This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced
all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16So let us come
boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his
mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Hebrews 5

1Every high priest is a man chosen to represent other people in their
dealings with God. He presents their gifts to God and offers
sacrifices for their sins. 2And he is able to deal gently with ignorant
and wayward people because he himself is subject to the same
weaknesses. 3That is why he must offer sacrifices for his own sins as
well as theirs.

4And no one can become a high priest simply because he wants
such an honor. He must be called by God for this work, just as
Aaron was. 5That is why Christ did not honor himself by assuming
he could become High Priest. No, he was chosen by God, who said
to him, “You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.*”

6And in another passage God said to him, “You are a priest forever
in the order of Melchizedek.”*

7While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings,
with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could rescue him from
death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for
God. 8Even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from
the things he suffered. 9In this way, God qualified him as a perfect
High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all
those who obey him. 10And God designated him to be a High Priest
in the order of Melchizedek.

A CALL TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

11There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is
difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and
don't seem to listen. 12You have been believers so long now that you
ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach
you again the basic things about God's word.* You are like babies
who need milk and cannot eat solid food. 13For someone who lives
on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right.
14Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have
the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Hebrews 6

1So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and
again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our
understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the
fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds* and placing
our faith in God. 2You don't need further instruction about
baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and
eternal judgment. 3And so, God willing, we will move forward to
further understanding.

4For it is impossible to bring back to repentance those who were
once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of
heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit, 5who have tasted the
goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come—
6and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such
people back to repentance; by rejecting the Son of God, they
themselves are nailing him to the cross once again and holding him
up to public shame.

7When the ground soaks up the falling rain and bears a good crop
for the farmer, it has God's blessing. 8But if a field bears thorns and
thistles, it is useless. The farmer will soon condemn that field and
burn it.

9Dear friends, even though we are talking this way, we really don't
believe it applies to you. We are confident that you are meant for
better things, things that come with salvation. 10For God is not
unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and
how you have shown your love to him by caring for other
believers,* as you still do. 11Our great desire is that you will keep on
loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what
you hope for will come true. 12Then you will not become spiritually
dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those
who are going to inherit God's promises because of their faith and
endurance.

GOD'S PROMISES BRING HOPE

13For example, there was God's promise to Abraham. Since there
was no one greater to swear by, God took an oath in his own name,
saying:

14"I will certainly bless you, and I will multiply your descendants
beyond number."*

15Then Abraham waited patiently, and he received what God had

promised.

16Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. 17God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. 18So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. 19This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. 20Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7

MELCHIZEDEK IS GREATER THAN ABRAHAM

1This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. 2Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means "king of justice," and king of Salem means "king of peace." 3There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.

4Consider then how great this Melchizedek was. Even Abraham, the

great patriarch of Israel, recognized this by giving him a tenth of what he had taken in battle. 5Now the law of Moses required that the priests, who are descendants of Levi, must collect a tithe from the rest of the people of Israel,* who are also descendants of Abraham. 6But Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham. And Melchizedek placed a blessing upon Abraham, the one who had already received the promises of God. 7And without question, the person who has the power to give a blessing is greater than the one who is blessed.

8The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on. 9In addition, we might even say that these Levites—the ones who collect the tithe—paid a tithe to Melchizedek when their ancestor Abraham paid a tithe to him. 10For although Levi wasn't born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham's body when Melchizedek collected the tithe from him.

11So if the priesthood of Levi, on which the law was based, could have achieved the perfection God intended, why did God need to establish a different priesthood, with a priest in the order of Melchizedek instead of the order of Levi and Aaron?*

12And if the priesthood is changed, the law must also be changed to permit it. 13For the priest we are talking about belongs to a different tribe, whose members have never served at the altar as priests. 14What I mean is, our Lord came from the tribe of Judah, and Moses never mentioned priests coming from that tribe.

JESUS IS LIKE MELCHIZEDEK

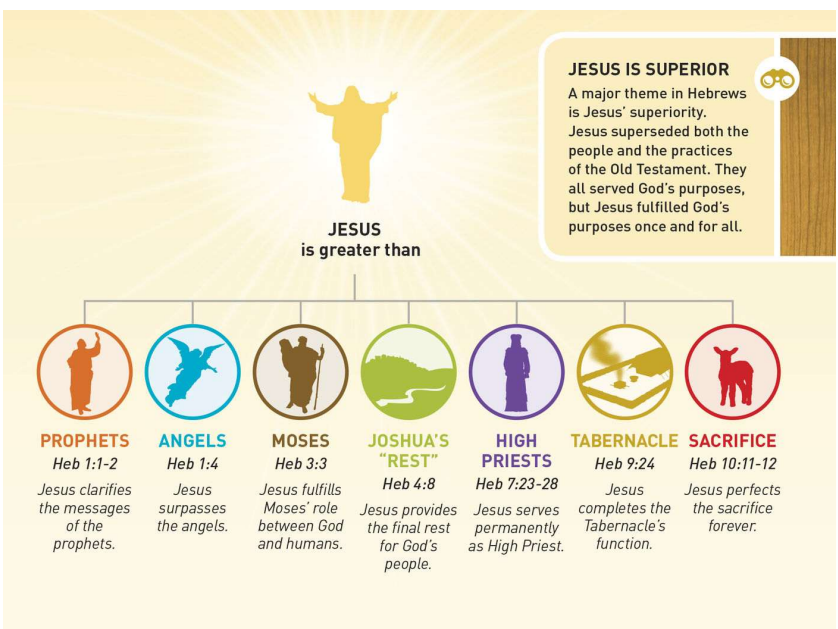
15This change has been made very clear since a different priest, who is like Melchizedek, has appeared. 16Jesus became a priest, not by meeting the physical requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. 17And the psalmist pointed this out when he prophesied, "You are a priest

forever in the order of Melchizedek.”*

18Yes, the old requirement about the priesthood was set aside
because it was weak and useless. 19For the law never made anything
perfect. But now we have confidence in a better hope, through
which we draw near to God.

20This new system was established with a solemn oath. Aaron’s
descendants became priests without such an oath, 21but there was
an oath regarding Jesus. For God said to him, “The LORD has taken
an oath and will not break his vow: ‘You are a priest forever.’”*

22Because of this oath, Jesus is the one who guarantees this better
covenant with God.



JESUS IS SUPERIOR

23There were many priests under the old system, for death
prevented them from remaining in office. 24But because Jesus lives
forever, his priesthood lasts forever. 25Therefore he is able, once and
forever, to save* those who come to God through him. He lives
forever to intercede with God on their behalf.

26He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and
blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and
has been given the highest place of honor in heaven.*27Unlike those
other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices every day.
They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the
people. But Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself as
the sacrifice for the people's sins. 28The law appointed high priests
who were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given,
God appointed his Son with an oath, and his Son has been made the
perfect High Priest forever.

Hebrews 8

CHRIST IS OUR HIGH PRIEST

1Here is the main point: We have a High Priest who sat down in the
place of honor beside the throne of the majestic God in heaven.
2There he ministers in the heavenly Tabernacle,* the true place of
worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands.

3And since every high priest is required to offer gifts and sacrifices,
our High Priest must make an offering, too. 4If he were here on
earth, he would not even be a priest, since there already are priests
who offer the gifts required by the law. 5They serve in a system of
worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven. For
when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave
him this warning: "Be sure that you make everything according to
the pattern I have shown you here on the mountain."*

6But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is
far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates
for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.

7If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no
need for a second covenant to replace it. 8But when God found fault
with the people, he said: “The day is coming, says the LORD, when
I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.

9This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of
Egypt.
They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back
on them, says the LORD.

10But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel
on that day,* says the LORD: I will put my laws in their minds, and
I will write them on their hearts.
I will be their God, and they will be my people.

11And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they
need to teach their relatives,*
saying, ‘You should know the LORD.’
For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already.

12And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again
remember their sins.”*

13When God speaks of a “new” covenant, it means he has made the
first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear.

Hebrews 9

OLD RULES ABOUT WORSHIP

1That first covenant between God and Israel had regulations for
worship and a place of worship here on earth. 2There were two
rooms in that Tabernacle.* In the first room were a lampstand, a
table, and sacred loaves of bread on the table. This room was called
the Holy Place. 3Then there was a curtain, and behind the curtain
was the second room* called the Most Holy Place. 4In that room
were a gold incense altar and a wooden chest called the Ark of the
Covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides. Inside the Ark
were a gold jar containing manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted
leaves, and the stone tablets of the covenant. 5Above the Ark were
the cherubim of divine glory, whose wings stretched out over the
Ark's cover, the place of atonement. But we cannot explain these
things in detail now.

6When these things were all in place, the priests regularly entered
the first room* as they performed their religious duties. 7But only
the high priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a
year. And he always offered blood for his own sins and for the sins
the people had committed in ignorance. 8By these regulations the
Holy Spirit revealed that the entrance to the Most Holy Place was
not freely open as long as the Tabernacle* and the system it
represented were still in use.

9This is an illustration pointing to the present time. For the gifts and
sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the
consciences of the people who bring them. 10For that old system
deals only with food and drink and various cleansing ceremonies—
physical regulations that were in effect only until a better system
could be established.

CHRIST IS THE PERFECT SACRIFICE

11So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things
that have come.* He has entered that greater, more perfect
Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is
not part of this created world. 12With his own blood—not the blood

of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

13Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. 14Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds* so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. 15That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

16Now when someone leaves a will,* it is necessary to prove that the person who made it is dead.*17The will goes into effect only after the person's death. While the person who made it is still alive, the will cannot be put into effect.

18That is why even the first covenant was put into effect with the blood of an animal. 19For after Moses had read each of God's commandments to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats,* along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's law and all the people, using hyssop branches and scarlet wool. 20Then he said, "This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you."*21And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and on everything used for worship. 22In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

23That is why the Tabernacle and everything in it, which were copies of things in heaven, had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals.

24For Christ did not enter into a holy place made with human

hands, which was only a copy of the true one in heaven. He entered into heaven itself to appear now before God on our behalf. 25And he did not enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the high priest here on earth who enters the Most Holy Place year after year with the blood of an animal. 26If that had been necessary, Christ would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But now, once for all time, he has appeared at the end of the age* to remove sin by his own death as a sacrifice.

27And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, 28so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 10

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE ONCE FOR ALL

1The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. 2If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared.

3But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. 4For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5That is why, when Christ* came into the world, he said to God, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings.

But you have given me a body to offer.

6You were not pleased with burnt offerings or other offerings for

sin.

7Then I said, ‘Look, I have come to do your will, O God— as is written about me in the Scriptures.’”*

8First, Christ said, “You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings or burnt offerings or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them” (though they are required by the law of Moses). 9Then he said, “Look, I have come to do your will.” He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. 10For God’s will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.

11Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins. 12But our High Priest offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand. 13There he waits until his enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet. 14For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.

15And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says,

16“This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day,* says the LORD: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”*

17Then he says, “I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.”*

18And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

A CALL TO PERSEVERE

19And so, dear brothers and sisters,* we can boldly enter heaven's
Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. 20By his death,*
Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the
Most Holy Place. 21And since we have a great High Priest who rules
over God's house, 22let us go right into the presence of God with
sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have
been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies
have been washed with pure water.

23Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for
God can be trusted to keep his promise. 24Let us think of ways to
motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25And let us
not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage
one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing
near.

26Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have
received knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice
that will cover these sins. 27There is only the terrible expectation of
God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies.

28For anyone who refused to obey the law of Moses was put to
death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
29Just think how much worse the punishment will be for those who
have trampled on the Son of God, and have treated the blood of the
covenant, which made us holy, as if it were common and unholy,
and have insulted and disdained the Holy Spirit who brings God's
mercy to us. 30For we know the one who said, "I will take revenge.

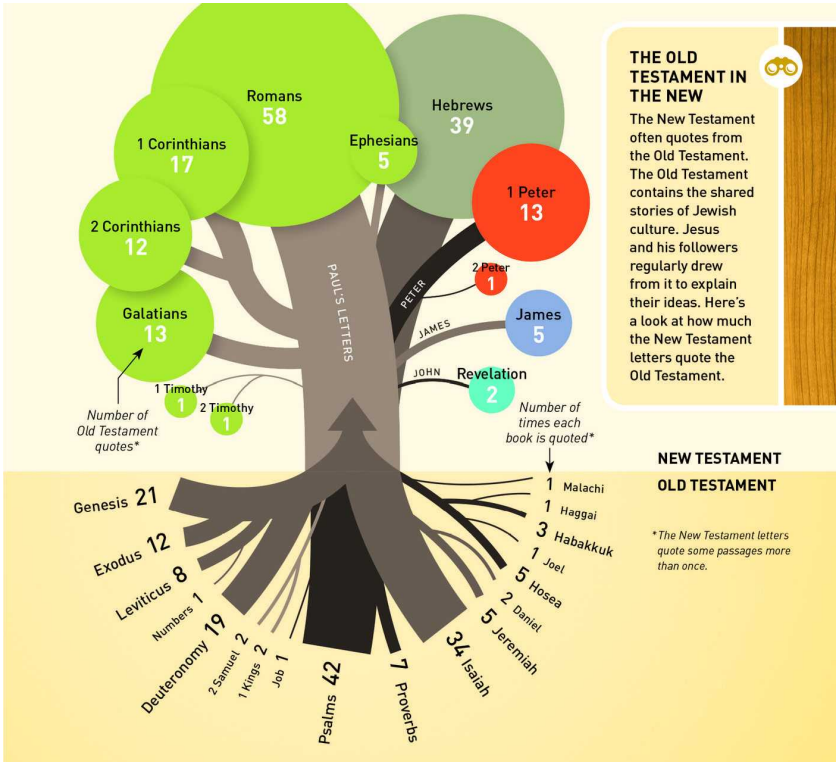
I will pay them back."*

He also said, "The LORD will judge his own people."*

31It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32Think back on those early days when you first learned about
Christ.* Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant
terrible suffering. 33Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule
and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were
suffering the same things. 34You suffered along with those who were
thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from you, you
accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for
you that will last forever.

35So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember
the great reward it brings you! 36Patient endurance is what you
need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will
receive all that he has promised.



THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW

37 "For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not
delay.

38 And my righteous ones will live by faith.*
But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away."*

39 But we are not like those who turn away from God to their own
destruction. We are the faithful ones, whose souls will be saved.

Hebrews 11

GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH

1Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen;
it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. 2Through their
faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.

3By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at
God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything
that can be seen.

4It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God
than Cain did. Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous
man, and God showed his approval of his gifts. Although Abel is
long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith.

5It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying
—"he disappeared, because God took him."* For before he was
taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God. 6And it is

impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

7It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith.

8It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. 9And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. 10Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.

11It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed* that God would keep his promise. 12And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead—a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.

13All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. 14Obviously people who say such things are looking forward to a country they can call their own. 15If they had longed for the country they came from, they could have gone back. 16But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

17It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God
was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was
ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, 18even though God had told
him, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be
counted."* 19Abraham reasoned that if Isaac died, God was able to
bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive
his son back from the dead.

20It was by faith that Isaac promised blessings for the future to his
sons, Jacob and Esau.

21It was by faith that Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed
each of Joseph's sons and bowed in worship as he leaned on his
staff.

22It was by faith that Joseph, when he was about to die, said
confidently that the people of Israel would leave Egypt. He even
commanded them to take his bones with them when they left.

23It was by faith that Moses' parents hid him for three months when
he was born. They saw that God had given them an unusual child,
and they were not afraid to disobey the king's command.

24It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called
the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25He chose to share the oppression of
God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26He
thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the
treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward. 27It
was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt, not fearing the king's
anger. He kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one
who is invisible. 28It was by faith that Moses commanded the people
of Israel to keep the Passover and to sprinkle blood on the
doorposts so that the angel of death would not kill their firstborn
sons.

29It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the

Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians tried to follow, they were all drowned.

30It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho for seven days, and the walls came crashing down.

31It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

32How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. 33By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions, 34quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. 35Women received their loved ones back again from death.

But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection. 36Some were jeered at, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in prisons. 37Some died by stoning, some were sawed in half,* and others were killed with the sword. Some went about wearing skins of sheep and goats, destitute and oppressed and mistreated. 38They were too good for this world, wandering over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

39All these people earned a good reputation because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. 40For God had something better in mind for us, so that they would not reach perfection without us.

Hebrews 12

GOD'S DISCIPLINE PROVES HIS LOVE

1Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of
witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows
us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run
with endurance the race God has set before us. 2We do this by

keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.* Because of the joy* awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. 3Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people;* then you won't become weary and give up. 4After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.

5And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children?* He said, "My child,* don't make light of the LORD's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you.

6For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."*

7As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? 8If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. 9Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?*

10For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. 11No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

12So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. 13Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

A CALL TO LISTEN TO GOD

14Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy

life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. 15Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many. 16Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau, who traded his birthright as the firstborn son for a single meal. 17You know that afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he begged with bitter tears.

18You have not come to a physical mountain,* to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai. 19For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking. 20They staggered back under God's command: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death."*21Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said, "I am terrified and trembling."*

22No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. 23You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. 24You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

25Be careful that you do not refuse to listen to the One who is speaking. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven! 26When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also."*27This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain.

28Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be
thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.
29For our God is a devouring fire.

Hebrews 13

CONCLUDING WORDS

1Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters.*2Don't forget to
show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have
entertained angels without realizing it! 3Remember those in prison,
as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being
mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.

4Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in
marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those
who commit adultery.

5Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has
said, "I will never fail you.

I will never abandon you."*

6So we can say with confidence, "The LORD is my helper, so I will
have no fear.

What can mere people do to me?”*

7Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of
all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example
of their faith.

8Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. 9So do not
be attracted by strange, new ideas. Your strength comes from God’s
grace, not from rules about food, which don’t help those who follow
them.

10We have an altar from which the priests in the Tabernacle* have
no right to eat. 11Under the old system, the high priest brought the
blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, and the
bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. 12So also Jesus
suffered and died outside the city gates to make his people holy by
means of his own blood. 13So let us go out to him, outside the camp,
and bear the disgrace he bore. 14For this world is not our permanent
home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come.

15Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise
to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. 16And don’t forget
to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices
that please God.

17Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is
to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give
them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would
certainly not be for your benefit.

18Pray for us, for our conscience is clear and we want to live
honorably in everything we do. 19And especially pray that I will be
able to come back to you soon.

20Now may the God of peace— who brought up from the dead our
Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal
covenant with his blood—

21may he equip you with all you need for doing his will.
May he produce in you,*
through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing
to him.
All glory to him forever and ever! Amen.

22I urge you, dear brothers and sisters,* to pay attention to what I
have written in this brief exhortation.

23I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released
from jail. If he comes here soon, I will bring him with me to see
you.

24Greet all your leaders and all the believers there.* The believers
from Italy send you their greetings.

25May God's grace be with you all.

James

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5

WELCOME TO

JAMES

This letter is written by James, a half brother of Jesus and a leader
in the Jerusalem church. He writes to the early Christians during a

time of persecution in order to provide them with some practical instructions for living out their faith. His letter contains many short, proverb-like sayings and echoes Jesus' teachings from the Sermon on the Mount. James addresses problems like pride, discrimination, greed, lust, hypocrisy, worldliness, and backbiting. He clearly makes his case that the Christian faith is more than a commitment to a philosophy; it's a commitment to a new way of life. Actions are the result of true faith: "Faith by itself isn't enough" (2:17). Just as a good tree bears good fruit, true faith expresses itself in a life marked by good deeds, self-control, humility, wisdom, fairness, patience, and prayer.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You don't need to make a stop in James, but you may want to read a couple of chapters for their highly practical advice. Your next stop is at Revelation 21:1.

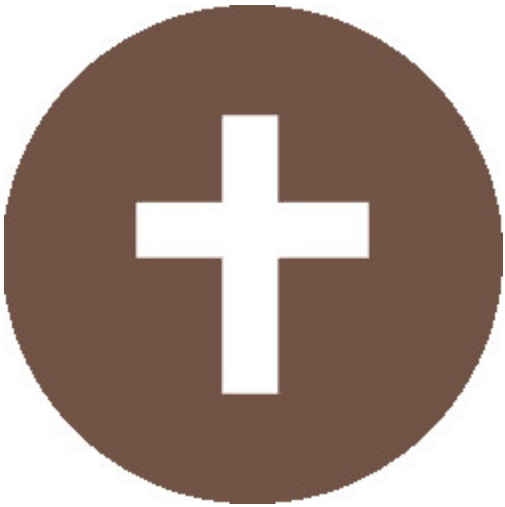
1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: You'll stop to read about one of the central themes of James's letter: Faith without good deeds is dead. Your next stop is at James 2:14.

2 STOPS

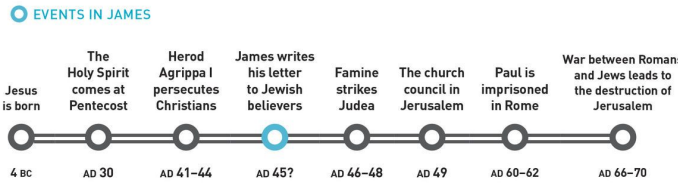
ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The readings on your route through

James provide both encouragement and practical advice for practicing good deeds and self-control. Your next stop is at James 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN JAMES

James clearly presents Jesus Christ as Lord, the one who deserves the undivided commitment of those who are called by his name. James calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ, recognizing the complete authority that Jesus has. Just as Jesus' words and actions testified that he was the Son of God, so our words and actions must testify that we live for Jesus.



James 1

GREETINGS FROM JAMES

1This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad.

Greetings!

FAITH AND ENDURANCE

2Dear brothers and sisters,* when troubles of any kind come your
way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3For you know that
when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4So
let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be
perfect and complete, needing nothing.

5If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to
you. He will not rebuke you for asking. 6But when you ask him, be
sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with
divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown
and tossed by the wind. 7Such people should not expect to receive
anything from the Lord. 8Their loyalty is divided between God and
the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

9Believers who are* poor have something to boast about, for God
has honored them. 10And those who are rich should boast that God
has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the
field. 11The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower
droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the
rich will fade away with all of their achievements.

12God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation.
Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised
to those who love him. 13And remember, when you are being
tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to
do wrong,* and he never tempts anyone else. 14Temptation comes
from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15These
desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to
grow, it gives birth to death.

16So don’t be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. 17Whatever is
good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father,
who created all the lights in the heavens.* He never changes or casts

a shifting shadow.*18He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.*

LISTENING AND DOING

19Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20Human anger* does not produce the righteousness* God desires. 21So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

22But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

26If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. 27Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

James 2

A WARNING AGAINST PREJUDICE

1My dear brothers and sisters,* how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?

2For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting* dressed

in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who
is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. 3If you give special attention
and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one,
"You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor"—well, 4doesn't
this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil
motives?

5Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor
in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will
inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? 6But you
dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you
into court? 7Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose
noble name* you bear?

8Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the
Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*9But if you favor some
people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of
breaking the law.

10For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as
a person who has broken all of God's laws. 11For the same God who
said, "You must not commit adultery," also said, "You must not
murder."* So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery,
you have still broken the law.

12So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will
be judged by the law that sets you free. 13There will be no mercy for
those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been
merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you.

FAITH WITHOUT GOOD DEEDS IS DEAD

14What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have
faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save
anyone? 15Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or
clothing, 16and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm
and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or
clothing. What good does that do?

17So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good
deeds, it is dead and useless.

18Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have
good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you
don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good
deeds."

19You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God.*
Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in

terror. 20How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

21Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. 23And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."* He was even called the friend of God.*24So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.

25Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. 26Just as the body is dead without breath,* so also faith is dead without good works.

James 3

CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

1Dear brothers and sisters,* not many of you should become
teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more
strictly. 2Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could
control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control
ourselves in every other way.

3We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a
small bit in its mouth. 4And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn
wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong.
5In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand
speeches.

But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6And among all the
parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world
of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole
life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself.*

7People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8but

no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly
poison. 9Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it
curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10And so
blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely,
my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11Does a spring of water
bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12Does a fig tree
produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw
fresh water from a salty spring.*

TRUE WISDOM COMES FROM GOD

13If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an
honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from
wisdom. 14But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish
ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and
lying. 15For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom.
Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. 16For wherever
there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder
and evil of every kind.

17But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace
loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of
mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is
always sincere. 18And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of
peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.*

James 4

DRAWING CLOSE TO GOD

1What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they
come from the evil desires at war within you? 2You want what you
don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what
others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take
it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you
don't ask God for it. 3And even when you ask, you don't get it
because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give

you pleasure.

4You adulterers!* Don't you realize that friendship with the world
makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a
friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. 5Do you
think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is
passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful
to him.*6And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God
opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

7So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee
from you. 8Come close to God, and God will come close to you.
Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is
divided between God and the world. 9Let there be tears for what
you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be
sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. 10Humble
yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.

WARNING AGAINST JUDGING OTHERS

11Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters.* If
you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and
judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge
whether it applies to you. 12God alone, who gave the law, is the
Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right
do you have to judge your neighbor?

WARNING ABOUT SELF-CONFIDENCE

13Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a
certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there
and make a profit." 14How do you know what your life will be like
tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while,
then it's gone. 15What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to,
we will live and do this or that." 16Otherwise you are boasting about

your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil.

17Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

James 5

WARNING TO THE RICH

1Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. 2Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. 3Your gold and silver are corroded. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh like fire. This corroded treasure you have hoarded will testify against you on the day of judgment. 4For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The cries of those who harvest your fields have reached the ears of the LORD of Heaven's Armies.

5You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every desire. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter. 6You have condemned and killed innocent people,* who do not resist you.*

PATIENCE AND ENDURANCE

7Dear brothers and sisters,* be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. 8You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near.

9Don't grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. For look—the Judge is standing at the door!

10For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters,
look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11We give
great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you
know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the
Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness
and mercy.

12But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath, by
heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so
that you will not sin and be condemned.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

13Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of
you happy? You should sing praises. 14Are any of you sick? You
should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you,
anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. 15Such a prayer
offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well.
And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.

16Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that
you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has
great power and produces wonderful results. 17Elijah was as human
as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall,
none fell for three and a half years! 18Then, when he prayed again,
the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.

RESTORE WANDERING BELIEVERS

19My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders
away from the truth and is brought back, 20you can be sure that
whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that
person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

1 Peter

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5

WELCOME TO

1 PETER

The apostle Peter writes this letter near the end of his life to comfort and encourage the Christians in Asia Minor, who are facing intense persecution for believing that Jesus is the Messiah. Peter explains that suffering is part of the Christian life and that God promises great rewards to those who trust him. He assures his readers that it is right for them to be noticeably different from the culture around them, for they are "temporary residents and foreigners" in the world—God's chosen people, his holy nation (2:9-11). Peter also reminds them of the example of Christ and points out that suffering and trials make us partners with Christ.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll do exactly that—fly over 1 Peter,

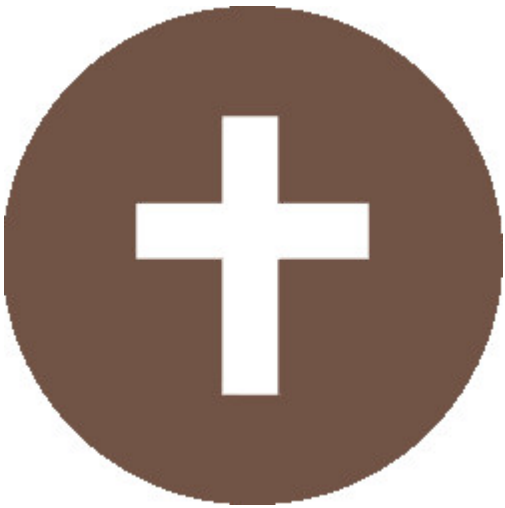
never stopping. Your next stop is at Revelation 21:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your stop in 1 Peter will motivate you to live a holy life out of love for Jesus and gratitude for his gift of salvation. Your next stop is at 1 Peter 1:13.

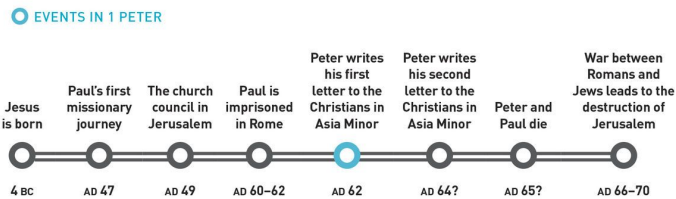
3 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The three stops in 1 Peter will fill you with hope and help you to live a holy life for Christ—even when it leads to suffering. Your next stop is at 1 Peter 1:13.



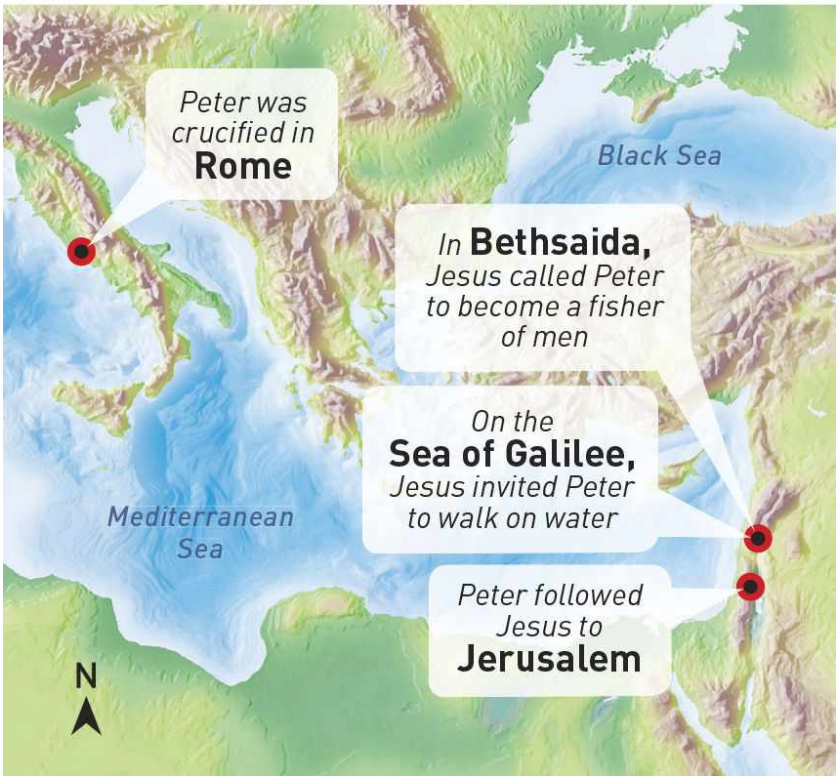
FINDING JESUS IN 1 PETER

Peter focuses on Jesus as the one who provides hope for believers. Jesus is our example not only of how to live righteous lives but also of how to endure suffering. Peter states that Jesus suffered on our behalf to bring us “safely home to God” (3:18). Because of Christ’s suffering we can “live for what is right” (2:24). But Jesus’ example also assures us that when we suffer for doing what is right, God is pleased (2:19-21). Peter also refers to Jesus as “the living cornerstone” (2:4) and “the Great Shepherd” (5:4).



THE LIFE OF PETER

Peter's quiet life as a fisherman was never the same after meeting Jesus. After he left his nets and the small town of Bethsaida, he followed Jesus to the capital city, Jerusalem. Later after Jesus ascended into heaven, Peter eventually traveled to Rome and probably died there. Peter might say he followed Jesus there too. For Peter, after walking on water, going to Rome was just another step.



THE LIFE OF PETER

1 Peter 1

GREETINGS FROM PETER

1This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

I am writing to God's chosen people who are living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.*2God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

May God give you more and more grace and peace.

THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

3All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, 4and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. 5And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

6So be truly glad.* There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. 7These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

8You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. 9The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

10This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know
more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation
prepared for you. 11They wondered what time or situation the Spirit
of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in
advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward.

12They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but
for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by
those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from
heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly
watching these things happen.

A CALL TO HOLY LIVING

13So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all
your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when
Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. 14So you must live as God's
obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to
satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. 15But
now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose
you is holy. 16For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I
am holy."*

17And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no
favorites. He will judge or reward you according to what you do. So
you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as
"temporary residents." 18For you know that God paid a ransom to
save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors.
And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value.
19It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of
God. 20God chose him as your ransom long before the world began,
but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake.

21Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have

placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory.

22You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters.* Love each other deeply with all your heart.*

23For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. 24As the Scriptures say,

"People are like grass;
their beauty is like a flower in the field.
The grass withers and the flower fades.

25But the word of the Lord remains forever."*

And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.

1 Peter 2

1So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. 2Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, 3now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

LIVING STONES FOR GOD'S HOUSE

4You are coming to Christ, who is the living cornerstone of God's
temple. He was rejected by people, but he was chosen by God for
great honor.

5And you are living stones that God is building into his spiritual
temple. What's more, you are his holy priests.* Through the
mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please
God. 6As the Scriptures say,

"I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem,*
chosen for great honor,
and anyone who trusts in him
will never be disgraced."*

7Yes, you who trust him recognize the honor God has given him.*
But for those who reject him,

"The stone that the builders rejected
has now become the cornerstone."*

8And,

"He is the stone that makes people stumble,
the rock that makes them fall."*

They stumble because they do not obey God's word, and so they
meet the fate that was planned for them.

9But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are
royal priests,* a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result,
you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of
the darkness into his wonderful light.

10"Once you had no identity as a people;

now you are God's people.
Once you received no mercy;
now you have received God's mercy."*

11Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners"
to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very
souls. 12Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving
neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will
see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when
he judges the world.*

RESPECTING PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY

13For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the
king as head of state, 14or the officials he has appointed. For the
king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor
those who do right.

15It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those
ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. 16For
you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as
an excuse to do evil. 17Respect everyone, and love the family of
believers.* Fear God, and respect the king.

SLAVES

18You who are slaves must submit to your masters with all respect.*
Do what they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable,
but even if they are cruel. 19For God is pleased when, conscious of
his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment. 20Of course, you get
no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if
you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased
with you.

21For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as
Christ suffered* for you. He is your example, and you must follow in

his steps.

22He never sinned,
nor ever deceived anyone.*

23He did not retaliate when he was insulted,
nor threaten revenge when he suffered.
He left his case in the hands of God,
who always judges fairly.

24He personally carried our sins
in his body on the cross
so that we can be dead to sin
and live for what is right.
By his wounds
you are healed.

25Once you were like sheep
who wandered away.
But now you have turned to your Shepherd,
the Guardian of your souls.

1 Peter 3

WIVES

1In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your
husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your
godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won
over 2by observing your pure and reverent lives.

3Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles,
expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. 4You should clothe
yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the
unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to
God. 5This is how the holy women of old made themselves
beautiful. They put their trust in God and accepted the authority of
their husbands. 6For instance, Sarah obeyed her husband, Abraham,
and called him her master. You are her daughters when you do
what is right without fear of what your husbands might do.

HUSBANDS

7In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives.

Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

ALL CHRISTIANS

8Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters.* Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. 9Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. 10For the Scriptures say,

"If you want to enjoy life
and see many happy days,
keep your tongue from speaking evil
and your lips from telling lies.

11Turn away from evil and do good.
Search for peace, and work to maintain it.

12The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right,
and his ears are open to their prayers.
But the LORD turns his face
against those who do evil."*

SUFFERING FOR DOING GOOD

13Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. 15Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 16But do this in a gentle and respectful way.* Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. 17Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

18Christ suffered* for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but
he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered
physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.*

19So he went and preached to the spirits in prison—20those who
disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was
building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in
that terrible flood.*21And that water is a picture of baptism, which
now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a
response to God from* a clean conscience. It is effective because of
the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

22Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor
next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept
his authority.

1 Peter 4

LIVING FOR GOD

1So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm
yourselves with the same attitude he had, and be ready to suffer,
too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished
with sin.*2You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own
desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. 3You have
had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy
—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and
wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols.

4Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer
plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they
slander you. 5But remember that they will have to face God, who
stands ready to judge everyone, both the living and the dead. 6That
is why the Good News was preached to those who are now dead*—
so although they were destined to die like all people,* they now live
forever with God in the Spirit.*

7The end of the world is coming soon. Therefore, be earnest and
disciplined in your prayers. 8Most important of all, continue to show
deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins.
9Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place
to stay.

10God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual
gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 11Do you have the gift of
speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through
you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the
strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will
bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to him
forever and ever! Amen.

SUFFERING FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN

12Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going
through, as if something strange were happening to you. 13Instead,
be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his
suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory
when it is revealed to all the world.

14If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will
be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God* rests upon you.*15If you
suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble,
or prying into other people's affairs. 16But it is no shame to suffer
for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by
his name! 17For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin
with God's household. And if judgment begins with us, what
terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God's Good News?
18And also,

"If the righteous are barely saved,
what will happen to godless sinners?"*

19So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on
doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created

you, for he will never fail you.

1 Peter 5

ADVICE FOR ELDERS AND YOUNG MEN

1And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am
an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will
share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a
fellow elder, I appeal to you: 2Care for the flock that God has
entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for
what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God.
3Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them
by your own good example. 4And when the Great Shepherd appears,
you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

5In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority
of the elders. And all of you, dress yourselves in humility as you
relate to one another, for

"God opposes the proud
but gives grace to the humble."*

SUFFERING 1 PETER 5:6-10

6So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the

right time he will lift you up in honor. 7Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

8Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. 9Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers* all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

10In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. 11All power to him forever! Amen.

PETER'S FINAL GREETINGS

12I have written and sent this short letter to you with the help of Silas,* whom I commend to you as a faithful brother. My purpose in writing is to encourage you and assure you that what you are experiencing is truly part of God's grace for you. Stand firm in this grace.

BABYLON IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

13Your sister church here in Babylon* sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark. 14Greet each other with a kiss of love.

Peace be with all of you who are in Christ.

2 Peter

Introduction 1 2 3

WELCOME TO

2 PETER

Peter is nearing the end of his life as he writes this second letter to the Christians in Asia Minor. He foresees problems that will remain after he is gone, and he warns his audience about false teachers who attack the truth by exalting their own ideas over those of the church and by causing some believers to question their faith. He encourages his readers to continue growing spiritually and to realize that the reports about Jesus Christ are indeed fact, not fiction. Finally, he reminds them that Christ will return someday to destroy the old order of this world; therefore, they should live godly lives in anticipation of Christ's coming and the transformation of the world.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: This route through 2 Peter has no reading stops. Your next stop is at Revelation 21:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: On your journey through 2 Peter, you'll find encouragement to grow in your faith. Your next stop is at 2

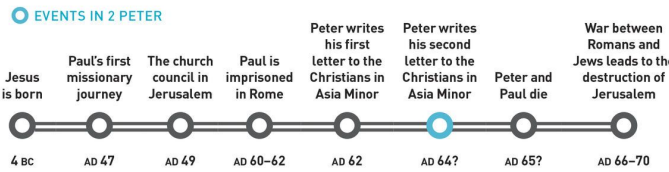
Peter 1:1.

1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: The single stop in 2 Peter will encourage you to cultivate qualities that will help you grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Your next stop is at 2 Peter 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN 2 PETER

Peter exalts Jesus as “Lord and Savior” four times throughout his letter, the only occurrences of that exact phrase in the Bible. Peter also emphasizes how important it is for believers to grow in their knowledge of Jesus (1:2). Jesus is the Lord of an eternal kingdom, and “the Morning Star” who “shines in your hearts” (1:19). Jesus is our hope for the future as we anticipate his victorious return to earth.



2 Peter 1

GREETINGS FROM PETER

1This letter is from Simon* Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.

I am writing to you who share the same precious faith we have.
This faith was given to you because of the justice and fairness* of
Jesus Christ, our God and Savior.

2May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.

GROWING IN FAITH

3By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 4And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

5In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

8The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.

10So, dear brothers and sisters,* work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. 11Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

PAYING ATTENTION TO SCRIPTURE

12Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even
though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth
you have been taught. 13And it is only right that I should keep on
reminding you as long as I live.*14For our Lord Jesus Christ has
shown me that I must soon leave this earthly life,*15so I will work
hard to make sure you always remember these things after I am
gone.

16For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about
the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic
splendor with our own eyes 17when he received honor and glory
from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said
to him, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great
joy.”*18We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were
with him on the holy mountain.

19Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in
the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close
attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp
shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the
Morning Star shines* in your hearts. 20Above all, you must realize
that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own
understanding,*21or from human initiative. No, those prophets were
moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

AFTERLIFE 2 PETER 2:1-11

2 Peter 2

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

1But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be
false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive
heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way,
they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. 2Many will follow
their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these
teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. 3In their greed they
will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God
condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be
delayed.

4For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them
into hell,* in gloomy pits of darkness,* where they are being held
until the day of judgment. 5And God did not spare the ancient world
—except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned
the world of God's righteous judgment. So God protected Noah
when he destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood.
6Later, God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and
turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an example of what
will happen to ungodly people. 7But God also rescued Lot out of
Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the
shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. 8Yes, Lot
was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the
wickedness he saw and heard day after day. 9So you see, the Lord
knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while

keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment. 10He is especially hard on those who follow their own twisted sexual desire, and who despise authority.

These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at supernatural beings* without so much as trembling. 11But the angels, who are far greater in power and strength, do not dare to bring from the Lord* a charge of blasphemy against those supernatural beings.

12These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed. They scoff at things they do not understand, and like animals, they will be destroyed. 13Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They delight in deception* even as they eat with you in your fellowship meals. 14They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God's curse. 15They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor,* who loved to earn money by doing wrong. 16But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice.

17These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness. 18They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting. With an appeal to twisted sexual desires, they lure back into sin those who have barely escaped from a lifestyle of deception. 19They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you. 20And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before. 21It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life. 22They prove the truth of this proverb: "A dog returns to its vomit."* And another says, "A washed pig returns to the mud."

THE FUTURE 2 PETER 3:1-14

2 Peter 3

THE DAY OF THE LORD IS COMING

1This is my second letter to you, dear friends, and in both of them I
have tried to stimulate your wholesome thinking and refresh your
memory. 2I want you to remember what the holy prophets said long
ago and what our Lord and Savior commanded through your
apostles.

3Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days
scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own
desires. 4They will say, “What happened to the promise that Jesus is
coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything
has remained the same since the world was first created.”

5They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by
the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the
water and surrounded it with water. 6Then he used the water to
destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. 7And by the same
word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire.
They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people
will be destroyed.

8But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a
thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. 9The
Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people
think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want
anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. 10But the day
of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens
will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements
themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it
will be found to deserve judgment.*

11Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what
holy and godly lives you should live, 12looking forward to the day of
God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on
fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. 13But we are
looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has
promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

14And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to
happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are
pure and blameless in his sight.

15And remember, our Lord's patience gives people time to be saved.
This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the
wisdom God gave him—16speaking of these things in all of his
letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those
who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean
something quite different, just as they do with other parts of
Scripture. And this will result in their destruction.

PETER'S FINAL WORDS

17You already know these things, dear friends. So be on guard; then
you will not be carried away by the errors of these wicked people
and lose your own secure footing. 18Rather, you must grow in the
grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen.

1 John

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5

WELCOME TO

1 JOHN

John writes this letter to believers whom he cares about as a father cares for his little children. He gives them practical instructions for Christian living and provides clear teaching about Jesus to combat the false teachings that are currently circulating. John first emphasizes Jesus' physical incarnation and the relationship Jesus has with God the Father. John also instructs his audience on how they should live in Christ: They must walk in the light and live in love with all other people. Because of Jesus, believers have experienced the love of God, who is himself love. Therefore, John writes, Christians have no need to fear, either in this life or in the life to come.

0 STOPS

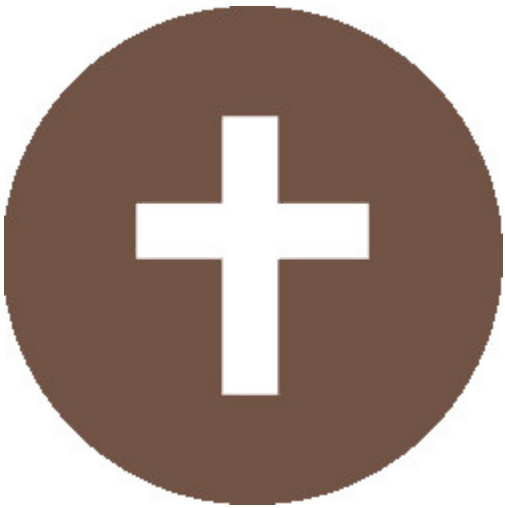
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll pass over 1 John completely, never touching down. Your next stop is at Revelation 21:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your one stop in 1 John will inspire you to love other people and defend God's truth. Your next stop is at 1 John 3:11.

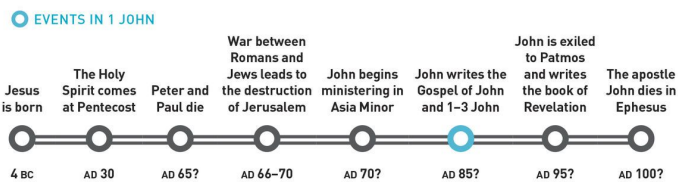
2 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your readings in 1 John will encourage you to walk in the light and love others, as Jesus did while he was on earth. Your next stop is at 1 John 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN 1 JOHN

At the beginning of this letter, John describes Jesus as having existed before the beginning of the world, being the Word of life, and being the very essence of eternal life. Yet John also firmly declares that Jesus is truly and fully human (1:1; 4:2). Elsewhere he describes Jesus as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the only true God (4:14-15; 5:20). Because Jesus is God, he has fellowship with God the Father (1:2-3). Because Jesus is human, he has made that same fellowship available to us by removing our sin and obtaining forgiveness for us (2:12; 3:5). When we know Jesus, we can have complete fellowship with God the Father just as Jesus does.



JOHN'S LATER MINISTRY

1 John 1

INTRODUCTION

1We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning,*
whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and
touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. 2This one
who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And
now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal
life. He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. 3We
proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so
that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with
the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4We are writing these
things so that you may fully share our joy.*

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

5This is the message we heard from Jesus* and now declare to you:
God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. 6So we are lying
if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual
darkness; we are not practicing the truth. 7But if we are living in the
light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each
other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

8If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not
living in the truth. 9But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful
and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all
wickedness. 10If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a
liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

1 John 2

1My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin.
But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case
before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous.
2He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only
our sins but the sins of all the world.

3And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his
commandments. 4If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey
God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the
truth. 5But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely
they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. 6Those
who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

A NEW COMMANDMENT

7Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather
it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old
commandment—to love one another—is the same message you
heard before. 8Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this
commandment, and you also are living it. For the darkness is
disappearing, and the true light is already shining.

9If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a fellow
believer,* that person is still living in darkness. 10Anyone who loves
a fellow believer* is living in the light and does not cause others to
stumble. 11But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and
walking in darkness. Such a person does not know the way to go,
having been blinded by the darkness.

12I am writing to you who are God’s children
because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus.*

13I am writing to you who are mature in the faith*
because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning.
I am writing to you who are young in the faith
because you have won your battle with the evil one.

14I have written to you who are God's children
because you know the Father.
I have written to you who are mature in the faith
because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning.
I have written to you who are young in the faith
because you are strong.
God's word lives in your hearts,
and you have won your battle with the evil one.

DO NOT LOVE THIS WORLD

15Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. 16For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. 17And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

WARNING ABOUT ANTICHRISTS

18Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. 19These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.

20But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit,* and all of you know the truth. 21So I am writing to you not

because you don’t know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies. 22And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ.* Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist.*23Anyone who denies the Son doesn’t have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father. 25And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us.

26I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray. 27But you have received the Holy Spirit,* and he lives within you, so you don’t need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit* teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.

LIVING AS CHILDREN OF GOD

28And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame.

29Since we know that Christ is righteous, we also know that all who do what is right are God's children.

GOD LOVES YOU 1 JOHN 3:1-10

1 John 3

1See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children,
and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world
don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know
him. 2Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not
yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do
know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.
3And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure,
just as he is pure.

4Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to
the law of God. 5And you know that Jesus came to take away our
sins, and there is no sin in him. 6Anyone who continues to live in
him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know
him or understand who he is.

7Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When
people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as
Christ is righteous. 8But when people keep on sinning, it shows that
they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning.
But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. 9Those
who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of
sinning, because God's life* is in them. So they can't keep on
sinning, because they are children of God. 10So now we can tell who
are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who
does not live righteously and does not love other believers* does not
belong to God.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

11This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We
should love one another. 12We must not be like Cain, who belonged
to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him?
Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had
been doing what was righteous. 13So don't be surprised, dear
brothers and sisters,* if the world hates you.

14If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers,* it proves
that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no
love is still dead. 15Anyone who hates another brother or sister* is
really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have
eternal life within them.

16We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us.
So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.
17If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or
sister* in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in
that person?

18Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us
show the truth by our actions. 19Our actions will show that we
belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before
God. 20Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and
he knows everything.

21Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with
bold confidence. 22And we will receive from him whatever we ask
because we obey him and do the things that please him.

23And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his
Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us.
24Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with
him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the
Spirit he gave us lives in us.

1 John 4

DISCERNING FALSE PROPHETS

1Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the
Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from
God. For there are many false prophets in the world. 2This is how
we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a
prophet* acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that
person has the Spirit of God. 3But if someone claims to be a prophet
and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not
from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you
heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.

4But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a
victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is
greater than the spirit who lives in the world. 5Those people belong
to this world, so they speak from the world's viewpoint, and the
world listens to them. 6But we belong to God, and those who know
God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to
us. That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the

spirit of deception.

LOVING ONE ANOTHER

7Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes
from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. 8But
anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

9God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only
Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.
10This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and
sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

11Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to
love each other. 12No one has ever seen God. But if we love each
other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in
us.

13And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and
he in us. 14Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now
testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.
15All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in
them, and they live in God. 16We know how much God loves us, and
we have put our trust in his love.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in
them. 17And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we
will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with
confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.

18Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we
are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have
not fully experienced his perfect love. 19We love each other* because
he loved us first.

20If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer,* that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? 21And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.*

1 John 5

FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD

1Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ* has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. 2We know we love God’s children if we love God and obey his commandments. 3Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. 4For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. 5And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

6And Jesus Christ was revealed as God’s Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross*—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. 7So we have these three witnesses*—8the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. 9Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son. 10All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don’t believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don’t believe what God has testified about his Son.

11And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life,
and this life is in his Son. 12Whoever has the Son has life; whoever
does not have God's Son does not have life.

CONCLUSION

13I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of
God, so that you may know you have eternal life. 14And we are
confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that
pleases him. 15And since we know he hears us when we make our
requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.

16If you see a fellow believer* sinning in a way that does not lead to
death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But there
is a sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you should pray for
those who commit it. 17All wicked actions are sin, but not every sin
leads to death.

18We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning,
for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch
them. 19We know that we are children of God and that the world
around us is under the control of the evil one.

20And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us
understanding so that we can know the true God.* And now we live
in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with
his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.

21Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's
place in your hearts.*

2 John

WELCOME TO

2 JOHN & 3 JOHN

John's second and third letters are quite personal. Second John is written either to a Christian woman whom John knows or to a church that John personifies as a woman. Either way, John writes to encourage true Christian love and to warn against the deceivers who are disputing the humanity of Jesus. John charges his audience not to listen to these lies but to stand for the truth no matter what the cost.

Third John is a personal note from John to his friend Gaius, encouraging him to provide hospitality to the traveling evangelists who preach the truth. He warns Gaius against such men as Diotrephes, who refuses to help spread the Good News. John also commends others, such as Demetrius, for their help.

0 STOPS

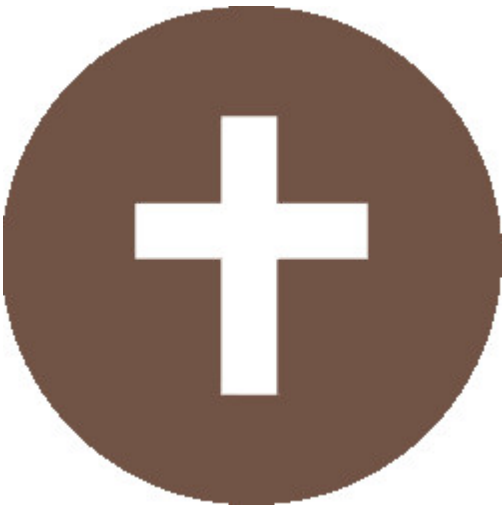
ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You'll fly right over these two books on your way to the book of Revelation. Your next stop is at Revelation 21:1.

1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your one stop in these letters will direct you to live in the truth and avoid the influence of deceivers. Your next stop is at 2 John 1:1.

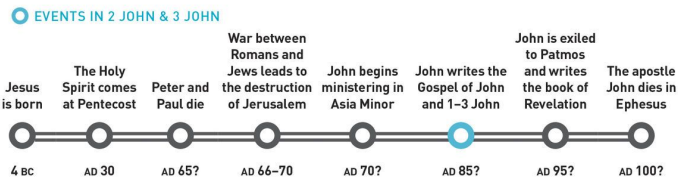
1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll stop just once to cover the readings in these two short books, which will encourage you to live in the truth and support those who preach it. Your next stop is at 2 John 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN 2 & 3 JOHN

Jesus is both human and divine. John is adamant that “Jesus Christ came in a real body” (2 John 1:7) and that he is “the Son of the Father” (2 John 1:3). Jesus’ relationship with God is something that he has made available to us because he became human like us. John focuses on Jesus indirectly in 3 John by encouraging others to live in the truth. Jesus is the only source of truth.



GREETINGS

1This letter is from John, the elder.*

I am writing to the chosen lady and to her children,* whom I love in
the truth—as does everyone else who knows the truth—2because
the truth lives in us and will be with us forever.

3Grace, mercy, and peace, which come from God the Father and
from Jesus Christ—the Son of the Father—will continue to be with
us who live in truth and love.

LIVE IN THE TRUTH

4How happy I was to meet some of your children and find them
living according to the truth, just as the Father commanded.

5I am writing to remind you, dear friends,* that we should love one
another. This is not a new commandment, but one we have had
from the beginning. 6Love means doing what God has commanded

us, and he has commanded us to love one another, just as you heard from the beginning.

7I say this because many deceivers have gone out into the world. They deny that Jesus Christ came* in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8Watch out that you do not lose what we* have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward. 9Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father and the Son.

10If anyone comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ, don't invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement. 11Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work.

CONCLUSION

12I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to do it with paper and ink. For I hope to visit you soon and talk with you face to face. Then our joy will be complete.

13Greetings from the children of your sister,* chosen by God.

3 John

Introduction 1

GREETINGS

1This letter is from John, the elder.*

I am writing to Gaius, my dear friend, whom I love in the truth.

2Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy
in body as you are strong in spirit. 3Some of the traveling teachers*
recently returned and made me very happy by telling me about
your faithfulness and that you are living according to the truth. 4I
could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are
following the truth.

CARING FOR THE LORD'S WORKERS

5Dear friend, you are being faithful to God when you care for the
traveling teachers who pass through, even though they are strangers
to you. 6They have told the church here of your loving friendship.
Please continue providing for such teachers in a manner that
pleases God. 7For they are traveling for the Lord,* and they accept
nothing from people who are not believers.*8So we ourselves should
support them so that we can be their partners as they teach the
truth.

9I wrote to the church about this, but Diotrephes, who loves to be
the leader, refuses to have anything to do with us. 10When I come, I
will report some of the things he is doing and the evil accusations
he is making against us. Not only does he refuse to welcome the
traveling teachers, he also tells others not to help them. And when
they do help, he puts them out of the church.

11Dear friend, don't let this bad example influence you. Follow only
what is good. Remember that those who do good prove that they
are God's children, and those who do evil prove that they do not
know God.*

12Everyone speaks highly of Demetrius, as does the truth itself. We
ourselves can say the same for him, and you know we speak the
truth.

CONCLUSION

13I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to write it with
pen and ink. 14For I hope to see you soon, and then we will talk face
to face.

15*Peace be with you.

Your friends here send you their greetings. Please give my personal
greetings to each of our friends there.

Jude

Introduction 1

WELCOME TO

JUDE

Jude's letter to the early Christians is short and to the point. He tells them to stay firm in their faith so that they will be saved on the day of judgment. Jude urges the believers to stand firm against the false teachers who spread false doctrines, such as the suggestion that Christians can sin freely because of God's grace. Jude gives examples of God's judgment on sinners in the past and devastatingly describes the vile lives of the false teachers who "have wormed their way" into churches. Jude closes with a prayer praising God, who keeps believers from falling away and brings

them joyfully into his presence.

0 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: You won't be stopping in Jude, but you may want to visit the last two verses, which form Jude's famous prayer of praise to God. Your next stop is at Revelation 21:1.

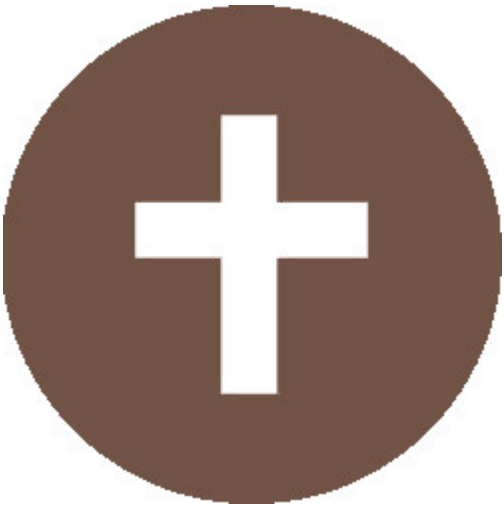
1 STOP

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: Your stop in Jude covers the whole book. In it, you'll find a warning to watch out for false teachers. Your next stop is at Jude 1:1.

1 STOP

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: Your one stop in this book will take you

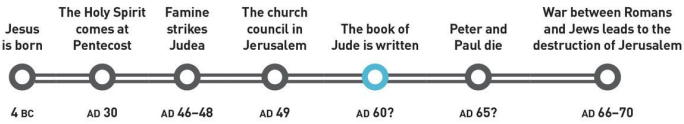
through Jude's entire letter. It contains both a warning and words of encouragement for you to persevere in your faith. Your next stop is at Jude 1:1.



FINDING JESUS IN JUDE

Jesus looms large in Jude's short letter. He is the powerful Savior who in his preincarnate state rescued the Hebrews from Egypt and was the destroyer of the unfaithful Hebrews in the desert (1:5). He is also the resurrected Lord who will return to earth surrounded by a vast entourage to judge and convict the world of sin (1:14-15). Yet, for all his fearsome majesty, Jesus is also the one who protects the faithful, shows mercy to them, and brings them eternal life (1:21). Jude was right, then, to call his half brother, Jesus, "Master and Lord" (1:4).

EVENTS IN JUDE



GREETINGS FROM JUDE

1This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.

I am writing to all who have been called by God the Father, who loves you and keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ.*

2May God give you more and more mercy, peace, and love.

AFTERLIFE JUDE 1:3-11

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

3Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people. 4I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

5So I want to remind you, though you already know these things, that Jesus* first rescued the nation of Israel from Egypt, but later he destroyed those who did not remain faithful. 6And I remind you of

the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them securely chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the great day of judgment. 7And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment.

8In the same way, these people—who claim authority from their dreams—live immoral lives, defy authority, and scoff at supernatural beings.*9But even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels,* did not dare accuse the devil of blasphemy, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (This took place when Michael was arguing with the devil about Moses' body.) 10But these people scoff at things they do not understand. Like unthinking animals, they do whatever their instincts tell them, and so they bring about their own destruction. 11What sorrow awaits them! For they follow in the footsteps of Cain, who killed his brother. Like Balaam, they deceive people for money. And like Korah, they perish in their rebellion.

12When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you.* They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain. They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots. 13They are like wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their shameful deeds. They are like wandering stars, doomed forever to blackest darkness.

14Enoch, who lived in the seventh generation after Adam, prophesied about these people. He said, "Listen! The Lord is coming with countless thousands of his holy ones 15to execute judgment on the people of the world. He will convict every person of all the ungodly things they have done and for all the insults that ungodly

sinners have spoken against him.”*

16These people are grumblers and complainers, living only to satisfy
their desires. They brag loudly about themselves, and they flatter
others to get what they want.

A CALL TO REMAIN FAITHFUL

17But you, my dear friends, must remember what the apostles of our
Lord Jesus Christ predicted. 18They told you that in the last times
there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their
ungodly desires. 19These people are the ones who are creating
divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because
they do not have God’s Spirit in them.

20But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy
faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit,*21and await the mercy of
our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way,
you will keep yourselves safe in God’s love.

22And you must show mercy to* those whose faith is wavering.
23Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment.
Show mercy to still others,* but do so with great caution, hating the
sins that contaminate their lives.*

A PRAYER OF PRAISE

24Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away
and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without
a single fault. 25All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior
through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and
authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all
time! Amen.

Revelation

Introduction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

WELCOME TO

REVELATION

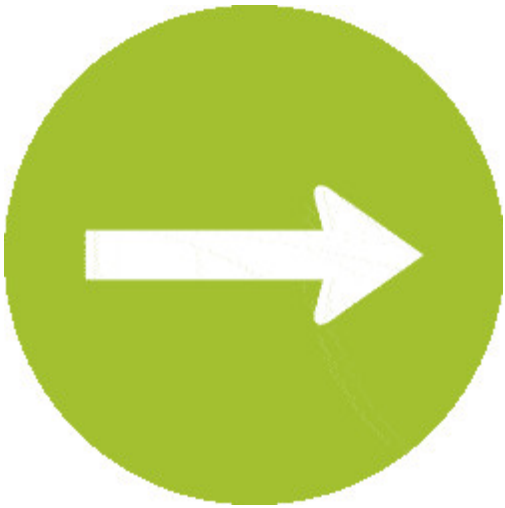
Revelation is a complex book about a simple truth: hope. This book is Christ's revelation to John during John's exile on the island of Patmos. John receives messages and visions of hope for God's people, who face suffering and oppression as they wait for Jesus' return.

There are two major sections in this book. The first is a series of seven letters from Christ to the churches in Asia Minor (chapters 1–3). Christ states what he knows about each church and instructs some of them on how to overcome their weaknesses. He then proclaims either blessings or judgment on each one.

The second section is a series of visions providing a glimpse of spiritual realities that humans don't normally see. John observes the ultimate overthrow of evil, the return of Christ, the last judgment, and the eternal Kingdom. Even though Revelation is a complex book, it's clear about one thing: Jesus wins! The Lamb of God will reign over everything. The message of Revelation gives eternal hope and promise to God's faithful people.

2 STOPS

ON THE FLYOVER ROUTE: Your two stops in this book proclaim the hope that Jesus will come again and renew God's creation. Your next stop is at Revelation 21:1.



3 STOPS

ON THE DIRECT ROUTE: The three stops in Revelation will show

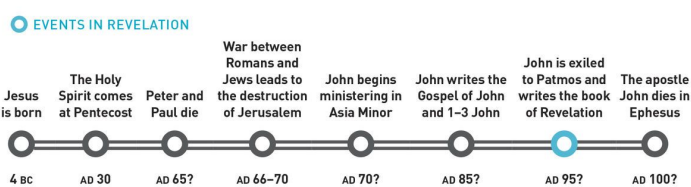
you a mysterious part of John's vision as well as the glorious finale to God's big story. Your next stop is at Revelation 12:1.

6 STOPS

ON THE SCENIC ROUTE: You'll stop six times in Revelation to read of John's strange and wonderful visions, which include everything from a glorious picture of heaven to the joyous announcement of Christ's imminent return. Your next stop is at Revelation 1:1.

FINDING JESUS IN REVELATION

The book of Revelation is a vision of Jesus the Messiah. It is a revelation that comes from him and focuses on him. In this vision, Jesus is the all-encompassing one. He is described as the “Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end” (1:8). Jesus is above all kings and lords (19:16); he is the triumphant Lion of Judah—the king—because he is also the slaughtered Lamb of God—the sacrifice (5:4-10). For all this he is to be praised and joyously awaited. We can be sure of all of this because he is the one who has revealed all these things (1:1). We can also be sure that he is coming again soon (22:20). Come, Lord Jesus!



THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Revelation 1

PROLOGUE

1This is a revelation from* Jesus Christ, which God gave him to
show his servants the events that must soon* take place. He sent an
angel to present this revelation to his servant John, 2who faithfully
reported everything he saw. This is his report of the word of God
and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

3God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the
church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what
it says, for the time is near.

JOHN'S GREETING TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

4This letter is from John to the seven churches in the province of
Asia.*

Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and
who is still to come; from the sevenfold Spirit* before his throne;
5and from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness to these things, the
first to rise from the dead, and the ruler of all the kings of the
world.

All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by
shedding his blood for us. 6He has made us a Kingdom of priests for
God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen.

7Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven.
And everyone will see him— even those who pierced him.
And all the nations of the world will mourn for him.
Yes! Amen!

8“I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end,”* says
the Lord God. “I am the one who is, who always was, and who is
still to come—the Almighty One.”

PATMOS

VISION OF THE SON OF MAN

9I, John, am your brother and your partner in suffering and in God’s
Kingdom and in the patient endurance to which Jesus calls us. I was
exiled to the island of Patmos for preaching the word of God and
for my testimony about Jesus. 10It was the Lord’s Day, and I was
worshiping in the Spirit.* Suddenly, I heard behind me a loud voice
like a trumpet blast. 11It said, “Write in a book* everything you see,
and send it to the seven churches in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna,
Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”

12When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold
lampstands. 13And standing in the middle of the lampstands was
someone like the Son of Man.* He was wearing a long robe with a
gold sash across his chest. 14His head and his hair were white like
wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. 15His
feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice
thundered like mighty ocean waves. 16He held seven stars in his
right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth.
And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

17When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his
right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the
Last. 18I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and
ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.*

19“Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now
happening and the things that will happen.* 20This is the meaning of
the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the
seven gold lampstands: The seven stars are the angels* of the seven
churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

Revelation 2

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

1“Write this letter to the angel* of the church in Ephesus. This is the
message from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand,
the one who walks among the seven gold lampstands:

2“I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your
patient endurance. I know you don’t tolerate evil people. You have
examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not.
You have discovered they are liars. 3You have patiently suffered for
me without quitting.

4“But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each
other as you did at first!* 5Look how far you have fallen! Turn back
to me and do the works you did at first. If you don’t repent, I will
come and remove your lampstand from its place among the
churches. 6But this is in your favor: You hate the evil deeds of the
Nicolaitans, just as I do.

7“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand
what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I
will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA

8“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. This is the
message from the one who is the First and the Last, who was dead
but is now alive:

9“I know about your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich! I know the blasphemy of those opposing you. They say they are Jews, but they are not, because their synagogue belongs to Satan. 10Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will throw some of you into prison to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life.

11“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. Whoever is victorious will not be harmed by the second death.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMUM

12“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Pergamum. This is the message from the one with the sharp two-edged sword:

13“I know that you live in the city where Satan has his throne, yet you have remained loyal to me. You refused to deny me even when Antipas, my faithful witness, was martyred among you there in Satan’s city.

14“But I have a few complaints against you. You tolerate some among you whose teaching is like that of Balaam, who showed Balak how to trip up the people of Israel. He taught them to sin by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin. 15In a similar way, you have some Nicolaitans among you who follow the same teaching. 16Repent of your sin, or I will come to you suddenly and fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will give some of the manna that has been hidden away in heaven. And I will give to each one a white stone, and on the stone will be engraved a new name that no one understands except the one who receives it.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA

18“Write this letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira. This is the

message from the Son of God, whose eyes are like flames of fire,
whose feet are like polished bronze:

19"I know all the things you do. I have seen your love, your faith,
your service, and your patient endurance. And I can see your
constant improvement in all these things.

20"But I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that
woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my
servants astray. She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat
food offered to idols. 21I gave her time to repent, but she does not
want to turn away from her immorality.

22"Therefore, I will throw her on a bed of suffering,* and those who
commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and
turn away from her evil deeds. 23I will strike her children dead.
Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out
the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each
of you whatever you deserve.

24"But I also have a message for the rest of you in Thyatira who
have not followed this false teaching ('deeper truths,' as they call
them—depths of Satan, actually). I will ask nothing more of you
25except that you hold tightly to what you have until I come. 26To
all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, To them I will
give authority over all the nations.

27They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like
clay pots.*

28They will have the same authority I received from my Father, and
I will also give them the morning star!

29"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand
what he is saying to the churches.

Revelation 3

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS

1 “Write this letter to the angel* of the church in Sardis. This is the
message from the one who has the sevenfold Spirit* of God and the
seven stars:

“I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for
being alive—but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what little
remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions
do not meet the requirements of my God. 3 Go back to what you
heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me
again. If you don’t wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as
unexpected as a thief.

4 “Yet there are some in the church in Sardis who have not soiled
their clothes with evil. They will walk with me in white, for they
are worthy. 5 All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will
never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce
before my Father and his angels that they are mine.

6 “Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand
what he is saying to the churches.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

7 “Write this letter to the angel of the church in Philadelphia.

This is the message from the one who is holy and true, the one who
has the key of David.

What he opens, no one can close; and what he closes, no one can open:*

8"I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you
that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed my
word and did not deny me. 9Look, I will force those who belong to
Satan's synagogue—those liars who say they are Jews but are not—
to come and bow down at your feet. They will acknowledge that
you are the ones I love.

10"Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will
protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the
whole world to test those who belong to this world. 11I am coming
soon.* Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away
your crown. 12All who are victorious will become pillars in the
Temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it. And I will
write on them the name of my God, and they will be citizens in the
city of my God—the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven
from my God. And I will also write on them my new name.

13"Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand
what he is saying to the churches.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA

14"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is
the message from the one who is the Amen—the faithful and true
witness, the beginning* of God's new creation:

15"I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I
wish that you were one or the other! 16But since you are like
lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my
mouth! 17You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need
a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable
and poor and blind and naked. 18So I advise you to buy gold from
me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also
buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your
nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. 19I
correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from

your indifference.

20“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and
open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as
friends. 21Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne,
just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

22“Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand
what he is saying to the churches.”

Revelation 4

WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

1Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the
same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The
voice said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen
after this.” 2And instantly I was in the Spirit,* and I saw a throne in
heaven and someone sitting on it. 3The one sitting on the throne
was as brilliant as gemstones—like jasper and carnelian. And the
glow of an emerald circled his throne like a rainbow. 4Twenty-four
thrones surrounded him, and twenty-four elders sat on them. They
were all clothed in white and had gold crowns on their heads.
5From the throne came flashes of lightning and the rumble of

thunder. And in front of the throne were seven torches with burning flames. This is the sevenfold Spirit* of God. 6In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal.

In the center and around the throne were four living beings, each covered with eyes, front and back. 7The first of these living beings was like a lion; the second was like an ox; the third had a human face; and the fourth was like an eagle in flight. 8Each of these living beings had six wings, and their wings were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day after day and night after night they keep on saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty— the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come.”

9Whenever the living beings give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever), 10the twenty-four elders fall down and worship the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever). And they lay their crowns before the throne and say,

11“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power.
For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased.”

Revelation 5

THE LAMB OPENS THE SCROLL

1Then I saw a scroll* in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. There was writing on the inside and the outside of the scroll, and it was sealed with seven seals. 2And I saw a strong angel, who shouted with a loud voice: “Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it?” 3But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll and read it.

4Then I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to

open the scroll and read it. 5But one of the twenty-four elders said
to me, “Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir
to David’s throne,* has won the victory. He is worthy to open the
scroll and its seven seals.”

6Then I saw a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it
was now standing between the throne and the four living beings
and among the twenty-four elders. He had seven horns and seven
eyes, which represent the sevenfold Spirit* of God that is sent out
into every part of the earth. 7He stepped forward and took the scroll
from the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. 8And when he
took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell
down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold
bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God’s people.
9And they sang a new song with these words: “You are worthy to
take the scroll and break its seals and open it.

For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for
God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

10And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for
our God.
And they will reign* on the earth.”

11Then I looked again, and I heard the voices of thousands and
millions of angels around the throne and of the living beings and
the elders. 12And they sang in a mighty chorus: “Worthy is the Lamb
who was slaughtered— to receive power and riches and wisdom
and strength and honor and glory and blessing.”

13And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under
the earth and in the sea. They sang: “Blessing and honor and glory
and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb
forever and ever.”

14And the four living beings said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four

elders fell down and worshiped the Lamb.

Revelation 6

THE LAMB BREAKS THE FIRST SIX SEALS

1As I watched, the Lamb broke the first of the seven seals on the
scroll.* Then I heard one of the four living beings say with a voice
like thunder, “Come!” 2I looked up and saw a white horse standing
there. Its rider carried a bow, and a crown was placed on his head.
He rode out to win many battles and gain the victory.

3When the Lamb broke the second seal, I heard the second living
being say, “Come!” 4Then another horse appeared, a red one. Its
rider was given a mighty sword and the authority to take peace
from the earth. And there was war and slaughter everywhere.

5When the Lamb broke the third seal, I heard the third living being
say, “Come!” I looked up and saw a black horse, and its rider was
holding a pair of scales in his hand. 6And I heard a voice from
among the four living beings say, “A loaf of wheat bread or three
loaves of barley will cost a day’s pay.* And don’t waste* the olive oil
and wine.”

7When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the fourth living
being say, “Come!” 8I looked up and saw a horse whose color was
pale green. Its rider was named Death, and his companion was the
Grave.* These two were given authority over one-fourth of the
earth, to kill with the sword and famine and disease* and wild

animals.

9When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls
of all who had been martyred for the word of God and for being
faithful in their testimony. 10They shouted to the Lord and said, “O
Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you judge the
people who belong to this world and avenge our blood for what
they have done to us?” 11Then a white robe was given to each of
them. And they were told to rest a little longer until the full number
of their brothers and sisters*—their fellow servants of Jesus who
were to be martyred—had joined them.

12I watched as the Lamb broke the sixth seal, and there was a great
earthquake. The sun became as dark as black cloth, and the moon
became as red as blood. 13Then the stars of the sky fell to the earth
like green figs falling from a tree shaken by a strong wind. 14The sky
was rolled up like a scroll, and all of the mountains and islands
were moved from their places.

15Then everyone—the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals,
the wealthy, the powerful, and every slave and free person—all hid
themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains.
16And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and
hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from
the wrath of the Lamb. 17For the great day of their wrath has come,
and who is able to survive?”

Revelation 7

GOD’S PEOPLE WILL BE PRESERVED

1Then I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth,
holding back the four winds so they did not blow on the earth or
the sea, or even on any tree. 2And I saw another angel coming up
from the east, carrying the seal of the living God. And he shouted to
those four angels, who had been given power to harm land and sea,
3“Wait! Don’t harm the land or the sea or the trees until we have

placed the seal of God on the foreheads of his servants."

4And I heard how many were marked with the seal of God—
144,000 were sealed from all the tribes of Israel:

12,000 from Judah
12,000 from Reuben
12,000 from Gad
12,000 from Asher
12,000 from Naphtali
12,000 from Manasseh
12,000 from Simeon
12,000 from Levi
12,000 from Issachar
12,000 from Zebulun
12,000 from Joseph
12,000 from Benjamin

AFTERLIFE REVELATION 7:9-17

PRAISE FROM THE GREAT CROWD

9After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands. 10And they were shouting with a

great roar, “Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne
and from the Lamb!”

11And all the angels were standing around the throne and around
the elders and the four living beings. And they fell before the throne
with their faces to the ground and worshiped God. 12They sang,
“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor
and power and strength belong to our God forever and ever!
Amen.”

13Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, “Who are these who
are clothed in white? Where did they come from?”

14And I said to him, “Sir, you are the one who knows.”

Then he said to me, “These are the ones who died in* the great
tribulation.* They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb
and made them white.

15“That is why they stand in front of God’s throne and serve him
day and night in his Temple.
And he who sits on the throne will give them shelter.

16They will never again be hungry or thirsty; they will never be
scorched by the heat of the sun.

17For the Lamb on the throne*
will be their Shepherd.
He will lead them to springs of life-giving water.
And God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”

Revelation 8

THE LAMB BREAKS THE SEVENTH SEAL

1When the Lamb broke the seventh seal on the scroll,* there was
silence throughout heaven for about half an hour. 2I saw the seven
angels who stand before God, and they were given seven trumpets.

3Then another angel with a gold incense burner came and stood at
the altar. And a great amount of incense was given to him to mix
with the prayers of God's people as an offering on the gold altar
before the throne. 4The smoke of the incense, mixed with the
prayers of God's holy people, ascended up to God from the altar
where the angel had poured them out. 5Then the angel filled the
incense burner with fire from the altar and threw it down upon the
earth; and thunder crashed, lightning flashed, and there was a
terrible earthquake.

THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS

6Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow
their mighty blasts.

7The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire mixed with
blood were thrown down on the earth. One-third of the earth was
set on fire, one-third of the trees were burned, and all the green
grass was burned.

8Then the second angel blew his trumpet, and a great mountain of
fire was thrown into the sea. One-third of the water in the sea
became blood, 9one-third of all things living in the sea died, and
one-third of all the ships on the sea were destroyed.

10Then the third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from
the sky, burning like a torch. It fell on one-third of the rivers and on
the springs of water. 11The name of the star was Bitterness.* It made
one-third of the water bitter, and many people died from drinking
the bitter water.

12Then the fourth angel blew his trumpet, and one-third of the sun

was struck, and one-third of the moon, and one-third of the stars, and they became dark. And one-third of the day was dark, and also one-third of the night.

13Then I looked, and I heard a single eagle crying loudly as it flew through the air, “Terror, terror, terror to all who belong to this world because of what will happen when the last three angels blow their trumpets.”

Revelation 9

THE FIFTH TRUMPET BRINGS THE FIRST TERROR

1Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen to earth from the sky, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit.*2When he opened it, smoke poured out as though from a huge furnace, and the sunlight and air turned dark from the smoke.

3Then locusts came from the smoke and descended on the earth, and they were given power to sting like scorpions. 4They were told not to harm the grass or plants or trees, but only the people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5They were told not to kill them but to torture them for five months with pain like the pain of a scorpion sting. 6In those days people will seek death but will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them!

7The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. They had what looked like gold crowns on their heads, and their faces looked like human faces. 8They had hair like women’s hair and teeth like the teeth of a lion. 9They wore armor made of iron, and their wings roared like an army of chariots rushing into battle. 10They had tails that stung like scorpions, and for five months they had the power to torment people. 11Their king is the angel from the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is *Abaddon,* and in Greek, *Apollyon*—the Destroyer.

12The first terror is past, but look, two more terrors are coming!

THE SIXTH TRUMPET BRINGS THE SECOND TERROR

13Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice speaking from the four horns of the gold altar that stands in the presence of God. 14And the voice said to the sixth angel who held the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great Euphrates River.” 15Then the four angels who had been prepared for this hour and day and month and year were turned loose to kill one-third of all the people on earth. 16I heard the size of their army, which was 200 million mounted troops.

17And in my vision, I saw the horses and the riders sitting on them. The riders wore armor that was fiery red and dark blue and yellow. The horses had heads like lions, and fire and smoke and burning sulfur billowed from their mouths. 18One-third of all the people on earth were killed by these three plagues—by the fire and smoke and burning sulfur that came from the mouths of the horses. 19Their power was in their mouths and in their tails. For their tails had heads like snakes, with the power to injure people.

20But the people who did not die in these plagues still refused to repent of their evil deeds and turn to God. They continued to worship demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—idols that can neither see nor hear nor walk! 21And they did not repent of their murders or their witchcraft or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Revelation 10

THE ANGEL AND THE SMALL SCROLL

1Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, surrounded by a cloud, with a rainbow over his head. His face shone like the sun, and his feet were like pillars of fire. 2And in his hand was a small scroll* that had been opened. He stood with his

right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. 3And he gave a great shout like the roar of a lion. And when he shouted, the seven thunders answered.

4When the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write. But I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Keep secret* what the seven thunders said, and do not write it down.”

5Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand toward heaven. 6He swore an oath in the name of the one who lives forever and ever, who created the heavens and everything in them, the earth and everything in it, and the sea and everything in it. He said, “There will be no more delay. 7When the seventh angel blows his trumpet, God’s mysterious plan will be fulfilled. It will happen just as he announced it to his servants the prophets.”

8Then the voice from heaven spoke to me again: “Go and take the open scroll from the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.”

9So I went to the angel and told him to give me the small scroll. “Yes, take it and eat it,” he said. “It will be sweet as honey in your mouth, but it will turn sour in your stomach!” 10So I took the small scroll from the hand of the angel, and I ate it! It was sweet in my mouth, but when I swallowed it, it turned sour in my stomach.

11Then I was told, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.”

Revelation 11

THE TWO WITNESSES

1Then I was given a measuring stick, and I was told, “Go and
measure the Temple of God and the altar, and count the number of
worshipers. 2But do not measure the outer courtyard, for it has been
turned over to the nations. They will trample the holy city for 42
months. 3And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will
be clothed in burlap and will prophesy during those 1,260 days.”

4These two prophets are the two olive trees and the two lampstands
that stand before the Lord of all the earth. 5If anyone tries to harm
them, fire flashes from their mouths and consumes their enemies.
This is how anyone who tries to harm them must die. 6They have
power to shut the sky so that no rain will fall for as long as they
prophesy. And they have the power to turn the rivers and oceans
into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as
often as they wish.

7When they complete their testimony, the beast that comes up out
of the bottomless pit* will declare war against them, and he will
conquer them and kill them. 8And their bodies will lie in the main
street of Jerusalem,* the city that is figuratively called “Sodom” and
“Egypt,” the city where their Lord was crucified. 9And for three and
a half days, all peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will stare at
their bodies. No one will be allowed to bury them. 10All the people
who belong to this world will gloat over them and give presents to
each other to celebrate the death of the two prophets who had
tormented them.

11But after three and a half days, God breathed life into them, and
they stood up! Terror struck all who were staring at them. 12Then a
loud voice from heaven called to the two prophets, “Come up here!”
And they rose to heaven in a cloud as their enemies watched.

13At the same time there was a terrible earthquake that destroyed a
tenth of the city. Seven thousand people died in that earthquake,
and everyone else was terrified and gave glory to the God of
heaven.

14The second terror is past, but look, the third terror is coming quickly.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET BRINGS THE THIRD TERROR

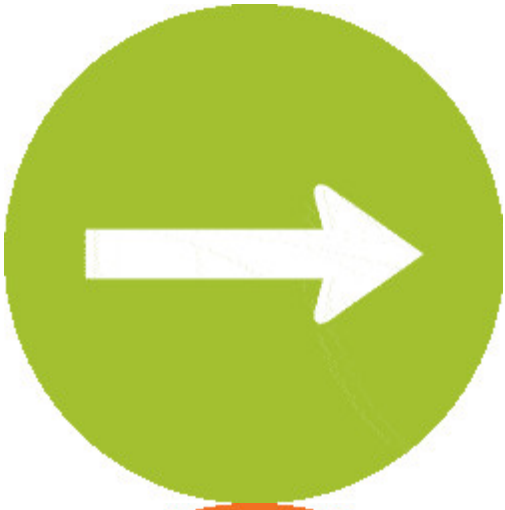
15Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices shouting in heaven: “The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,*

and he will reign forever and ever.”

16The twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones before God fell with their faces to the ground and worshiped him. 17And they said, “We give thanks to you, Lord God, the Almighty, the one who is and who always was, for now you have assumed your great power and have begun to reign.

18The nations were filled with wrath, but now the time of your wrath has come.
It is time to judge the dead and reward your servants the prophets, as well as your holy people, and all who fear your name, from the least to the greatest.
It is time to destroy all who have caused destruction on the earth.”

19Then, in heaven, the Temple of God was opened and the Ark of his covenant could be seen inside the Temple. Lightning flashed, thunder crashed and roared, and there was an earthquake and a terrible hailstorm.



VISIONS REVELATION 12:1-18

Revelation 12

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

1Then I witnessed in heaven an event of great significance. I saw a
woman clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and a
crown of twelve stars on her head. 2She was pregnant, and she cried
out because of her labor pains and the agony of giving birth.

3Then I witnessed in heaven another significant event. I saw a large
red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, with seven crowns on
his heads. 4His tail swept away one-third of the stars in the sky, and
he threw them to the earth. He stood in front of the woman as she
was about to give birth, ready to devour her baby as soon as it was
born.

5She gave birth to a son who was to rule all nations with an iron
rod. And her child was snatched away from the dragon and was
caught up to God and to his throne. 6And the woman fled into the
wilderness, where God had prepared a place to care for her for
1,260 days.

7Then there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought
against the dragon and his angels. 8And the dragon lost the battle,
and he and his angels were forced out of heaven. 9This great dragon
—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving
the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.

10Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, “It has
come at last— salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God,
and the authority of his Christ.*

For the accuser of our brothers and sisters*
has been thrown down to earth— the one who accuses them before

our God day and night.

11And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by
their testimony.
And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to
die.

12Therefore, rejoice, O heavens!
And you who live in the heavens, rejoice!
But terror will come on the earth and the sea, for the devil has
come down to you in great anger, knowing that he has little time."

13When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the
earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male
child. 14But she was given two wings like those of a great eagle so
she could fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness. There
she would be cared for and protected from the dragon* for a time,
times, and half a time.

15Then the dragon tried to drown the woman with a flood of water
that flowed from his mouth. 16But the earth helped her by opening
its mouth and swallowing the river that gushed out from the mouth
of the dragon. 17And the dragon was angry at the woman and
declared war against the rest of her children—all who keep God's
commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus.

18Then the dragon took his stand* on the shore beside the sea.

Revelation 13

THE BEAST OUT OF THE SEA

1Then I saw a beast rising up out of the sea. It had seven heads and
ten horns, with ten crowns on its horns. And written on each head
were names that blasphemed God. 2This beast looked like a leopard,
but it had the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion! And the
dragon gave the beast his own power and throne and great
authority.

3I saw that one of the heads of the beast seemed wounded beyond
recovery—but the fatal wound was healed! The whole world
marveled at this miracle and gave allegiance to the beast. 4They
worshiped the dragon for giving the beast such power, and they
also worshiped the beast. “Who is as great as the beast?” they
exclaimed. “Who is able to fight against him?”

5Then the beast was allowed to speak great blasphemies against
God. And he was given authority to do whatever he wanted for
forty-two months. 6And he spoke terrible words of blasphemy
against God, slandering his name and his dwelling—that is, those
who dwell in heaven.*7And the beast was allowed to wage war
against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And he was given
authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and
nation. 8And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the
beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book
of Life that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered before the
world was made.*

9Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.

10Anyone who is destined for prison will be taken to prison.
Anyone destined to die by the sword will die by the sword.

This means that God’s holy people must endure persecution
patiently and remain faithful.

THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH

11Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth. He had two
horns like those of a lamb, but he spoke with the voice of a dragon.
12He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required
all the earth and its people to worship the first beast, whose fatal
wound had been healed. 13He did astounding miracles, even making
fire flash down to earth from the sky while everyone was watching.
14And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of
the first beast, he deceived all the people who belong to this world.
He ordered the people to make a great statue of the first beast, who
was fatally wounded and then came back to life. 15He was then
permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the
statue of the beast commanded that anyone refusing to worship it
must die.

16He required everyone—small and great, rich and poor, free and
slave—to be given a mark on the right hand or on the forehead.
17And no one could buy or sell anything without that mark, which
was either the name of the beast or the number representing his
name. 18Wisdom is needed here. Let the one with understanding
solve the meaning of the number of the beast, for it is the number
of a man.* His number is 666.*

MOUNT ZION

Revelation 14

THE LAMB AND THE 144,000

1Then I saw the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him were
144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their
foreheads. 2And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of mighty
ocean waves or the rolling of loud thunder. It was like the sound of
many harpists playing together.

3This great choir sang a wonderful new song in front of the throne
of God and before the four living beings and the twenty-four elders.
No one could learn this song except the 144,000 who had been
redeemed from the earth. 4They have kept themselves as pure as
virgins,* following the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been
purchased from among the people on the earth as a special offering*
to God and to the Lamb. 5They have told no lies; they are without
blame.

THE THREE ANGELS

6And I saw another angel flying through the sky, carrying the
eternal Good News to proclaim to the people who belong to this
world—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. 7"Fear God,"
he shouted. "Give glory to him. For the time has come when he will
sit as judge. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea,
and all the springs of water."

8Then another angel followed him through the sky, shouting,
"Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen—because she made all
the nations of the world drink the wine of her passionate
immorality."

9Then a third angel followed them, shouting, "Anyone who

worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand 10must drink the wine of God's anger. It has been poured full strength into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. 11The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name."

12This means that God's holy people must endure persecution patiently, obeying his commands and maintaining their faith in Jesus.

13And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from their hard work; for their good deeds follow them!"

THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH

14Then I saw a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was someone like the Son of Man.* He had a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand.

15Then another angel came from the Temple and shouted to the one sitting on the cloud, "Swing the sickle, for the time of harvest has come; the crop on earth is ripe." 16So the one sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the whole earth was harvested.

17After that, another angel came from the Temple in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. 18Then another angel, who had power to destroy with fire, came from the altar. He shouted to the angel with the sharp sickle, "Swing your sickle now to gather the clusters of grapes from the vines of the earth, for they are ripe for judgment." 19So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and loaded the grapes

into the great winepress of God's wrath. 20The grapes were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress in a stream about 180 miles* long and as high as a horse's bridle.

SONGS REVELATION 15:1-4

Revelation 15

THE SONG OF MOSES AND OF THE LAMB

1Then I saw in heaven another marvelous event of great significance. Seven angels were holding the seven last plagues, which would bring God's wrath to completion. 2I saw before me what seemed to be a glass sea mixed with fire. And on it stood all the people who had been victorious over the beast and his statue and the number representing his name. They were all holding harps that God had given them. 3And they were singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your works, O Lord God, the Almighty.

Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations.*

4Who will not fear you, Lord, and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous
deeds have been revealed."

THE SEVEN BOWLS OF THE SEVEN PLAGUES

5Then I looked and saw that the Temple in heaven, God's
Tabernacle, was thrown wide open. 6The seven angels who were
holding the seven plagues came out of the Temple. They were
clothed in spotless white linen* with gold sashes across their chests.
7Then one of the four living beings handed each of the seven angels
a gold bowl filled with the wrath of God, who lives forever and
ever. 8The Temple was filled with smoke from God's glory and
power. No one could enter the Temple until the seven angels had
completed pouring out the seven plagues.

Revelation 16

1Then I heard a mighty voice from the Temple say to the seven
angels, "Go your ways and pour out on the earth the seven bowls
containing God's wrath."

2So the first angel left the Temple and poured out his bowl on the
earth, and horrible, malignant sores broke out on everyone who had
the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue.

3Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it
became like the blood of a corpse. And everything in the sea died.

4Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs,
and they became blood. 5And I heard the angel who had authority
over all water saying, "You are just, O Holy One, who is and who
always was, because you have sent these judgments.

6Since they shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets,
you have given them blood to drink.
It is their just reward."

7And I heard a voice from the altar,* saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just."

8Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, causing it to scorch everyone with its fire. 9Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who had control over all these plagues. They did not repent of their sins and turn to God and give him glory.

10Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. His subjects ground their teeth* in anguish, 11and they cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they did not repent of their evil deeds and turn to God.

12Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates River, and it dried up so that the kings from the east could march their armies toward the west without hindrance. 13And I saw three evil* spirits that looked like frogs leap from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. 14They are demonic spirits who work miracles and go out to all the rulers of the world to gather them for battle against the Lord on that great judgment day of God the Almighty.

15"Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed."

16And the demonic spirits gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place with the Hebrew name *Armageddon*.*

17Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. And a
mighty shout came from the throne in the Temple, saying, “It is
finished!” 18Then the thunder crashed and rolled, and lightning
flashed. And a great earthquake struck—the worst since people
were placed on the earth. 19The great city of Babylon split into three
sections, and the cities of many nations fell into heaps of rubble. So
God remembered all of Babylon’s sins, and he made her drink the
cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath. 20And every
island disappeared, and all the mountains were leveled. 21There was
a terrible hailstorm, and hailstones weighing as much as seventy-
five pounds* fell from the sky onto the people below. They cursed
God because of the terrible plague of the hailstorm.

Revelation 17

THE GREAT PROSTITUTE

1One of the seven angels who had poured out the seven bowls came
over and spoke to me. “Come with me,” he said, “and I will show
you the judgment that is going to come on the great prostitute, who
rules over many waters. 2The kings of the world have committed
adultery with her, and the people who belong to this world have
been made drunk by the wine of her immorality.”

3So the angel took me in the Spirit* into the wilderness. There I saw
a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that had seven heads and ten
horns, and blasphemies against God were written all over it. 4The
woman wore purple and scarlet clothing and beautiful jewelry
made of gold and precious gems and pearls. In her hand she held a
gold goblet full of obscenities and the impurities of her immorality.
5A mysterious name was written on her forehead: “Babylon the
Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World.” 6I
could see that she was drunk—drunk with the blood of God’s holy
people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete
amazement.

7“Why are you so amazed?” the angel asked. “I will tell you the
mystery of this woman and of the beast with seven heads and ten
horns on which she sits. 8The beast you saw was once alive but isn’t
now. And yet he will soon come up out of the bottomless pit* and
go to eternal destruction. And the people who belong to this world,
whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world
was made, will be amazed at the reappearance of this beast who
had died.

9“This calls for a mind with understanding: The seven heads of the
beast represent the seven hills where the woman rules. They also
represent seven kings. 10Five kings have already fallen, the sixth
now reigns, and the seventh is yet to come, but his reign will be
brief.

11“The scarlet beast that was, but is no longer, is the eighth king. He
is like the other seven, and he, too, is headed for destruction. 12The
ten horns of the beast are ten kings who have not yet risen to
power. They will be appointed to their kingdoms for one brief
moment to reign with the beast. 13They will all agree to give him
their power and authority. 14Together they will go to war against
the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them because he is Lord of all
lords and King of all kings. And his called and chosen and faithful
ones will be with him.”

15Then the angel said to me, “The waters where the prostitute is
ruling represent masses of people of every nation and language.
16The scarlet beast and his ten horns all hate the prostitute. They
will strip her naked, eat her flesh, and burn her remains with fire.
17For God has put a plan into their minds, a plan that will carry out
his purposes. They will agree to give their authority to the scarlet
beast, and so the words of God will be fulfilled. 18And this woman
you saw in your vision represents the great city that rules over the
kings of the world.”

Revelation 18

THE FALL OF BABYLON

1After all this I saw another angel come down from heaven with
great authority, and the earth grew bright with his splendor. 2He
gave a mighty shout: “Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen!

She has become a home for demons.
She is a hideout for every foul* spirit, a hideout for every foul
vulture and every foul and dreadful animal.*

3For all the nations have fallen*
because of the wine of her passionate immorality.
The kings of the world have committed adultery with her.
Because of her desires for extravagant luxury, the merchants of the
world have grown rich.”

4Then I heard another voice calling from heaven, “Come away from
her, my people.

Do not take part in her sins, or you will be punished with her.

5For her sins are piled as high as heaven, and God remembers her
evil deeds.

6Do to her as she has done to others.
Double her penalty* for all her evil deeds.
She brewed a cup of terror for others, so brew twice as much* for
her.

7She glorified herself and lived in luxury, so match it now with
torment and sorrow.
She boasted in her heart, ‘I am queen on my throne.
I am no helpless widow, and I have no reason to mourn.’

8Therefore, these plagues will overtake her in a single day— death
and mourning and famine.
She will be completely consumed by fire, for the Lord God who
judges her is mighty.”

9And the kings of the world who committed adultery with her and

enjoyed her great luxury will mourn for her as they see the smoke rising from her charred remains. 10They will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will cry out, “How terrible, how terrible for you, O Babylon, you great city!

In a single moment God’s judgment came on you.”

11The merchants of the world will weep and mourn for her, for there is no one left to buy their goods. 12She bought great quantities of gold, silver, jewels, and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet cloth; things made of fragrant thyine wood, ivory goods, and objects made of expensive wood; and bronze, iron, and marble. 13She also bought cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, wagons, and bodies—that is, human slaves.

14“The fancy things you loved so much are gone,” they cry.
“All your luxuries and splendor are gone forever, never to be yours again.”

15The merchants who became wealthy by selling her these things will stand at a distance, terrified by her great torment. They will weep and cry out,

16“How terrible, how terrible for that great city!
She was clothed in finest purple and scarlet linens, decked out with gold and precious stones and pearls!

17In a single moment all the wealth of the city is gone!”

And all the captains of the merchant ships and their passengers and sailors and crews will stand at a distance. 18They will cry out as they watch the smoke ascend, and they will say, “Where is there another city as great as this?” 19And they will weep and throw dust on their heads to show their grief. And they will cry out, “How terrible, how terrible for that great city!

The shipowners became wealthy by transporting her great wealth on the seas.
In a single moment it is all gone.”

20Rejoice over her fate, O heaven and people of God and apostles
and prophets!
For at last God has judged her for your sakes.

21Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a huge
millstone. He threw it into the ocean and shouted, “Just like this,
the great city Babylon will be thrown down with violence and will
never be found again.

22The sound of harps, singers, flutes, and trumpets will never be
heard in you again.
No craftsmen and no trades will ever be found in you again.
The sound of the mill will never be heard in you again.

23The light of a lamp will never shine in you again.
The happy voices of brides and grooms will never be heard in you
again.
For your merchants were the greatest in the world, and you
deceived the nations with your sorceries.

24In your* streets flowed the blood of the prophets and of God’s holy
people and the blood of people slaughtered all over the world.”

Revelation 19

SONGS OF VICTORY IN HEAVEN

1After this, I heard what sounded like a vast crowd in heaven
shouting, “Praise the LORD!*

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.

2His judgments are true and just.
He has punished the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with
her immorality.
He has avenged the murder of his servants.”

3And again their voices rang out: “Praise the LORD!

The smoke from that city ascends forever and ever!”

4Then the twenty-four elders and the four living beings fell down
and worshiped God, who was sitting on the throne. They cried out,
“Amen! Praise the LORD!”

5And from the throne came a voice that said, “Praise our God, all
his servants, all who fear him, from the least to the greatest.”

WEDDINGS REVELATION 19:6-9

6Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a vast crowd or
the roar of mighty ocean waves or the crash of loud thunder:
“Praise the LORD!

For the Lord our God,* the Almighty, reigns.

7Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him.
For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his
bride has prepared herself.

8She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.”
For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people.

9And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are
invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” And he added, “These
are true words that come from God.”

10Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, “No, don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers and sisters* who testify about their faith in Jesus. Worship only God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus.*”

THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE

11Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. 12His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. 13He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. 14The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. 15From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. 16On his robe at his thigh* was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

17Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, shouting to the vultures flying high in the sky: “Come! Gather together for the great banquet God has prepared. 18Come and eat the flesh of kings, generals, and strong warriors; of horses and their riders; and of all humanity, both free and slave, small and great.”

19Then I saw the beast and the kings of the world and their armies gathered together to fight against the one sitting on the horse and his army. 20And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—miracles that deceived all who had accepted the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. 21Their entire army was killed by the sharp sword that came from the mouth of the one riding the white horse. And the vultures all gorged

themselves on the dead bodies.

DEMONS REVELATION 20:1-10

Revelation 20

THE THOUSAND YEARS

1Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the
bottomless pit* and a heavy chain in his hand. 2He seized the
dragon—that old serpent, who is the devil, Satan—and bound him
in chains for a thousand years. 3The angel threw him into the
bottomless pit, which he then shut and locked so Satan could not
deceive the nations anymore until the thousand years were finished.
Afterward he must be released for a little while.

4Then I saw thrones, and the people sitting on them had been given
the authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been
beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for proclaiming the
word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his statue, nor
accepted his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They all came
to life again, and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5This is the first resurrection. (The rest of the dead did not come
back to life until the thousand years had ended.) 6Blessed and holy
are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second
death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ

and will reign with him a thousand years.

THE DEFEAT OF SATAN

7When the thousand years come to an end, Satan will be let out of
his prison. 8He will go out to deceive the nations—called Gog and
Magog—in every corner of the earth. He will gather them together
for battle—a mighty army, as numberless as sand along the
seashore. 9And I saw them as they went up on the broad plain of the
earth and surrounded God's people and the beloved city. But fire
from heaven came down on the attacking armies and consumed
them.

10Then the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery
lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet.
There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

11And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth
and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. 12I
saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne.
And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the
dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in
the books. 13The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave*
gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds.
14Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This
lake of fire is the second death. 15And anyone whose name was not
found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

THE FUTURE REVELATION 21:1-8

JERUSALEM

Revelation 21

THE NEW JERUSALEM

1Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and

the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. 2And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

3I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.*4He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

5And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” 6And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. 7All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

8“But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

9Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

10So he took me in the Spirit* to a great, high mountain, and he showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. 11It shone with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious stone—like jasper as clear as crystal. 12The city wall was broad and high, with twelve gates guarded by twelve angels. And the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were written on the gates. 13There were three gates on each side—east, north, south, and west. 14The wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were written

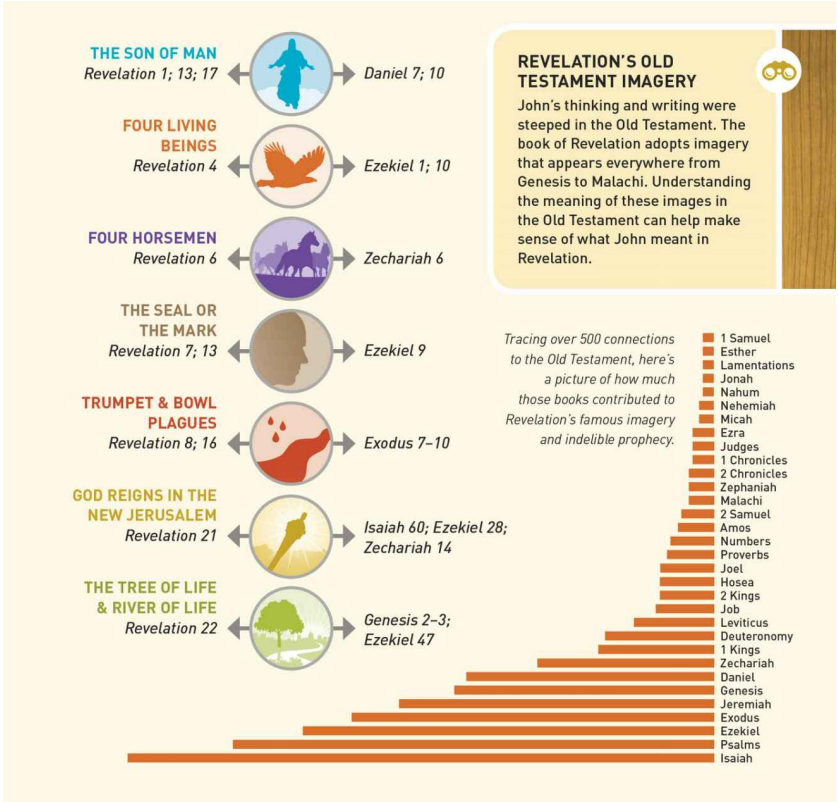
the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15The angel who talked to me held in his hand a gold measuring
stick to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16When he
measured it, he found it was a square, as wide as it was long. In
fact, its length and width and height were each 1,400 miles.*17Then
he measured the walls and found them to be 216 feet thick*
(according to the human standard used by the angel).

18The wall was made of jasper, and the city was pure gold, as clear
as glass. 19The wall of the city was built on foundation stones inlaid
with twelve precious stones:* the first was jasper, the second
sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20the fifth onyx, the
sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth
topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth
amethyst.

21The twelve gates were made of pearls—each gate from a single
pearl! And the main street was pure gold, as clear as glass.

22I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the
Lamb are its temple. 23And the city has no need of sun or moon, for
the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. 24The
nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter
the city in all their glory. 25Its gates will never be closed at the end
of day because there is no night there. 26And all the nations will
bring their glory and honor into the city. 27Nothing evil* will be
allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and
dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's
Book of Life.



REVELATION'S OLD TESTAMENT IMAGERY

Revelation 22

1Then the angel showed me a river with the water of life, clear as
crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2It flowed
down the center of the main street. On each side of the river grew a
tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit,* with a fresh crop each
month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations.

3No longer will there be a curse upon anything. For the throne of
God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship
him. 4And they will see his face, and his name will be written on
their foreheads. 5And there will be no night there—no need for

lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

6Then the angel said to me, “Everything you have heard and seen is trustworthy and true. The Lord God, who inspires his prophets,* has sent his angel to tell his servants what will happen soon.*”

JESUS IS COMING

7"Look, I am coming soon! Blessed are those who obey the words of prophecy written in this book.*"

8I, John, am the one who heard and saw all these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. 9But he said, "No, don't worship me. I am

a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this book. Worship only God!”

10Then he instructed me, “Do not seal up the prophetic words in this book, for the time is near. 11Let the one who is doing harm continue to do harm; let the one who is vile continue to be vile; let the one who is righteous continue to live righteously; let the one who is holy continue to be holy.”

12“Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. 13I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

14Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. 15Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie.

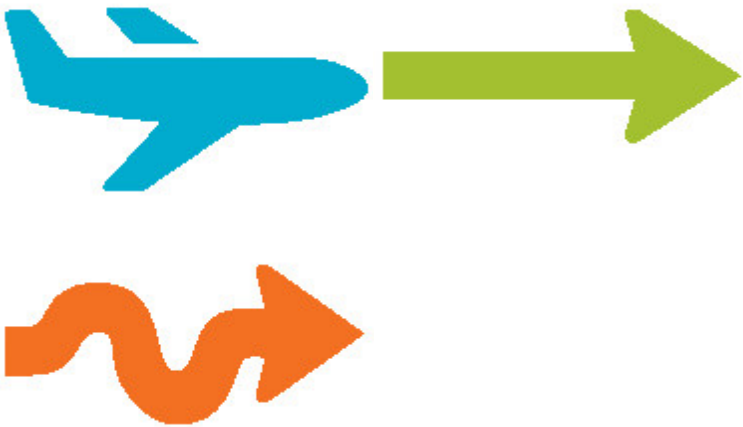
16“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne.* I am the bright morning star.”

17The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” Let anyone who hears this say, “Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life. 18And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. 19And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

20He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon!”

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

21May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people.*



NLT

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Samuel

2 Samuel

1 Kings

2 Kings

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Ezra

Nehemiah

Esther

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Ezekiel

Daniel

Hosea

Joel

Amos

Obadiah

Jonah

Micah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts

Romans

1 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

Galatians

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

1 Thessalonians

2 Thessalonians

1 Timothy

2 Timothy

Titus

Philemon

Hebrews

James

1 Peter

2 Peter

1 John

2 John

3 John

Jude

Revelation

NLT Text Notes

Genesis Text Notes

Exodus Text Notes

Leviticus Text Notes

Numbers Text Notes

Deuteronomy Text Notes

Joshua Text Notes

Judges Text Notes

Ruth Text Notes

1 Samuel Text Notes

2 Samuel Text Notes

1 Kings Text Notes

2 Kings Text Notes

1 Chronicles Text Notes

2 Chronicles Text Notes

Ezra Text Notes

Nehemiah Text Notes

Esther Text Notes

Job Text Notes

Psalms Text Notes

Proverbs Text Notes

Ecclesiastes Text Notes

Song of Songs Text Notes

Isaiah Text Notes

Jeremiah Text Notes

Lamentations Text Notes

Ezekiel Text Notes

Daniel Text Notes

Hosea Text Notes

Joel Text Notes

Amos Text Notes

Obadiah Text Notes

Jonah Text Notes

Micah Text Notes

Nahum Text Notes

Habakkuk Text Notes

Zephaniah Text Notes

Haggai Text Notes

Zechariah Text Notes

Malachi Text Notes

Matthew Text Notes

Mark Text Notes

Luke Text Notes

John Text Notes

Acts Text Notes

Romans Text Notes

1 Corinthians Text Notes

2 Corinthians Text Notes

Galatians Text Notes

Ephesians Text Notes

Philippians Text Notes

Colossians Text Notes

1 Thessalonians Text Notes

2 Thessalonians Text Notes

1 Timothy Text Notes

2 Timothy Text Notes

Titus Text Notes

Philemon Text Notes

Hebrews Text Notes

James Text Notes

1 Peter Text Notes

2 Peter Text Notes

1 John Text Notes

2 John Text Notes

3 John Text Notes

Jude Text Notes

Revelation Text Notes

Genesis Text Notes **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50**

GENESIS 1:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*__Gen 1:1__ Or *In the beginning when God created the heavens and the*

earth, . . . Or *When God began to create the heavens and the earth, . . .*

*Gen 1:26a Or *man;* Hebrew reads *adam.*

*Gen 1:26b As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *all the earth.*

*Gen 1:27 Or *the man;* Hebrew reads *ha-adam.*

GENESIS 2:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 2:2 Or *ceased;* also in 2:3.

*Gen 2:6 Or *mist.*

*Gen 2:19 Or *Adam,* and so throughout the chapter.

*Gen 2:21 Or *took a part of the man's side.*

GENESIS 3:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 3:8 Or *Adam,* and so throughout the chapter.

*Gen 3:15 Or *bruise;* also in 3:15b.

*Gen 3:16 Or *And though you will have desire for your husband, / he will rule over you.*

*Gen 3:20 *Eve* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “to give life.”

*Gen 3:22 Or *the man;* Hebrew reads *ha-adam.*

GENESIS 4:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 4:1a Or *the man;* also in 4:25.

*Gen 4:1b Or *I have acquired. Cain* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “produce” or “acquire.”

*Gen 4:8 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text lacks *“Let’s go out into the fields.”*

*Gen 4:13 Or *My sin.*

*Gen 4:16 *Nod* means “wandering.”

*Gen 4:18 Or *the ancestor of,* and so throughout the verse.

*Gen 4:25 *Seth* probably means “granted”; the name may also mean “appointed.”

GENESIS 5:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 5:1 Or *man;* Hebrew reads *adam;* similarly in 5:2.

*Gen 5:6 Or *the ancestor of;* also in 5:9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 25.

*Gen 5:7 Or *the birth of this ancestor of;* also in 5:10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26.

*Gen 5:29 *Noah* sounds like a Hebrew term that can mean “relief” or “comfort.”

GENESIS 6:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 6:2 Hebrew *daughters of men;* also in 6:4.

*Gen 6:3 Greek version reads *will not remain in.*

*Gen 6:14a Traditionally rendered *an ark*.

*Gen 6:14b Or *gopher wood*.

*Gen 6:15 Hebrew *300 cubits* [138 meters] *long, 50 cubits* [23 meters] *wide, and 30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *high*.

*Gen 6:16 Hebrew *an opening of 1 cubit* [46 centimeters].

GENESIS 7:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 7:2 Hebrew *of each clean animal;* similarly in 7:8.

*Gen 7:20 Hebrew *15 cubits* [6.9 meters].

GENESIS 8:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 8:4 Hebrew *on the seventeenth day of the seventh month;* see 7:11.

*Gen 8:5 Hebrew *On the first day of the tenth month;* see 7:11 and note on 8:4.

*Gen 8:13 Hebrew *On the first day of the first month;* see 7:11.

*Gen 8:14 Hebrew *The twenty-seventh day of the second month arrived;* see note on 8:13.

*Gen 8:20 Hebrew *every clean animal and every clean bird.*

GENESIS 9:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 9:6 Or *man;* Hebrew reads *ha-adam.*

*Gen 9:27 Hebrew *May he live in the tents of Shem.*

GENESIS 10:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 10:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 1:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Dodanim.*

*Gen 10:9 Hebrew *a great hunter before the LORD;* also in 10:9b.

*Gen 10:10 Hebrew *Shinar.*

*Gen 10:11 Or *From that land Assyria went out.*

*Gen 10:14 Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, and Caphtorites.* Compare Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7.

*Gen 10:15 Hebrew *ancestor of Heth.*

*Gen 10:21 Or *Shem, whose older brother was Japheth.*

*Gen 10:24 Greek version reads *Arphaxad was the father of Cainan, Cainan was the father of Shelah.* Compare Luke 3:36.

GENESIS 11:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 11:2 Hebrew *Shinar.*

*Gen 11:9 Or *Babylon. Babel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "confusion."

*Gen 11:10 Or *the ancestor of;* also in 11:12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24.

*Gen 11:11 Or *the birth of this ancestor of;* also in 11:13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25.

*Gen 11:12-13 Greek version reads 12*When Arphaxad was 135 years*

old, he became the father of Cainan. 13*After the birth of Cainan, Arphaxad lived another 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan was 130 years old, he became the father of Shelah. After the birth of Shelah, Cainan lived another 330 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died.* Compare Luke 3:35-36.

*Gen 11:32 Some ancient versions read *145 years;* compare 11:26 and 12:4.

GENESIS 12:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 12:7 Hebrew *seed.*

GENESIS 13:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 13:15 Hebrew *seed;* also in 13:16.

GENESIS 14:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 14:1 Hebrew *Shinar;* also in 14:9.

*Gen 14:3 Hebrew *Salt Sea.*

*Gen 14:8 Hebrew *Siddim Valley* (see 14:3); also in 14:10.

*Gen 14:18 Hebrew *El-Elyon;* also in 14:19, 20, 22.

GENESIS 15:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 15:18 Hebrew *the river of Egypt,* referring either to an eastern branch of the Nile River or to the Brook of Egypt in the Sinai (see Num 34:5).

GENESIS 16:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 16:13 Hebrew *El-roi.*

GENESIS 17:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 17:5 *Abram* means "exalted father"; *Abraham* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "father of many."

*Gen 17:7 Hebrew *seed;* also in 17:7b, 8, 9, 10, 19.

*Gen 17:15 *Sarai* and *Sarah* both mean "princess"; the change in spelling may reflect the difference in dialect between Ur and Canaan.

*Gen 17:19 *Isaac* means “he laughs.”

GENESIS 18:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 18:6 Hebrew *3 seahs,* about half a bushel or 22 liters.

GENESIS 19:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 19:10 Hebrew *men;* also in 19:12, 16.

*Gen 19:37 *Moab* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “from father.”

*Gen 19:38 *Ben-ammi* means “son of my kinsman.”

GENESIS 20:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 20:16 Hebrew *1,000 [shekels] of silver,* about 25 pounds or 11.4 kilograms in weight.

GENESIS 21:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 21:6 The name *Isaac* means “he laughs.”

*Gen 21:9 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *of her son, Isaac.*

*Gen 21:16 Hebrew *a bowshot.*

*Gen 21:33 Hebrew *El-Olam.*

GENESIS 22:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 22:17 Hebrew *seed;* also in 22:17b, 18.

GENESIS 23:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 23:15 Hebrew *400 shekels,* about 10 pounds or 4.6 kilograms in weight; also in 23:16.

GENESIS 24:1-67 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 24:7 Hebrew *seed;* also in 24:60.

*Gen 24:22 Hebrew *a gold nose-ring weighing a beka* [0.2 ounces or 6 grams] *and two gold bracelets weighing 10 [shekels]* [4 ounces or 114 grams].

GENESIS 25:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 25:18 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Gen 25:25 *Esau* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “hair.”

*Gen 25:26 *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew words for “heel” and “deceiver.”

GENESIS 26:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 26:3 Hebrew *seed;* also in 26:4, 24.

GENESIS 27:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 27:36 *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew words for “heel” and “deceiver.”

GENESIS 28:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 28:3 Hebrew *El-Shaddai.*

*Gen 28:4 Hebrew *seed;* also in 28:13, 14.

GENESIS 29:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 29:17 Or *Leah had dull eyes,* or *Leah had soft eyes.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Gen 29:32 *Reuben* means "Look, a son!" It also sounds like the Hebrew for "He has seen my misery."

*Gen 29:33 *Simeon* probably means "one who hears."

*Gen 29:34 *Levi* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "being attached" or "feeling affection for."

*Gen 29:35 *Judah* is related to the Hebrew term for "praise."

GENESIS 30:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 30:3 Hebrew *bear children on my knees.*

*Gen 30:6 *Dan* means "he judged" or "he vindicated."

*Gen 30:8 *Naphtali* means “my struggle.”

*Gen 30:11 *Gad* means “good fortune.”

*Gen 30:13 *Asher* means “happy.”

*Gen 30:18 *Issachar* sounds like a Hebrew term that means “reward.”

*Gen 30:20 *Zebulun* probably means “honor.”

*Gen 30:24 *Joseph* means “may he add.”

*Gen 30:27 Or *I have learned by divination that.*

GENESIS 31:1-55 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 31:13 As in Greek version and an Aramaic Targum; Hebrew reads *the God of Bethel.*

*Gen 31:21 Hebrew *the river.*

*Gen 31:42 Or *and the Fear of Isaac.*

*Gen 31:53 Or *the Fear of his father, Isaac.*

*Gen 31:55 Verse 31:55 is numbered 32:1 in Hebrew text.

GENESIS 32:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 32:1 Verses 32:1-32 are numbered 32:2-33 in Hebrew text.

*Gen 32:2 *Mahanaim* means "two camps."

*Gen 32:28 *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew words for "heel" and "deceiver." *Israel* means "God fights."

*Gen 32:31 Hebrew *Penuel,* a variant spelling of Peniel.

GENESIS 33:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 33:19 Hebrew *100 kesitahs;* the value or weight of the kesitah is no longer known.

*Gen 33:20 *El-Elohe-Israel* means "God, the God of Israel."

GENESIS 34:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 34:7 Hebrew *a disgraceful thing in Israel.*

GENESIS 35:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 35:10 *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew words for “heel” and “deceiver.” *Israel* means “God fights.”

*Gen 35:21 Hebrew *Israel;* also in 35:22a. The names “Jacob” and “Israel” are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

GENESIS 36:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 36:26 Hebrew *Dishan,* a variant spelling of Dishon; compare 36:21, 28.

*Gen 36:31 Or *before an Israelite king ruled over them.*

*Gen 36:39 As in some Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Syriac version (see also 1 Chr 1:50); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Hadar*.

GENESIS 37:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 37:3a Hebrew *Israel;* also in 37:13. See note on 35:21.

*Gen 37:3b Traditionally rendered *a coat of many colors.* The exact meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Gen 37:26 Hebrew *cover his blood.*

*Gen 37:28 Hebrew *20 [shekels],* about 8 ounces or 228 grams in weight.

*Gen 37:35 Hebrew *go down to Sheol.*

*Gen 37:36 Hebrew *the Medanites.* The relationship between the Midianites and Medanites is unclear; compare 37:28. See also 25:2.

GENESIS 38:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 38:29 *Perez* means “breaking out.”

*Gen 38:30 *Zerah* means “scarlet” or “brightness.”

GENESIS 39:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

GENESIS 40:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 40:20 Hebrew *He lifted up the head of.*

GENESIS 41:1-57 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 41:45a *Zaphenath-paneah* probably means "God speaks and lives."

*Gen 41:45b Greek version reads *of Heliopolis;* also in 41:50.

*Gen 41:51 *Manasseh* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "causing to forget."

*Gen 41:52 *Ephraim* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "fruitful."

GENESIS 42:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 42:5 Hebrew *Israel's.* See note on 35:21.

*Gen 42:38 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

GENESIS 43:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 43:6 Hebrew *Israel;* also in 43:11. See note on 35:21.

*Gen 43:14 Hebrew *El-Shaddai.*

GENESIS 44:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 44:5 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks this phrase.

*Gen 44:29 Hebrew *to Sheol;* also in 44:31.

GENESIS 45:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 45:7 Or *and to save you with an extraordinary rescue.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Gen 45:8 Hebrew *a father.*

*Gen 45:21 Hebrew *Israel;* also in 45:28. See note on 35:21.

*Gen 45:22 Hebrew *300 [shekels],* about 7.5 pounds or 3.4 kilograms in weight.

GENESIS 46:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 46:1 Hebrew *Israel;* also in 46:29, 30. See note on 35:21.

*Gen 46:3 Hebrew *I am El.*

*Gen 46:13a As in Syriac version and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also 1 Chr 7:1); Hebrew reads *Puvah.*

*Gen 46:13b As in some Greek manuscripts and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Num 26:24; 1 Chr 7:1); Hebrew reads *Iob.*

*Gen 46:16 As in Greek version and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Num 26:15); Hebrew reads *Ziphion.*

*Gen 46:20 Greek version reads *of Heliopolis.*

*Gen 46:27a Greek version reads *nine sons,* probably including Joseph's grandsons through Ephraim and Manasseh (see 1 Chr 7:14-20).

*Gen 46:27b Greek version reads *seventy-five;* see note on Exod 1:5.

GENESIS 47:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 47:21 As in Greek version and Samaritan Pentateuch; Hebrew reads *he moved them all into the towns.*

*Gen 47:29 Hebrew *Israel;* also in 47:31b. See note on 35:21.

*Gen 47:31 Greek version reads *and Israel bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff.* Compare Heb 11:21.

GENESIS 48:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 48:2 Hebrew *Israel;* also in 48:8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 21. See note on 35:21.

*Gen 48:3 Hebrew *El-Shaddai.*

*Gen 48:4 Hebrew *seed;* also in 48:19.

*Gen 48:7 Hebrew *Paddan,* referring to Paddan-aram; compare Gen 35:9.

*Gen 48:22 Or *an extra ridge of land.* The meaning of the Hebrew is

uncertain.

GENESIS 49:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 49:10a Hebrew *from between his feet.*

*Gen 49:10b Or *until tribute is brought to him and the peoples obey;* traditionally rendered *until Shiloh comes.*

*Gen 49:14 Or *sheepfolds,* or *hearths.*

*Gen 49:22 Or *Joseph is a fruitful tree, a fruitful tree beside a spring. His branches reach over the wall.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Gen 49:26 Or *of the ancient mountains.*

GENESIS 50:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gen 50:2 Hebrew *Israel.* See note on 35:21.

*Gen 50:11 *Abel-mizraim* means “mourning of the Egyptians.”

*Gen 50:23 Hebrew *who were born on Joseph's knees.*

Exodus Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40

EXODUS 1:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 1:5 Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read *seventy-five;* see notes on Gen 46:27.

*Exod 1:10 Or *will take the country.*

*Exod 1:16 Hebrew *look upon the two stones;* perhaps the reference is to a birthstool.

EXODUS 2:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 2:10 *Moses* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "to lift out."

*Exod 2:22 *Gershom* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "a foreigner there."

*Exod 2:25 Or *and acknowledged his obligation to help them.*

EXODUS 3:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 3:1a Moses' father-in-law went by two names, Jethro and Reuel.

*Exod 3:1b Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*Exod 3:6 Greek version reads *your fathers.*

*Exod 3:14 Or *I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE.*

*Exod 3:15 *Yahweh* (also in 3:16) is a transliteration of the proper name *YHWH* that is sometimes rendered "Jehovah"; in this translation it is usually rendered "the LORD" (note the use of small capitals).

*Exod 3:19 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *will not let you go, not by a mighty hand.*

EXODUS 4:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 4:6 Or *with leprosy.* The Hebrew word used here can describe various skin diseases.

*Exod 4:25 The Hebrew word for “feet” may refer here to the male sex organ.

EXODUS 5:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

EXODUS 6:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 6:2 *Yahweh* is a transliteration of the proper name *YHWH* that is sometimes rendered “Jehovah”; in this translation it is usually rendered “the LORD” (note the use of small capitals).

*Exod 6:3 *El-Shaddai,* which means “God Almighty,” is the name for God used in Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3.

*Exod 6:12 Hebrew *I have uncircumcised lips;* also in 6:30.

EXODUS 7:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 7:9 Hebrew *tannin,* which elsewhere refers to a sea monster. Greek version translates it “dragon.”

*Exod 7:14 Hebrew *heavy*.

EXODUS 8:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 8:1 Verses 8:1-4 are numbered 7:26-29 in Hebrew text.

*Exod 8:5 Verses 8:5-32 are numbered 8:1-28 in Hebrew text.

*Exod 8:15 Hebrew *made his heart heavy;* also in 8:32.

*Exod 8:23 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *I will set redemption between.*

EXODUS 9:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 9:7 Hebrew *heavy.*

*Exod 9:14 Hebrew *on your heart.*

*Exod 9:16 Greek version reads *to display my power in you;* compare Rom 9:17.

*Exod 9:34 Hebrew *made his heart heavy.*

EXODUS 10:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 10:1 Hebrew *have made his heart and his officials' hearts heavy.*

*Exod 10:19 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

EXODUS 11:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

EXODUS 12:1-51 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 12:11 Hebrew *Bind up your loins.*

*Exod 12:37 Or *fighting men;* Hebrew reads *men on foot.*

*Exod 12:40 Samaritan Pentateuch reads *in Canaan and Egypt;* Greek version reads *in Egypt and Canaan.*

EXODUS 13:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 13:4 Hebrew *On this day in the month of Abib.* This first month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of March and April.

*Exod 13:9 Or *Let it remind you always to keep the instructions of the LORD on the tip of your tongue, because with a strong hand, the LORD rescued you from Egypt.*

*Exod 13:18a Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

*Exod 13:18b Greek version reads *left Egypt in the fifth generation.*

EXODUS 14:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 14:4 Hebrew *after them.*

*Exod 14:25 As in Greek version, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Syriac version; Hebrew reads *He removed.*

EXODUS 15:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 15:3 *Yahweh* is a transliteration of the proper name *YHWH* that is sometimes rendered "Jehovah"; in this translation it is usually rendered "the LORD" (note the use of small capitals).

*Exod 15:4 Hebrew *sea of reeds;* also in 15:22.

EXODUS 16:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 16:1a The geographical name *Sin* is related to *Sinai* and should not be confused with the English word *sin.*

*Exod 16:1b The Exodus had occurred on the fifteenth day of the first month (see Num 33:3).

*Exod 16:16 Hebrew *1 omer* [2.2 liters]; also in 16:32, 33.

*Exod 16:18 Hebrew *measured it with an omer.*

*Exod 16:22 Hebrew *2 omers* [4.4 liters].

*Exod 16:31 *Manna* means "What is it?" See 16:15.

*Exod 16:34 Hebrew *He placed it in front of the Testimony;* see note on 25:16.

*Exod 16:36 Hebrew *An omer is one-tenth of an ephah.*

EXODUS 17:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 17:1 The geographical name *Sin* is related to *Sinai* and should not be confused with the English word *sin.*

*Exod 17:6 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*Exod 17:16 Or *Hands have been lifted up to the LORD's throne, and now.*

EXODUS 18:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 18:3 *Gershom* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "a foreigner there."

*Exod 18:4 *Eliezer* means "God is my helper."

EXODUS 19:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 19:1 Hebrew *In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt, on the very day,* i.e., two lunar months to the day after leaving Egypt. Compare Num 33:3.

*Exod 19:13 Or *up to the mountain.*

EXODUS 20:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 20:1 Hebrew *all these words.*

*Exod 20:6 Hebrew *for thousands of those.*

EXODUS 21:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 21:6 Or *before the judges.*

*Exod 21:17 Greek version reads *Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of.* Compare Matt 15:4; Mark 7:10.

*Exod 21:22 Or *so she has a miscarriage;* Hebrew reads *so her children come out.*

*Exod 21:28 Or *bull,* or *cow;* also in 21:29-36.

*Exod 21:32 Hebrew *30 shekels of silver,* about 12 ounces or 342 grams in weight.

EXODUS 22:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 22:1a Verse 22:1 is numbered 21:37 in Hebrew text.

*Exod 22:1b Or *bull,* or *cow;* also in 22:4, 9, 10.

*Exod 22:2 Verses 22:2-31 are numbered 22:1-30 in Hebrew text.

*Exod 22:8 Or *before the judges.*

*Exod 22:9 Or *before the judges, and the person whom the judges declare.*

*Exod 22:20 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

EXODUS 23:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 23:15 Hebrew *appointed time in the month of Abib.* This first month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of March and April.

*Exod 23:16a Or *Festival of Weeks.* This was later called the Festival of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1). It is celebrated today as Shavuot (or Shabuoth).

*Exod 23:16b Or *Festival of Ingathering.* This was later called the Festival of Shelters or Festival of Tabernacles (see Lev 23:33-36). It is celebrated today as Sukkot (or Succoth).

*Exod 23:25 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *he.*

*Exod 23:28 Often rendered *the hornet.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Exod 23:31a Hebrew *from the sea of reeds to the sea of the Philistines.*

*Exod 23:31b Hebrew *from the wilderness to the river.*

EXODUS 24:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

EXODUS 25:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 25:10 Hebrew *2.5 cubits* [115 centimeters] *long, 1.5 cubits* [69 centimeters] *wide, and 1.5 cubits high.*

*Exod 25:16 Hebrew *Place inside the Ark the Testimony;* similarly in 25:21. The Hebrew word for "testimony" refers to the terms of the LORD's covenant with Israel as written on stone tablets, and also to the covenant itself.

*Exod 25:17 Hebrew *2.5 cubits* [115 centimeters] *long and 1.5 cubits* [69 centimeters] *wide.*

*Exod 25:22 Or *Ark of the Testimony.*

*Exod 25:23 Hebrew *2 cubits* [92 centimeters] *long, 1 cubit* [46 centimeters] *wide, and 1.5 cubits* [69 centimeters] *high.*

*Exod 25:25 Hebrew *a border of a handbreadth* [8 centimeters].

*Exod 25:39 Hebrew *1 talent* [34 kilograms].

EXODUS 26:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 26:2 Hebrew *28 cubits* [12.9 meters] *long and 4 cubits* [1.8 meters] *wide.*

*Exod 26:8 Hebrew *30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *long and 4 cubits* [1.8 meters] *wide.*

*Exod 26:9 Hebrew *Double over the sixth sheet at the front.*

*Exod 26:12 Hebrew *The half sheet that is left over.*

*Exod 26:13 Hebrew *1 cubit* [46 centimeters].

*Exod 26:16 Hebrew *10 cubits* [4.6 meters] *high and 1.5 cubits* [69 centimeters] *wide.*

*Exod 26:33 Or *Ark of the Testimony;* also in 26:34.

EXODUS 27:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 27:1 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters] *wide, 5 cubits long, a square, and 3 cubits* [1.4 meters] *high.*

*Exod 27:9 Hebrew *100 cubits* [46 meters]; also in 27:11.

*Exod 27:12 Hebrew *50 cubits* [23 meters]; also in 27:13.

*Exod 27:14 Hebrew *15 cubits* [6.9 meters]; also in 27:15.

*Exod 27:16 Hebrew *20 cubits* [9.2 meters].

*Exod 27:18 Hebrew *100 cubits* [46 meters] *long and 50 by 50* [23 meters] *wide and 5 cubits* [2.3 meters] *high.*

*Exod 27:21 Hebrew *in the Tent of Meeting, outside the inner curtain that is in front of the Testimony.* See note on 25:16.

EXODUS 28:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 28:15 Hebrew *a chestpiece for decision.*

*Exod 28:16 Hebrew *1 span* [23 centimeters].

*Exod 28:17 The identification of some of these gemstones is uncertain.

*Exod 28:29 Hebrew *the chestpiece for decision;* also in 28:30. See 28:15.

*Exod 28:32 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Exod 28:43 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.*

EXODUS 29:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 29:4 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 29:10, 11, 30, 32, 42, 44.

*Exod 29:33 Or *their atonement.*

*Exod 29:36a Or *to make atonement.*

*Exod 29:36b Or *by making atonement for it;* similarly in 29:37.

*Exod 29:40 Hebrew *1/10 [of an ephah]* [2.2 liters] *of choice flour . . . 1/4 of a hin* [1 liter] *of pure oil . . . 1/4 of a hin of wine.*

EXODUS 30:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 30:2 Hebrew *1 cubit* [46 centimeters] *long and 1 cubit wide, a square, and 2 cubits* [92 centimeters] *high.*

*Exod 30:6a Or *Ark of the Testimony;* also in 30:26.

*Exod 30:6b Hebrew *that covers the Testimony;* see note on 25:16.

*Exod 30:10 Or *make atonement for;* also in 30:10b.

*Exod 30:13 Or *0.2 ounces* [6 grams].

*Exod 30:15 Or *to make atonement for your lives;* similarly in 30:16.

*Exod 30:16 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 30:18, 20, 26, 36.

*Exod 30:23 Hebrew *500 [shekels]* [5.7 kilograms] *of pure myrrh,*

250 [shekels] [2.9 kilograms] *of fragrant cinnamon, 250 [shekels] of fragrant calamus.*

*Exod 30:24a Hebrew *500 [shekels]* [5.7 kilograms] *of cassia.*

*Exod 30:24b Hebrew *1 hin* [3.8 liters] *of olive oil.*

*Exod 30:36 Hebrew *in front of the Testimony;* see note on 25:16.

EXODUS 31:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 31:7a Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

*Exod 31:7b Hebrew *the Ark of the Testimony.*

*Exod 31:18 Hebrew *the two tablets of the Testimony;* see note on 25:16.

EXODUS 32:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 32:13 Hebrew *Israel.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*Exod 32:15 Hebrew *the two tablets of the Testimony;* see note on 25:16.

*Exod 32:25 Or *out of control, and they mocked anyone who opposed them.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Exod 32:29 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *Today ordain yourselves.*

*Exod 32:30 Or *to make atonement.*

EXODUS 33:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 33:6 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*Exod 33:7 This "Tent of Meeting" is different from the Tabernacle described in chapters 26 and 36.

*Exod 33:19 *Yahweh* is a transliteration of the proper name *YHWH* that is sometimes rendered "Jehovah"; in this translation it is usually rendered "the LORD" (note the use of small capitals).

EXODUS 34:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 34:5 *Yahweh* is a transliteration of the proper name *YHWH*

that is sometimes rendered “Jehovah”; in this translation it is usually rendered “the LORD” (note the use of small capitals).

*Exod 34:6 See note on 34:5.

*Exod 34:7 Hebrew *for thousands.*

*Exod 34:18 Hebrew *appointed time in the month of Abib.* This first month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of March and April.

*Exod 34:19 As in Greek version; the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

*Exod 34:22a Hebrew *Festival of Weeks;* compare 23:16. This was later called the Festival of Pentecost. It is celebrated today as Shavuot (or Shabuoth).

*Exod 34:22b Or *Festival of Ingathering.* This was later called the Festival of Shelters or Festival of Tabernacles (see Lev 23:33-36). It is celebrated today as Sukkot (or Succoth).

*Exod 34:28a Hebrew *he.*

*Exod 34:28b Hebrew *the ten words.*

*Exod 34:29 Hebrew *the two tablets of the Testimony;* see note on 25:16.

EXODUS 35:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 35:21 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.*

EXODUS 36:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 36:8 Hebrew *he;* also in 36:16, 20, 35. See 37:1.

*Exod 36:9 Hebrew *28 cubits* [12.9 meters] *long and 4 cubits* [1.8 meters] *wide.*

*Exod 36:15 Hebrew *30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *long and 4 cubits* [1.8 meters] *wide.*

*Exod 36:21 Hebrew *10 cubits* [4.6 meters] *high and 1.5 cubits* [69 centimeters] *wide.*

EXODUS 37:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 37:1 Hebrew *2.5 cubits* [115 centimeters] *long, 1.5 cubits* [69 centimeters] *wide, and 1.5 cubits high.*

*Exod 37:6 Hebrew *2.5 cubits* [115 centimeters] *long and 1.5 cubits* [69 centimeters] *wide.*

*Exod 37:10a Hebrew *he;* also in 37:17, 25.

*Exod 37:10b Hebrew *2 cubits* [92 centimeters] *long, 1 cubit* [46 centimeters] *wide, and 1.5 cubits* [69 centimeters] *high.*

*Exod 37:12 Hebrew *a border of a handbreadth* [8 centimeters].

*Exod 37:24 Hebrew *1 talent* [34 kilograms].

*Exod 37:25 Hebrew *1 cubit* [46 centimeters] *long and 1 cubit wide, a square, and 2 cubits* [92 centimeters] *high.*

EXODUS 38:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 38:1a Hebrew *he;* also in 38:8, 9.

*Exod 38:1b Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters] *wide, 5 cubits long, a square, and 3 cubits* [1.4 meters] *high.*

*Exod 38:8 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 38:30.

*Exod 38:9 Hebrew *100 cubits* [46 meters]; also in 38:11.

*Exod 38:12 Hebrew *50 cubits* [23 meters]; also in 38:13.

*Exod 38:14 Hebrew *15 cubits* [6.9 meters]; also in 38:15.

*Exod 38:18 Hebrew *20 cubits* [9.2 meters] *long and 5 cubits* [2.3 meters] *high.*

*Exod 38:21 Hebrew *the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Testimony.*

*Exod 38:24 Hebrew *29 talents and 730 shekels* [994 kilograms]. Each shekel weighed about 0.4 ounces or 11 grams.

*Exod 38:25 Hebrew *100 talents and 1,775 shekels* [3,420 kilograms].

*Exod 38:26 Or *0.2 ounces* [6 grams].

*Exod 38:27 Hebrew *100 talents* [3,400 kilograms] *of silver, 1 talent* [34 kilograms] *for each base.*

*Exod 38:28 Hebrew *1,775 [shekels]* [20.2 kilograms].

*Exod 38:29 Hebrew *70 talents and 2,400 shekels* [2,407 kilograms].

EXODUS 39:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 39:2 Hebrew *He;* also in 39:8, 22.

*Exod 39:9 Hebrew *1 span* [23 centimeters].

*Exod 39:10 The identification of some of these gemstones is uncertain.

*Exod 39:23 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Exod 39:32 Hebrew *the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting;* also in 39:40.

*Exod 39:35 Or *Ark of the Testimony*.

EXODUS 40:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Exod 40:2a Hebrew *the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting;* also in 40:6, 29.

*Exod 40:2b Hebrew *the first day of the first month.* This day of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April.

*Exod 40:3 Or *Ark of the Testimony;* also in 40:5, 21.

*Exod 40:7 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 40:12, 22, 24, 26, 30, 32, 34, 35.

*Exod 40:20 Hebrew *He placed the Testimony;* see note on 25:16.

Leviticus Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

LEVITICUS 1:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 1:1 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 1:3, 5.

*Lev 1:3 Or *it.*

*Lev 1:4 Or *to make atonement for you.*

*Lev 1:16 Or *the crop and its contents.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

LEVITICUS 2:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

LEVITICUS 3:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 3:2 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 3:8, 13.

LEVITICUS 4:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 4:3 Hebrew *the anointed priest;* also in 4:5, 16.

*Lev 4:4 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 4:5, 7, 14, 16, 18.

*Lev 4:20 Or *will make atonement for the people;* similarly in 4:26, 31, 35.

LEVITICUS 5:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 5:6 Or *will make atonement for you for your sin;* similarly in 5:10, 13, 16, 18.

*Lev 5:11 Hebrew *1/10 of an ephah* [2.2 liters].

*Lev 5:15 Each shekel was about 0.4 ounces or 11 grams in weight.

LEVITICUS 6:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 6:1 Verses 6:1-7 are numbered 5:20-26 in Hebrew text.

*Lev 6:7 Or *will make atonement for you before the LORD.*

*Lev 6:8 Verses 6:8-30 are numbered 6:1-23 in Hebrew text.

*Lev 6:16 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 6:26, 30.

*Lev 6:20 Hebrew *1/10 of an ephah* [2.2 liters].

*Lev 6:21 The meaning of this Hebrew term is uncertain.

*Lev 6:22 Hebrew *the anointed priest.*

*Lev 6:30 Or *an offering to make atonement.*

LEVITICUS 7:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 7:7 Or *to make atonement.*

LEVITICUS 8:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 8:3 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 8:4, 31, 33, 35.

*Lev 8:15 Or *by making atonement for it;* or *that offerings for purification might be made on it.*

*Lev 8:34 Or *to make atonement for you.*

LEVITICUS 9:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 9:4 Or *cow;* also in 9:18, 19.

*Lev 9:5 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 9:23.

*Lev 9:7 Or *to make atonement for them.*

LEVITICUS 10:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 10:6 Or *by uncovering your heads.*

*Lev 10:7 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 10:9.

*Lev 10:17 Or *to make atonement for the people before the LORD.*

LEVITICUS 11:1-47 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 11:4 The identification of some of the animals, birds, and insects in this chapter is uncertain.

*Lev 11:5 Or *coney,* or *rock badger.*

LEVITICUS 12:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 12:6 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.*

*Lev 12:7 Or *to make atonement for her;* also in 12:8.

LEVITICUS 13:1-59 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 13:2a Traditionally rendered *leprosy.* The Hebrew word used throughout this passage is used to describe various skin diseases.

*Lev 13:2b Or *one of his descendants.*

*Lev 13:45 Or *and uncover their heads.*

*Lev 13:47 Traditionally rendered *leprosy.* The Hebrew term used throughout this passage is the same term used for the various skin diseases described in 13:1-46.

*Lev 13:55 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

LEVITICUS 14:1-57 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 14:2 Traditionally rendered *leprosy;* see note on 13:2a.

*Lev 14:4 Or *juniper;* also in 14:6, 49, 51.

*Lev 14:10a Hebrew *3/10 of an ephah* [6.6 liters].

*Lev 14:10b Hebrew *1 log* [0.3 liters]; also in 14:21.

*Lev 14:11 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 14:23.

*Lev 14:18 Or *will make atonement for;* similarly in 14:19, 20, 21, 29, 31, 53.

*Lev 14:21 Hebrew *1/10 of an ephah* [2.2 liters].

*Lev 14:34 Traditionally rendered *leprosy;* see note on 13:47.

*Lev 14:54 Traditionally rendered *leprosy;* see note on 13:2a.

*Lev 14:55 Traditionally rendered *leprosy;* see note on 13:47.

LEVITICUS 15:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 15:14 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 15:29.

*Lev 15:15 Or *will make atonement for;* also in 15:30.

*Lev 15:16 Hebrew *until evening;* also in 15:18.

LEVITICUS 16:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 16:6 Or *to make atonement for himself and his family;* similarly in 16:11, 17b, 24, 34.

*Lev 16:7 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 16:16, 17, 20, 23, 33.

*Lev 16:10 Or *wilderness, it will make atonement for the people.*

*Lev 16:13 Hebrew *that is above the Testimony.* The Hebrew word for "testimony" refers to the terms of the LORD's covenant with Israel as written on stone tablets, which were kept in the Ark, and also to the covenant itself.

*Lev 16:16 Or *make atonement for;* similarly in 16:17a, 18, 20, 27, 33.

*Lev 16:29a Hebrew *On the tenth day of the seventh month.* This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in September or October.

*Lev 16:29b Or *must fast;* also in 16:31.

*Lev 16:30 Or *atonement will be made for you, to purify you.*

*Lev 16:32 Or *atonement.*

LEVITICUS 17:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 17:3 Or *cow.*

*Lev 17:4a Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 17:5, 6, 9.

*Lev 17:4b Hebrew *will be guilty of blood.*

*Lev 17:7 Or *goat demons.*

*Lev 17:11 Or *to make atonement for you.*

LEVITICUS 18:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 18:17 Or *do not marry.*

LEVITICUS 19:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 19:5 Or *it.*

*Lev 19:16 Hebrew *Do not act as a merchant toward your own people.*

*Lev 19:17 Hebrew *for your brother.*

*Lev 19:21 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.*

*Lev 19:22 Or *make atonement for him.*

*Lev 19:23 Hebrew *consider it uncircumcised.*

*Lev 19:36 Hebrew *Use an honest ephah* [a dry measure] *and an honest hin* [a liquid measure].

LEVITICUS 20:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 20:9 Greek version reads *Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of.* Compare Matt 15:4; Mark 7:10.

LEVITICUS 21:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 21:10 Or *never uncover his head.*

LEVITICUS 22:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 22:4 Traditionally rendered *leprosy;* see note on 13:2a.

*Lev 22:19 Or *it.*

*Lev 22:23 Or *cow.*

LEVITICUS 23:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 23:5 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May.

*Lev 23:13a Hebrew *2/10 of an ephah* [4.4 liters]; also in 23:17.

*Lev 23:13b Hebrew *1/4 of a hin* [1 liter].

*Lev 23:21 This celebration, called the Festival of Harvest or the Festival of Weeks, was later called the Festival of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1). It is celebrated today as Shavuot (or Shabuoth).

*Lev 23:24 Hebrew *On the first day of the seventh month.* This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in September or October. This festival is celebrated today as Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year.

*Lev 23:27a Hebrew *on the tenth day of the seventh month;* see 23:24 and the note there. This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in September or October. It is celebrated today as Yom Kippur.

*Lev 23:27b Or *to fast;* similarly in 23:29, 32.

*Lev 23:28 Or *when atonement is made for you before.*

*Lev 23:34a Or *Festival of Booths,* or *Festival of Tabernacles.* This was earlier called the Festival of the Final Harvest or Festival of Ingathering (see Exod 23:16b). It is celebrated today as Sukkot (or Succoth).

*Lev 23:34b Hebrew *on the fifteenth day of the seventh month;* see 23:27a and the note there.

*Lev 23:39 Hebrew *on the fifteenth day of the seventh month.*

*Lev 23:40 Or *gather fruit from majestic trees.*

*Lev 23:41 Hebrew *the seventh month.*

LEVITICUS 24:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 24:3 Hebrew *in the Tent of Meeting, outside the inner curtain of the Testimony;* see note on 16:13.

*Lev 24:5 Hebrew *2/10 of an ephah* [4.4 liters].

*Lev 24:11 Hebrew *the Name;* also in 24:16b.

LEVITICUS 25:1-55 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 25:9 Hebrew *on the tenth day of the seventh month, on the Day of Atonement;* see 23:27a and the note there.

LEVITICUS 26:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 26:30 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

LEVITICUS 27:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lev 27:3 Or *20 ounces* [570 grams].

*Lev 27:4 Or *12 ounces* [342 grams].

*Lev 27:5 Or *A boy . . . 8 ounces* [228 grams] *of silver; a girl . . . 4 ounces* [114 grams].

*Lev 27:6 Or *A boy . . . 2 ounces* [57 grams] *of silver; a girl . . . 1.2 ounces* [34 grams].

*Lev 27:7 Or *A man . . . 6 ounces* [171 grams] *of silver; a woman . . . 4 ounces* [114 grams].

*Lev 27:16 Hebrew *50 shekels* [20 ounces or 570 grams] *of silver for a homer* [220 liters] *of barley seed.*

*Lev 27:21 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in 27:28, 29.

*Lev 27:25 Each shekel was about 0.4 ounces [11 grams] in weight.

Numbers Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

NUMBERS 1:1-54 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 1:1a Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 1:1b This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in April or May.

*Num 1:18 Hebrew *on the first day of the second month;* see 1:1.

*Num 1:20-21a In the Hebrew text, this sentence (*This is the number of men twenty years old or older who were able to go to war, as their names were listed in the records of their clans and families*) is

repeated in 1:22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42.

*Num 1:20-21b Hebrew *Israel's.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*Num 1:50 Or *Tabernacle of the Testimony;* also in 1:53.

NUMBERS 2:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 2:2 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* also in 2:17.

*Num 2:14-15 As in many Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Latin Vulgate (see also 1:14); most Hebrew manuscripts read *son of Reuel.*

NUMBERS 3:1-51 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 3:7 Hebrew *around the Tent of Meeting, doing service at the Tabernacle.*

*Num 3:8 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* also in 3:25.

*Num 3:28 Some Greek manuscripts read *8,300;* see total in 3:39.

*Num 3:38 Hebrew *toward the sunrise, in front of the Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 3:47 Hebrew *5 shekels* [2 ounces or 57 grams].

*Num 3:50 Hebrew *1,365 [shekels] of silver* [34 pounds or 15.5 kilograms].

NUMBERS 4:1-49 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 4:3 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* also in 4:4, 15, 23, 25, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47.

*Num 4:5 Or *Ark of the Testimony.*

NUMBERS 5:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 5:2 Traditionally rendered *leprosy.* The Hebrew word used here describes various skin diseases.

*Num 5:8 Or *bring a ram for atonement, which will make atonement for them.*

*Num 5:15 Hebrew *1/10 of an ephah* [2.2 liters].

*Num 5:21 Hebrew *when he causes your thigh to waste away.*

*Num 5:22 Hebrew *and your thigh to waste away.*

*Num 5:27 Hebrew *and her thigh will waste away.*

NUMBERS 6:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 6:10 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* also in 6:13, 18.

*Num 6:11 Or *make atonement for them.*

NUMBERS 7:1-89 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 7:5 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* also in 7:89.

*Num 7:13 Hebrew *silver platter weighing 130 [shekels]* [1.5 kilograms] *and a silver basin weighing 70 shekels* [800 grams]; also in 7:19, 25, 31, 37, 43, 49, 55, 61, 67, 73, 79, 85.

*Num 7:14 Hebrew *10 [shekels]* [114 grams]; also in 7:20, 26, 32, 38, 44, 50, 56, 62, 68, 74, 80, 86.

*Num 7:85 Hebrew *2,400 [shekels]* [27.6 kilograms].

*Num 7:86 Hebrew *120 [shekels]* [1.4 kilograms].

*Num 7:89 Or *Ark of the Testimony.*

NUMBERS 8:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 8:9 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* also in 8:15, 19, 22, 24, 26.

*Num 8:12 Or *to make atonement for the Levites.*

*Num 8:19 Or *make atonement for.*

*Num 8:21 Or *then made atonement for them to purify them.*

NUMBERS 9:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 9:1 The first month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of March and April.

*Num 9:3 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May.

*Num 9:11 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late April, May, or early June.

*Num 9:15 Hebrew *covered the Tabernacle, the Tent of the Testimony.*

NUMBERS 10:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 10:3 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 10:11a This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late April, May, or early June.

*Num 10:11b Or *Tabernacle of the Testimony.*

NUMBERS 11:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 11:16 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 11:24 Hebrew *the tent;* also in 11:26.

*Num 11:31 Or *there were quail about 3 feet* [2 cubits or 92 centimeters] *deep on the ground.*

*Num 11:32 Hebrew *10 homers* [2.2 kiloliters].

NUMBERS 12:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 12:4 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 12:5 Hebrew *the tent;* also in 12:10.

*Num 12:10 Or *with a skin disease.* The Hebrew word used here can describe various skin diseases.

NUMBERS 13:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 13:29 Hebrew *the sea.*

*Num 13:33 Hebrew *nephilim.*

NUMBERS 14:1-45 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 14:10 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 14:25 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

NUMBERS 15:1-41 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 15:4a Hebrew *1/10 of an ephah* [2.2 liters].

*Num 15:4b Hebrew *1/4 of a hin* [1 liter]; also in 15:5.

*Num 15:6a Hebrew *2/10 of an ephah* [4.4 liters].

*Num 15:6b Hebrew *1/3 of a hin* [1.3 liters]; also in 15:7.

*Num 15:9a Hebrew *3/10 of an ephah* [6.6 liters].

*Num 15:9b Hebrew *1/2 of a hin* [2 liters]; also in 15:10.

*Num 15:25 Or *will make atonement for the whole community of Israel.*

*Num 15:28 Or *to make atonement for.*

NUMBERS 16:1-50 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 16:5 Greek version reads *God has visited and knows those who are his.* Compare 2 Tim 2:19.

*Num 16:14 Hebrew *Are you trying to put out the eyes of these men?*

*Num 16:18 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* also in 16:19, 42, 43, 50.

*Num 16:30 Hebrew *into Sheol;* also in 16:33.

*Num 16:36 Verses 16:36-50 are numbered 17:1-15 in Hebrew text.

*Num 16:46 Or *to make atonement for them.*

*Num 16:47 Or *and made atonement for.*

NUMBERS 17:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 17:1 Verses 17:1-13 are numbered 17:16-28 in Hebrew text.

*Num 17:4 Hebrew *in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony.* The

Hebrew word for “testimony” refers to the terms of the LORD’s covenant with Israel as written on stone tablets, which were kept in the Ark, and also to the covenant itself.

*Num 17:7 Or *Tabernacle of the Testimony;* also in 17:8.

*Num 17:10 Hebrew *before the Testimony;* see note on 17:4.

NUMBERS 18:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 18:2 Or *Tabernacle of the Testimony*.

*Num 18:4 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* also in 18:6, 21, 22, 23, 31.

*Num 18:14 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*Num 18:16 Hebrew *5 shekels* [2 ounces or 57 grams] *of silver*.

*Num 18:19 Hebrew *a covenant of salt*.

NUMBERS 19:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 19:4 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 19:6 Or *juniper.*

NUMBERS 20:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 20:1 The first month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of March and April. The number of years since leaving Egypt is not specified.

*Num 20:6 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

NUMBERS 21:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 21:2 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in 21:3.

*Num 21:3 *Hormah* means "destruction."

*Num 21:4 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

*Num 21:16 *Beer* means "well."

*Num 21:20 Or *overlooks Jeshimon.*

*Num 21:24 Or *because the terrain of the Ammonite frontier was rugged;* Hebrew reads *because the boundary of the Ammonites was strong.*

*Num 21:30 Or *until fire spread to Medeba.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

NUMBERS 22:1-41 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 22:5a Or *who was at Pethor in the land of the Amavites.*

*Num 22:5b Hebrew *the river.*

*Num 22:7 Hebrew *set out with the money of divination in their hand.*

NUMBERS 23:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 23:28 Or *overlooking Jeshimon.*

NUMBERS 24:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 24:6 Or *like a majestic valley.*

*Num 24:17 As in Samaritan Pentateuch; the meaning of the Hebrew word is uncertain.

*Num 24:22 Hebrew *Asshur;* also in 24:24.

*Num 24:24 Hebrew *Kittim.*

NUMBERS 25:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 25:1a Hebrew *Shittim.*

*Num 25:1b As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *some of the men began having.*

*Num 25:6 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 25:13 Or *he made atonement for the people of Israel.*

NUMBERS 26:1-65 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 26:1 The initial phrase in verse 26:1 is numbered 25:19 in Hebrew text.

*Num 26:5 Hebrew *Israel's;* see note on 1:20-21b.

*Num 26:12 As in Syriac version (see also Gen 46:10; Exod 6:15); Hebrew reads *Nemuelite . . . Nemuel.*

*Num 26:13 As in parallel texts at Gen 46:10 and Exod 6:15; Hebrew reads *Zerahite . . . Zerah.*

*Num 26:17 As in Samaritan Pentateuch and Greek and Syriac versions (see also Gen 46:16); Hebrew reads *Arod.*

*Num 26:23 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate (see also 1 Chr 7:1); Hebrew reads *The Punite clan, named after its ancestor Puvah.*

*Num 26:39 As in some Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate; most Hebrew manuscripts read *Shephupham.*

*Num 26:40 As in Samaritan Pentateuch, some Greek manuscripts, and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *named after their ancestor Ard.*

NUMBERS 27:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 27:2 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

*Num 27:12 Or *the mountains of Abarim.*

*Num 27:14 Hebrew *waters of Meribath-kadesh.*

NUMBERS 28:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 28:5a Hebrew *1/10 of an ephah* [2.2 liters]; also in 28:13, 21, 29.

*Num 28:5b Hebrew *1/4 of a hin* [1 liter]; also in 28:7.

*Num 28:9 Hebrew *2/10 of an ephah* [4.4 liters]; also in 28:12, 20, 28.

*Num 28:12 Hebrew *3/10 of an ephah* [6.6 liters]; also in 28:20, 28.

*Num 28:14a Hebrew *1/2 of a hin* [2 liters].

*Num 28:14b Hebrew *1/3 of a hin* [1.3 liters].

*Num 28:14c Hebrew *1/4 of a hin* [1 liter].

*Num 28:16 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May.

*Num 28:22 Or *to make atonement for yourselves;* also in 28:30.

*Num 28:26 Hebrew *Festival of Weeks.* This was later called the Festival of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1). It is celebrated today as Shavuot (or Shabuoth).

NUMBERS 29:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 29:1 Hebrew *the first day of the seventh month.* This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in September or October. This festival is celebrated today as Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year.

*Num 29:3a Hebrew *3/10 of an ephah* [6.6 liters]; also in 29:9, 14.

*Num 29:3b Hebrew *2/10 of an ephah* [4.4 liters]; also in 29:9, 14.

*Num 29:4 Hebrew *1/10 of an ephah* [2.2 liters]; also in 29:10, 15.

*Num 29:5 Or *to make atonement for yourselves.*

*Num 29:7 Hebrew *On the tenth day of the seventh month;* see 29:1

and the note there. This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in September or October. It is celebrated today as Yom Kippur.

*Num 29:12a Hebrew *On the fifteenth day of the seventh month;* see 29:1, 7 and the notes there. This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late September, October, or early November.

*Num 29:12b Or *Festival of Booths,* or *Festival of Tabernacles*. This was earlier called the Festival of the Final Harvest or Festival of Ingathering (see Exod 23:16b). It is celebrated today as Sukkot (or Succoth).

*Num 29:40 Verse 29:40 is numbered 30:1 in Hebrew text.

NUMBERS 30:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 30:1 Verses 30:1-16 are numbered 30:2-17 in Hebrew text.

NUMBERS 31:1-54 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 31:14 Hebrew *the commanders of thousands, and the commanders of hundreds;* also in 31:48, 52, 54.

*Num 31:50 Or *will make atonement for our lives before the LORD.*

*Num 31:52 Hebrew *16,750 shekels* [191 kilograms].

*Num 31:54 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting.*

NUMBERS 32:1-42 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 32:3 As in Samaritan Pentateuch and Greek version (see also 32:38); Hebrew reads *Sebam.*

*Num 32:41 Hebrew *Havvoth-jair.*

NUMBERS 33:1-56 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 33:3 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May.

*Num 33:8a As in many Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Latin Vulgate (see also 33:7); most Hebrew manuscripts read *left from in front of Hahiroth.*

*Num 33:8b Hebrew *the sea.*

*Num 33:10 Hebrew *sea of reeds;* also in 33:11.

*Num 33:11 The geographical name *Sin* is related to *Sinai* and should not be confused with the English word *sin*.

*Num 33:38 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in July or August.

*Num 33:45 As in 33:44; Hebrew reads *Iyim,* another name for Iye-abarim.

*Num 33:47 Or *the mountains of Abarim;* also in 33:48.

*Num 33:49 Hebrew *as far as Abel-shittim.*

NUMBERS 34:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 34:3 Hebrew *Salt Sea;* also in 34:12.

*Num 34:4 Or *the ascent of Akrabbim.*

*Num 34:5 Hebrew *the sea;* also in 34:6, 7.

*Num 34:11 Hebrew *Sea of Kinnereth.*

NUMBERS 35:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Num 35:4 Hebrew *1,000 cubits* [460 meters].

*Num 35:5 Hebrew *2,000 cubits* [920 meters].

*Num 35:33 Or *can make atonement for murder.*

NUMBERS 36:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

Deuteronomy Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34

DEUTERONOMY 1:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 1:1 Hebrew *the Arabah;* also in 1:7.

*Deut 1:2 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai; also in 1:6, 19.

*Deut 1:3 Hebrew *In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month.* This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in January or February.

*Deut 1:7 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*Deut 1:40 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

DEUTERONOMY 2:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 2:1 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

*Deut 2:23 Hebrew *from Caphtor.*

*Deut 2:34 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

DEUTERONOMY 3:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 3:6 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in 3:6b.

*Deut 3:11 Hebrew *9 cubits* [4.1 meters] *long and 4 cubits* [1.8 meters] *wide.*

*Deut 3:14 Hebrew *Havvoth-jair.*

*Deut 3:17 Hebrew *from Kinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea.*

DEUTERONOMY 4:1-49 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 4:10 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai; also in 4:15.

*Deut 4:13 Hebrew *the ten words.*

*Deut 4:33 Or *voice of a god.*

*Deut 4:48 As in Syriac version (see also 3:9); Hebrew reads *Mount Sion.*

*Deut 4:49 Hebrew *took the Arabah on the east side of the Jordan as far as the sea of the Arabah.*

DEUTERONOMY 5:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 5:2 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*Deut 5:10 Hebrew *for thousands of those.*

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 6:4 Or *The LORD our God is one LORD;* or *The LORD our God, the LORD is one;* or *The LORD is our God, the LORD is one.*

DEUTERONOMY 7:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 7:2 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in 7:26.

*Deut 7:20 Often rendered *the hornet.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

DEUTERONOMY 8:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

DEUTERONOMY 9:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 9:8 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*Deut 9:22a *Taberah* means "place of burning." See Num 11:1-3.

*Deut 9:22b *Massah* means "place of testing." See Exod 17:1-7.

*Deut 9:22c *Kibroth-hattaavah* means “graves of gluttony.” See Num 11:31-34.

DEUTERONOMY 10:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 10:4 Hebrew *the ten words.*

*Deut 10:6 Or *set out from Beeroth of Bene-jaakan.*

*Deut 10:16 Hebrew *circumcise the foreskin of your hearts.*

DEUTERONOMY 11:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 11:4 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

*Deut 11:24 Hebrew *to the western sea.*

*Deut 11:30 Hebrew *the Arabah.*

DEUTERONOMY 12:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 12:32 Verse 12:32 is numbered 13:1 in Hebrew text.

DEUTERONOMY 13:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 13:1 Verses 13:1-18 are numbered 13:2-19 in Hebrew text.

*Deut 13:15 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; similarly in 13:17.

DEUTERONOMY 14:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 14:4 The identification of some of the animals and birds listed in this chapter is uncertain.

*Deut 14:7 Or *coney,* or *rock badger.*

DEUTERONOMY 15:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 15:12 Or *If a Hebrew man or woman is sold to you.*

DEUTERONOMY 16:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 16:1 Hebrew *Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto the LORD your God.* Abib, the first month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar, usually occurs within the months of March and April.

*Deut 16:10 Hebrew *Festival of Weeks;* also in 16:16. This was later called the Festival of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1). It is celebrated today as Shavuot (or Shabuoth).

*Deut 16:13 Or *Festival of Booths,* or *Festival of Tabernacles;* also in 16:16. This was earlier called the Festival of the Final Harvest or Festival of Ingathering (see Exod 23:16b). It is celebrated today as Sukkot (or Succoth).

DEUTERONOMY 17:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

DEUTERONOMY 18:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 18:10 Or *never make your son or daughter pass through the fire.*

*Deut 18:16 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

DEUTERONOMY 19:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 19:3 Or *Keep the roads in good repair.*

DEUTERONOMY 20:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 20:17 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

DEUTERONOMY 21:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 21:22 Or *impaled on a pole;* similarly in 21:23.

*Deut 21:23 Greek version reads *for everyone who is hung on a tree.* Compare Gal 3:13.

DEUTERONOMY 22:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 22:1 Hebrew *don't hide yourself;* similarly in 22:3.

*Deut 22:19 Hebrew *100 [shekels] of silver,* about 2.5 pounds or 1.1 kilograms in weight.

*Deut 22:29 Hebrew *50 [shekels] of silver,* about 1.25 pounds or 570 grams in weight.

*Deut 22:30 Verse 22:30 is numbered 23:1 in Hebrew text.

DEUTERONOMY 23:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 23:1 Verses 23:1-25 are numbered 23:2-26 in Hebrew text.

*Deut 23:18 Hebrew *a dog.*

DEUTERONOMY 24:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 24:8 Traditionally rendered *leprosy.* The Hebrew word used here can describe various skin diseases.

DEUTERONOMY 25:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

DEUTERONOMY 26:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

DEUTERONOMY 27:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

DEUTERONOMY 28:1-68 NLT TEXT NOTES

DEUTERONOMY 29:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 29:1a Verse 29:1 is numbered 28:69 in Hebrew text.

*Deut 29:1b Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*Deut 29:2 Verses 29:2-29 are numbered 29:1-28 in Hebrew text.

*Deut 29:17 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

DEUTERONOMY 30:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 30:4 Hebrew *of the heavens.*

*Deut 30:6 Hebrew *circumcise your heart.*

*Deut 30:20 Or *He.*

DEUTERONOMY 31:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 31:1 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *Moses went and spoke.*

*Deut 31:14 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 31:14b.

DEUTERONOMY 32:1-52 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 32:5 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Deut 32:8 As in Dead Sea Scrolls, which read *the number of the sons of God,* and Greek version, which reads *the number of the angels of God;* Masoretic Text reads *the number of the sons of Israel.*

*Deut 32:10 Hebrew *as the pupil of his eye.*

*Deut 32:15 Hebrew *Jeshurun,* a term of endearment for Israel.

*Deut 32:22 Hebrew *of Sheol.*

*Deut 32:31 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Greek version reads *our enemies are fools.*

*Deut 32:36 Or *will take revenge for.*

*Deut 32:43a As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text lacks the first two lines. Compare Heb 1:6.

*Deut 32:43b As in Greek version; Hebrew text lacks this sentence. Compare Rom 15:10.

*Deut 32:43c As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *his servants.*

*Deut 32:43d As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text lacks this line.

*Deut 32:44 Hebrew *Hoshea,* a variant name for Joshua.

*Deut 32:49 Hebrew *the mountains of Abarim.*

*Deut 32:51 Hebrew *waters of Meribath-kadesh.*

DEUTERONOMY 33:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 33:2a As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *upon them.*

*Deut 33:2b Or *came from myriads of holy ones, from the south, from his mountain slopes.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Deut 33:3 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Indeed, lover of the peoples.*

*Deut 33:4 Hebrew *of Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*Deut 33:5 Hebrew *in Jeshurun,* a term of endearment for Israel.

*Deut 33:6 Hebrew lacks *Moses said this about the tribe of Reuben.*

*Deut 33:8 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks *the Levites.*

*Deut 33:18 Hebrew lacks *and Issachar.*

*Deut 33:26 Hebrew *of Jeshurun,* a term of endearment for Israel.

DEUTERONOMY 34:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Deut 34:2 Hebrew *the western sea.*

*Deut 34:6 Hebrew *He buried him;* Samaritan Pentateuch and some Greek manuscripts read *They buried him.*

JOSHUA 1:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 1:4 Hebrew *the Great Sea.*

JOSHUA 2:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 2:1 Hebrew *Shittim.*

*Josh 2:10a Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

*Josh 2:10b The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

JOSHUA 3:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 3:1 Hebrew *Shittim.*

*Josh 3:4 Hebrew *about 2,000 cubits* [920 meters].

*Josh 3:16 Hebrew *the sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea.*

JOSHUA 4:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 4:16 Hebrew *Ark of the Testimony*.

*Josh 4:19 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May.

*Josh 4:23 Hebrew *sea of reeds*.

JOSHUA 5:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 5:1 Hebrew *along the sea*.

*Josh 5:2 Or *circumcise the Israelites a second time*.

*Josh 5:3 *Gibeath-haaraloth* means "hill of foreskins."

*Josh 5:9 *Gilgal* sounds like the Hebrew word *galal,* meaning "to roll."

*Josh 5:10 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May.

JOSHUA 6:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 6:17 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; similarly in 6:18, 21.

JOSHUA 7:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 7:1a The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; similarly in 7:11, 12, 13, 15.

*Josh 7:1b As in parallel text at 1 Chr 2:6; Hebrew reads *Zabdi.* Also in 7:17, 18.

*Josh 7:5 Or *as far as Shebarim.*

*Josh 7:21a Hebrew *Shinar.*

*Josh 7:21b Hebrew *200 shekels of silver,* about 5 pounds or 2.3 kilograms in weight.

*Josh 7:21c Hebrew *50 shekels,* about 20 ounces or 570 grams in weight.

*Josh 7:26 Hebrew *valley of Achor*.

JOSHUA 8:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 8:14 Hebrew *the Arabah*.

*Josh 8:17 Some manuscripts lack *or Bethel*.

*Josh 8:26 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*Josh 8:28 *Ai* means "ruin."

*Josh 8:31 Exod 20:25; Deut 27:5-6.

*Josh 8:32 Hebrew *onto the stones*.

JOSHUA 9:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 9:1a Hebrew *the Shephelah*.

*Josh 9:1b Hebrew *the Great Sea*.

JOSHUA 10:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 10:1 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in 10:28, 35, 37, 39, 40.

*Josh 10:13a Or *The Book of the Upright.*

*Josh 10:13b Or *did not set for about a whole day.*

*Josh 10:40 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

JOSHUA 11:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 11:2a Hebrew *in the Arabah south of Kinnereth.*

*Josh 11:2b Hebrew *the Shephelah;* also in 11:16.

*Josh 11:11 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in 11:12, 20, 21.

*Josh 11:16 Hebrew *the Shephelah, the Arabah.*

JOSHUA 12:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 12:1 Hebrew *the Arabah;* also in 12:3, 8.

*Josh 12:3 Hebrew *from the Sea of Kinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah, which is the Salt Sea.*

*Josh 12:8 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*Josh 12:23a Hebrew *Naphath-dor,* a variant spelling of Naphoth-dor.

*Josh 12:23b Greek version reads *Goyim in Galilee.*

JOSHUA 13:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 13:25 Hebrew *in front of.*

*Josh 13:26 Hebrew *Li-debir,* apparently a variant spelling of Lo-debar (compare 2 Sam 9:4; 17:27; Amos 6:13).

*Josh 13:27 Hebrew *Sea of Kinnereth.*

JOSHUA 14:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOSHUA 15:1-63 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 15:2 Hebrew *the Salt Sea;* also in 15:5.

*Josh 15:3 Hebrew *Akrabbim.*

*Josh 15:4a Hebrew *the sea;* also in 15:11.

*Josh 15:4b Hebrew *your.*

*Josh 15:9 Or *the spring at Me-nephtoah.*

*Josh 15:12 Hebrew *the Great Sea;* also in 15:47.

*Josh 15:18 Some Greek manuscripts read *he urged her.*

*Josh 15:33 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

JOSHUA 16:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 16:2 As in Greek version (also see 18:13); Hebrew reads *From Bethel to Luz.*

*Josh 16:3 Hebrew *the sea;* also in 16:6, 8.

JOSHUA 17:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 17:9 Hebrew *the sea;* also in 17:10.

*Josh 17:11a Hebrew *Beth-shean,* a variant spelling of Beth-shan; also in 17:16.

*Josh 17:11b The meaning of the Hebrew here is uncertain.

JOSHUA 18:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 18:1 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.*

*Josh 18:15a Or *From there it went to Mozah.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Josh 18:15b Or *the spring at Me-nephtoah.*

*Josh 18:18 Hebrew *overlooking the Arabah,* or *overlooking Beth-arabah.*

*Josh 18:19 Hebrew *Salt Sea.*

*Josh 18:28 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Kiriath.*

JOSHUA 19:1-51 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 19:28 As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Ebron.*

*Josh 19:29 Hebrew *the sea.*

*Josh 19:34 Hebrew *and Judah at the Jordan River.*

*Josh 19:47a Or *had trouble holding on to their land.*

*Josh 19:47b Hebrew *Leshem,* a variant spelling of Laish.

*Josh 19:51 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.*

JOSHUA 20:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOSHUA 21:1-45 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 21:36 Hebrew *Jahzah,* a variant spelling of Jahaz.

JOSHUA 22:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 22:10 Or *to the circle of stones;* similarly in 22:11.

*Josh 22:20 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*Josh 22:34 Some manuscripts lack this word.

JOSHUA 23:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 23:4 Hebrew *the Great Sea.*

JOSHUA 24:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Josh 24:2 Hebrew *the river;* also in 24:3, 14, 15.

*Josh 24:6 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

*Josh 24:12 Often rendered *the hornet.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Josh 24:32 Hebrew *100 kesitahs;* the value or weight of the kesitah is no longer known.

Judges Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

JUDGES 1:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 1:9 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*Judg 1:14 Greek version and Latin Vulgate read *he urged her.*

*Judg 1:17a The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*Judg 1:17b *Hormah* means “destruction.”

*Judg 1:27 Hebrew *Beth-shean,* a variant spelling of Beth-shan.

*Judg 1:36 Hebrew *Akrabbim.*

JUDGES 2:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 2:3 Hebrew *They will be in your sides;* compare Num 33:55.

*Judg 2:9 As in parallel text at Josh 24:30; Hebrew reads *Timnath-heres,* a variant spelling of Timnath-serah.

JUDGES 3:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 3:8 *Aram-naharaim* means "Aram of the two rivers," thought to have been located between the Euphrates and Balih Rivers in northwestern Mesopotamia.

*Judg 3:16 Hebrew *gomed,* the length of which is uncertain.

*Judg 3:22 Or *and it came out behind.*

*Judg 3:23 Or *and went out through the porch;* the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

JUDGES 4:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 4:11 Or *father-in-law.*

JUDGES 5:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 5:7 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Judg 5:11 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Judg 5:15 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version, which read *searchings of heart;* Masoretic Text reads *resolve of heart.*

JUDGES 6:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 6:19 Hebrew *an ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters].

JUDGES 7:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 7:3 Hebrew *may leave Mount Gilead.* The identity of Mount Gilead is uncertain in this context. It is perhaps used here as another name for Mount Gilboa.

*Judg 7:15 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *he bowed.*

*Judg 7:19 Hebrew *at the beginning of the second watch.*

JUDGES 8:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 8:8 Hebrew *Penuel,* a variant spelling of Peniel; also in 8:9, 17.

*Judg 8:26 Hebrew *1,700 [shekels]* [19.4 kilograms].

*Judg 8:29 Hebrew *Jerub-baal;* see 6:32.

JUDGES 9:1-57 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 9:1 Hebrew *Jerub-baal's* (see 6:32); also in 9:2, 24.

*Judg 9:5 Hebrew *Jerub-baal* (see 6:32); also in 9:16, 19, 28, 57.

*Judg 9:6 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Judg 9:28 Hebrew *Who is Shechem?*

*Judg 9:29 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *And he said.*

*Judg 9:31 Or *in secret;* Hebrew reads *in Tormah;* compare 9:41.

*Judg 9:37a Or *the center of the land.*

*Judg 9:37b Hebrew *Elon-meonenim.*

*Judg 9:46 Hebrew *El-berith,* another name for Baal-berith; compare 9:4.

JUDGES 10:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 10:4 Hebrew *Havvoth-jair.*

JUDGES 11:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 11:16 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

JUDGES 12:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

JUDGES 13:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 13:4 Hebrew *any unclean thing;* also in 13:7, 14.

JUDGES 14:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 14:11 Hebrew *they*.

*Judg 14:15 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *seventh*.

JUDGES 15:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 15:17 Hebrew *Ramath-lehi*.

*Judg 15:19 Hebrew *En-hakkore*.

JUDGES 16:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 16:2 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *Word soon spread*.

*Judg 16:5 Hebrew *1,100 [shekels],* about 28 pounds or 12.5 kilograms in weight.

*Judg 16:13-14 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *I would become as weak as anyone else. / So while he slept, Delilah wove the seven braids of his hair into the fabric.* 14*Then she tightened it with the loom shuttle.*

*Judg 16:19 Or *she began to torment him.* Greek version reads *He began to grow weak.*

JUDGES 17:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 17:2 Hebrew *1,100 [shekels],* about 28 pounds or 12.5 kilograms in weight.

*Judg 17:10 Hebrew *10 [shekels] of silver,* about 4 ounces or 114 grams in weight.

JUDGES 18:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 18:7 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Judg 18:12 *Mahaneh-dan* means "the camp of Dan."

*Judg 18:30 As in an ancient Hebrew tradition, some Greek manuscripts, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *son of Manasseh.*

JUDGES 19:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 19:2 Or *she was unfaithful to him.*

*Judg 19:3 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *When she brought him to.*

*Judg 19:18 As in Greek version (see also 19:29); Hebrew reads *now I'm going to the Tabernacle of the LORD.*

*Judg 19:28 Greek version adds *for she was dead.*

JUDGES 20:1-48 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 20:10a Hebrew *10 men from every hundred, 100 men from every thousand, and 1,000 men from every 10,000.*

*Judg 20:10b Hebrew *Geba,* in this case a variant spelling of Gibeah; also in 20:33.

*Judg 20:33 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *hiding in the open space.*

*Judg 20:42 Or *battle, for the people from the nearby towns also came out and killed them.*

*Judg 20:43 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

JUDGES 21:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Judg 21:11 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

Ruth Text Notes

1 2 3 4

RUTH 1:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ruth 1:20 *Naomi* means “pleasant”; *Mara* means “bitter.”

*Ruth 1:21 Or *has testified against me.*

RUTH 2:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ruth 2:17 Hebrew *it was about an ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters].

*Ruth 2:20 Hebrew *to the living and to the dead.*

*Ruth 2:21 Hebrew *Ruth the Moabite.*

RUTH 3:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ruth 3:15a Hebrew *six measures,* an unknown quantity.

*Ruth 3:15b Most Hebrew manuscripts read *he;* many Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac version, and Latin Vulgate read *she.*

RUTH 4:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ruth 4:20 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 4:21); Hebrew reads *Salma.*

1 Samuel Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

1 SAMUEL 1:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 1:1 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *in Ramathaim-zophim;* compare 1:19.

*1 Sam 1:5 Or *And because he loved Hannah, he would give her a choice portion.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Sam 1:7 Hebrew *the house of the LORD;* also in 1:24.

*1 Sam 1:9 Hebrew *the Temple of the LORD.*

*1 Sam 1:11 Some manuscripts add *He will drink neither wine nor intoxicants.*

*1 Sam 1:20 *Samuel* sounds like the Hebrew term for “asked of God” or “heard by God.”

*1 Sam 1:22 Some manuscripts add *I will offer him as a Nazirite for all time.*

*1 Sam 1:23 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *may the LORD keep his promise.*

*1 Sam 1:24a As in Dead Sea Scrolls, Greek and Syriac versions; Masoretic Text reads *three bulls.*

*1 Sam 1:24b Hebrew *and an ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters].

*1 Sam 1:28 Hebrew *he.*

1 SAMUEL 2:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 2:1 Hebrew *has exalted my horn.*

*1 Sam 2:6 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

*1 Sam 2:10 Hebrew *he exalts the horn.*

*1 Sam 2:18 Hebrew *He wore a linen ephod.*

*1 Sam 2:20 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *this one he requested of the LORD.*

*1 Sam 2:22 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.* Some manuscripts lack this entire sentence.

*1 Sam 2:25 Or *the judges.*

*1 Sam 2:27 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *Did I*

reveal myself.

*1 Sam 2:28a Hebrew *your father.*

*1 Sam 2:28b Hebrew *an ephod.*

*1 Sam 2:30 Hebrew *that your house and your father's house.*

*1 Sam 2:33 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version, which read *die by the sword;* Masoretic Text reads *die like mortals.*

1 SAMUEL 3:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 3:3 Hebrew *the Temple of the LORD.*

*1 Sam 3:13 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *his sons have made themselves contemptible.*

*1 Sam 3:15 Hebrew *the house of the LORD.*

1 SAMUEL 4:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

In print editions of the NLT, this sentence is set at the end of

3:21.*1 Sam 4:1 In print editions of the NLT, this sentence is set at the end of 3:21.

*1 Sam 4:3 Or *he.*

*1 Sam 4:7 Or *A god has.*

1 SAMUEL 5:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 5:6 Greek version and Latin Vulgate read *tumors; and rats appeared in their land, and death and destruction were throughout the city.*

*1 Sam 5:11 Or *he.*

1 SAMUEL 6:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 6:18 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version; most Hebrew manuscripts read *great meadow* or *Abel-haggedolah.*

*1 Sam 6:19 As in a few Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts read *70 men, 50,000 men.* Perhaps the text should be understood to read *the LORD killed 70 men and 50 oxen.*

1 SAMUEL 7:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 7:12 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *Shen.*

1 SAMUEL 8:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 8:12 Hebrew *commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties.*

*1 Sam 8:16 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *young men.*

1 SAMUEL 9:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 9:8 Hebrew *1/4 shekel of silver,* about 0.1 ounces or 3 grams in weight.

*1 Sam 9:25 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *and talked with him there.*

1 SAMUEL 10:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 10:1 Greek version reads *over Israel. And you will rule over the LORD's people and save them from their enemies around them. This will be the sign to you that the LORD has appointed you to be leader over his special possession.*

*1 Sam 10:5 Hebrew *Gibeath-haelohim.*

*1 Sam 10:12 Hebrew *said, "Who is their father?"*

*1 Sam 10:27 This paragraph, which is not included in the Masoretic Text, is found in Dead Sea Scroll 4QSam^{a}.

1 SAMUEL 11:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 11:1 As in Dead Sea Scroll 4QSam^{a} and Greek version; Masoretic Text lacks *About a month later.*

*1 Sam 11:8 Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read *70,000.*

1 SAMUEL 12:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 12:8 Hebrew *When Jacob was.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*1 Sam 12:11a Hebrew *Jerub-baal,* another name for Gideon; see Judg 6:32.

*1 Sam 12:11b Greek and Syriac versions read *Barak.*

*1 Sam 12:11c Greek and Syriac versions read *Samson.*

1 SAMUEL 13:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 13:1a As in a few Greek manuscripts; the number is missing in the Hebrew.

*1 Sam 13:1b Hebrew *reigned . . . and two;* the number is incomplete in the Hebrew. Compare Acts 13:21.

*1 Sam 13:5 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *30,000.*

*1 Sam 13:15 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Samuel then left Gilgal and went to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin.*

*1 Sam 13:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *or plowshares.*

*1 Sam 13:21a Hebrew *1 pim* [8 grams].

*1 Sam 13:21b Hebrew *1/3 [of a shekel]* [4 grams].

1 SAMUEL 14:1-52 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 14:2 Or *around the rock of Rimmon;* compare Judg 20:45, 47; 21:13.

*1 Sam 14:14 Hebrew *half a yoke;* a "yoke" was the amount of land plowed by a pair of yoked oxen in one day.

*1 Sam 14:16 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *they went and there.*

*1 Sam 14:18 As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew reads *"Bring the Ark of God." For at that time the Ark of God was with the Israelites.*

*1 Sam 14:19 Hebrew *Withdraw your hand.*

*1 Sam 14:27 Or *his eyes brightened;* similarly in 14:29.

*1 Sam 14:41 Greek version adds *If the fault is with me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim; but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with Thummim.*

*1 Sam 14:47 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *he acted wickedly.*

*1 Sam 14:49 Hebrew *Ishvi,* a variant name for Ishbosheth; also known as Esh-baal.

1 SAMUEL 15:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 15:3 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; also in 15:8, 9, 15, 18, 20, 21.

*1 Sam 15:32 Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read *Agag arrived hesitantly, for he thought, "Surely this is the bitterness of death."*

1 SAMUEL 16:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 16:9 Hebrew *Shammah,* a variant spelling of Shimea; compare 1 Chr 2:13; 20:7.

*1 Sam 16:14 Or *an evil spirit;* also in 16:15, 16, 23.

1 SAMUEL 17:1-58 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 17:4 Hebrew *6 cubits and 1 span* [which totals about 9.75 feet or 3 meters]; Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read *4 cubits and 1 span* [which totals about 6.75 feet or 2 meters].

*1 Sam 17:5 Hebrew *5,000 shekels* [57 kilograms].

*1 Sam 17:7 Hebrew *600 shekels* [6.8 kilograms].

*1 Sam 17:13 Hebrew *Shammah,* a variant spelling of Shimea; compare 1 Chr 2:13; 20:7.

*1 Sam 17:17 Hebrew *ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters].

*1 Sam 17:18 Hebrew *and take their pledge.*

*1 Sam 17:52 As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew reads *a valley.*

1 SAMUEL 18:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 18:6 The type of instrument represented by the word *cymbals* is uncertain.

*1 Sam 18:10 Or *an evil spirit.*

*1 Sam 18:19 Or *But.*

1 SAMUEL 19:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 19:9 Or *evil spirit.*

*1 Sam 19:13 Hebrew *teraphim;* also in 19:16.

1 SAMUEL 20:1-42 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 20:16 Hebrew *with the house of David.*

*1 Sam 20:19 Hebrew *the stone Ezel.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Sam 20:25 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *with Jonathan standing.*

*1 Sam 20:30 Hebrew *You son of a perverse and rebellious woman.*

*1 Sam 20:41 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *near the south edge.*

*1 Sam 20:42 This sentence is numbered 21:1 in Hebrew text.

1 SAMUEL 21:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 21:1 Verses 21:1-15 are numbered 21:2-16 in Hebrew text.

*1 Sam 21:7 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

1 SAMUEL 22:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 22:7 Hebrew *commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?*

1 SAMUEL 23:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 23:11 Some manuscripts lack the first sentence of 23:11.

*1 Sam 23:28 Hebrew *Sela-hammahlekoth.*

*1 Sam 23:29 Verse 23:29 is numbered 24:1 in Hebrew text.

1 SAMUEL 24:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 24:1 Verses 24:1-22 are numbered 24:2-23 in Hebrew text.

1 SAMUEL 25:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 25:1 As in Greek version (see also 25:2); Hebrew reads *Paran.*

*1 Sam 25:18 Hebrew *5 seahs* [36.5 liters].

*1 Sam 25:22 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *May God strike and kill the enemies of David.*

*1 Sam 25:25 The name *Nabal* means "fool."

*1 Sam 25:37 Hebrew *his heart failed him.*

1 SAMUEL 26:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

1 SAMUEL 27:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

1 SAMUEL 28:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 28:6 Hebrew *by Urim.*

*1 Sam 28:13 Or *gods.*

1 SAMUEL 29:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

1 SAMUEL 30:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Sam 30:29 Greek version reads *Carmel.*

1 SAMUEL 31:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

2 Samuel Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

2 SAMUEL 1:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 1:18 Or *The Book of the Upright.*

*2 Sam 1:21 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

2 SAMUEL 2:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 2:8 *Ishbosheth* is another name for Esh-baal.

*2 Sam 2:16 Hebrew *Helkath-hazzurim.*

*2 Sam 2:29a Hebrew *the Arabah.*

*2 Sam 2:29b Or *continued on through the Bithron.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

2 SAMUEL 3:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 3:3 As in parallel text at 1 Chr 3:1 (see also Greek version, which reads *Daluia,* and possible support by Dead Sea Scrolls); Hebrew reads *Kileab.*

*2 Sam 3:7 *Ishbosheth* is another name for Esh-baal.

*2 Sam 3:14 Hebrew *the foreskins.*

*2 Sam 3:15 As in 1 Sam 25:44; Hebrew reads *Paltiel,* a variant spelling of Palti.

*2 Sam 3:29a Or *or a contagious skin disease.* The Hebrew word used here can describe various skin diseases.

*2 Sam 3:29b Or *who is effeminate;* Hebrew reads *who handles a spindle.*

2 SAMUEL 4:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 4:1 *Ishbosheth* is another name for Esh-baal.

*2 Sam 4:4 *Mephibosheth* is another name for Merib-baal.

*2 Sam 4:6 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *So they went into the house pretending to fetch wheat, but they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Recab and Baanah escaped.*

*2 Sam 4:7 Hebrew *the Arabah.*

2 SAMUEL 5:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 5:2 Or *For some time.*

*2 Sam 5:8a Or *Those 'lame' and 'blind' Jebusites hate me.*

*2 Sam 5:8b Or *with scaling hooks.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Sam 5:8c The meaning of this saying is uncertain.

*2 Sam 5:9 Hebrew *the millo.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Sam 5:23 Or *aspen,* or *balsam;* also in 5:24. The exact identification of this tree is uncertain.

*2 Sam 5:25 As in Greek version (see also 1 Chr 14:16); Hebrew reads *Geba.*

2 SAMUEL 6:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 6:2a Hebrew *Baale of Judah,* another name for Kiriath-jearim; compare 1 Chr 13:6.

*2 Sam 6:2b Or *the Ark of God where the Name is proclaimed—the name of the LORD of Heaven's Armies.*

*2 Sam 6:4 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and some Greek manuscripts; Masoretic Text reads 4*and they brought it from Abinadab's house, which was on a hill, with the Ark of God.*

*2 Sam 6:5 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 13:8); Masoretic Text reads *before the LORD with all manner of cypress wood.*

*2 Sam 6:7 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads *because of his irreverence.*

*2 Sam 6:14 Hebrew *a linen ephod.*

*2 Sam 6:19 Or *a portion of meat.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

2 SAMUEL 7:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 7:2 Hebrew *a house of cedar.*

*2 Sam 7:16 As in Greek version and some Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text reads *before you.*

*2 Sam 7:19 Or *This is your instruction for all humanity, O Sovereign LORD.*

*2 Sam 7:23 As in Greek version (see also 1 Chr 17:21); Hebrew reads *You made a name for yourself and awesome miracles for your land in the sight of your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt, the nations and their gods.*

2 SAMUEL 8:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 8:1 Hebrew *by conquering Metheg-ammah,* a name that means "the bridle," possibly referring to the size of the town or the tribute money taken from it. Compare 1 Chr 18:1.

*2 Sam 8:4 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version (see also 1 Chr 18:4); Masoretic Text reads *captured 1,700 charioteers.*

*2 Sam 8:8 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 18:8); Hebrew reads *Betah.*

*2 Sam 8:12 As in a few Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions (see also 8:14; 1 Chr 18:11); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Aram.*

*2 Sam 8:13 As in a few Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions (see also 8:14; 1 Chr 18:12); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Arameans.*

*2 Sam 8:18a Hebrew *of the Kerethites and Pelethites.*

*2 Sam 8:18b Hebrew *David's sons were priests;* compare parallel text at 1 Chr 18:17.

2 SAMUEL 9:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 9:6 *Mephibosheth* is another name for Merib-baal.

*2 Sam 9:10 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *your master's grandson.*

*2 Sam 9:11 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *my table.*

2 SAMUEL 10:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 10:1 As in parallel text at 1 Chr 19:1; Hebrew reads *the king.*

*2 Sam 10:16 Hebrew *the river.*

*2 Sam 10:18 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 19:18); Hebrew reads *charioteers.*

2 SAMUEL 11:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 11:1 Hebrew *At the turn of the year.* The first day of the year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April.

*2 Sam 11:8 Hebrew *and wash your feet,* an expression that may also have a connotation of ritualistic washing.

*2 Sam 11:11 Or *at Succoth.*

*2 Sam 11:21 Hebrew *son of Jerub-besheth.* Jerub-besheth is a variation on the name Jerub-baal, which is another name for Gideon; see Judg 6:32.

2 SAMUEL 12:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 12:14 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads *the enemies of the LORD.*

*2 Sam 12:20 Hebrew *anointed himself.*

*2 Sam 12:24 Hebrew *he;* an alternate Hebrew reading and some Hebrew manuscripts read *she.*

*2 Sam 12:25 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *because of the LORD.*

*2 Sam 12:26 Or *the royal city.*

*2 Sam 12:27 Or *captured the city of water.*

*2 Sam 12:30a Or *from the head of Milcom* (as in Greek version). Milcom, also called Molech, was the god of the Ammonites.

*2 Sam 12:30b Hebrew *1 talent* [34 kilograms].

*2 Sam 12:31a Hebrew *He also brought out the people [of Rabbah] and put them under.*

*2 Sam 12:31b Hebrew *and he made them pass through the brick kilns.*

2 SAMUEL 13:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 13:3 Hebrew *Shimeah* (also in 13:32), a variant spelling of Shimea; compare 1 Chr 2:13.

*2 Sam 13:6 Or *a couple of cakes;* also in 13:8, 10.

*2 Sam 13:18 Or *a robe with sleeves,* or *an ornamented robe.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Sam 13:21 Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version add *But he did not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn.*

*2 Sam 13:27 As in Greek and Latin versions (compare also Dead Sea Scrolls); the Hebrew text lacks this sentence.

*2 Sam 13:34 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks this sentence.

*2 Sam 13:39a Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version read *And the spirit of the king.*

*2 Sam 13:39b Or *no longer felt a need to go out after Absalom.*

2 SAMUEL 14:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 14:2 Hebrew *don't anoint yourself with oil.*

*2 Sam 14:4 As in many Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions; Masoretic Text reads *spoke to.*

*2 Sam 14:16 Or *the property;* or *the people.*

*2 Sam 14:26 Hebrew *200 shekels* [2.3 kilograms] *by the royal standard.*

2 SAMUEL 15:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 15:7 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *forty years.*

*2 Sam 15:8 As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew lacks *in*

Hebron.

*2 Sam 15:18 Hebrew *the Kerethites and Pelethites.*

*2 Sam 15:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *and may unfailing love and faithfulness go with you.*

*2 Sam 15:24 Or *Abiathar went up.*

*2 Sam 15:25 Hebrew *and his dwelling place.*

*2 Sam 15:27a As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Are you a seer?* or *Do you see?*

*2 Sam 15:27b Hebrew lacks *and Abiathar;* compare 15:29.

*2 Sam 15:28 Hebrew *at the crossing points of the wilderness.*

2 SAMUEL 16:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 16:1 *Mephibosheth* is another name for Merib-baal.

*2 Sam 16:11 Hebrew *this Benjaminite.*

*2 Sam 16:12 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *see my iniquity.*

*2 Sam 16:14 As in Greek version (see also 17:16); Hebrew reads *when they reached their destination.*

2 SAMUEL 17:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 17:3 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *like the return of all is the man whom you seek.*

*2 Sam 17:16 Hebrew *at the crossing points of the wilderness.*

*2 Sam 17:25a Hebrew *Ithra,* a variant spelling of Jether.

*2 Sam 17:25b As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 2:17); Hebrew reads *an Israelite.*

2 SAMUEL 18:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 18:1 Hebrew *appointed commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.*

*2 Sam 18:3 As in two Hebrew manuscripts and some Greek and Latin manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts read *Now there are 10,000 like us.*

*2 Sam 18:9 Hebrew *his head.*

*2 Sam 18:11 Hebrew *10 [shekels] of silver,* about 4 ounces or 114 grams in weight.

*2 Sam 18:12 Hebrew *1,000 [shekels] of silver,* about 25 pounds or 11.4 kilograms in weight.

*2 Sam 18:21 Hebrew *from Cush;* similarly in 18:23, 31, 32.

*2 Sam 18:33 Verse 18:33 is numbered 19:1 in Hebrew text.

2 SAMUEL 19:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 19:1 Verses 19:1-43 are numbered 19:2-44 in Hebrew text.

*2 Sam 19:14 Or *David;* Hebrew reads *he.*

*2 Sam 19:20 Hebrew *in the house of Joseph.*

*2 Sam 19:22 Or *my prosecutor.*

*2 Sam 19:24 *Mephibosheth* is another name for Merib-baal.

*2 Sam 19:26 As in Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *I will saddle a donkey for myself.*

2 SAMUEL 20:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 20:7a Hebrew *So Joab's men.*

*2 Sam 20:7b Hebrew *the Kerethites and Pelethites;* also in 20:23.

*2 Sam 20:8 Hebrew *As he stepped forward, it fell out.*

*2 Sam 20:14 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *All the Berites.*

*2 Sam 20:19 Hebrew *a town that is a mother in Israel.*

*2 Sam 20:24 As in Greek version (see also 1 Kgs 4:6; 5:14); Hebrew reads *Adoram.*

2 SAMUEL 21:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 21:6 As in Greek version (see also 21:9); Hebrew reads *at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD.*

*2 Sam 21:7 *Mephibosheth* is another name for Merib-baal.

*2 Sam 21:8 As in a few Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and Syriac version (see also 1 Sam 18:19); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Michal.*

*2 Sam 21:16a Or *a descendant of the Rapha;* also in 21:18, 20, 22.

*2 Sam 21:16b Hebrew *300 [shekels]* [3.4 kilograms].

*2 Sam 21:19a As in parallel text at 1 Chr 20:5; Hebrew reads *son of Jaare-oregim.*

*2 Sam 21:19b As in parallel text at 1 Chr 20:5; Hebrew reads *killed Goliath of Gath.*

*2 Sam 21:20 As in parallel text at 1 Chr 20:6; Hebrew reads *a Midianite.*

*2 Sam 21:21 As in parallel text at 1 Chr 20:7; Hebrew reads

Shimei, a variant spelling of Shimea.

2 SAMUEL 22:1-51 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 22:6 Hebrew *Sheol.*

*2 Sam 22:11a Hebrew *a cherub.*

*2 Sam 22:11b As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Ps 18:10); other Hebrew manuscripts read *appearing.*

*2 Sam 22:13 Or *and lightning bolts.*

*2 Sam 22:36 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads *your answering.*

*2 Sam 22:43 As in Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Ps 18:42); Masoretic Text reads *I crushed and trampled them.*

*2 Sam 22:46 As in parallel text at Ps 18:45; Hebrew reads *come girding themselves.*

2 SAMUEL 23:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 23:1 Or *the favorite subject of the songs of Israel;* or *the favorite of the Strong One of Israel.*

*2 Sam 23:8a As in parallel text at 1 Chr 11:11; Hebrew reads *Josheb-basshebeth the Tahkemonite.*

*2 Sam 23:8b As in Greek and Latin versions (see also 1 Chr 11:11); the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Sam 23:8c As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 11:11); the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain, though it might be rendered *the Three. It was Adino the Eznite who killed 800 men at one time.*

*2 Sam 23:12 Hebrew *he.*

*2 Sam 23:17 Hebrew *Shall I drink the blood of these men?*

*2 Sam 23:18 As in a few Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version; most Hebrew manuscripts read *the Three.*

*2 Sam 23:19 As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *the Three.*

*2 Sam 23:20a Or *son of Jehoiada, son of Ish-hai.*

*2 Sam 23:20b Hebrew *two of Ariel.*

*2 Sam 23:26 As in parallel text at 1 Chr 11:27 (see also 1 Chr 27:10); Hebrew reads *from Palti.*

*2 Sam 23:27 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 11:29); Hebrew reads *Mebunnai.*

*2 Sam 23:29a As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 11:30); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Heleb.*

*2 Sam 23:29b As in parallel text at 1 Chr 11:31; Hebrew reads *Ittai.*

*2 Sam 23:30a As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Chr 11:32); Hebrew reads *Hiddai.*

*2 Sam 23:30b Or *from the ravines of Gaash.*

*2 Sam 23:33 As in parallel text at 1 Chr 11:34; Hebrew reads *Jonathan, Shammah;* some Greek manuscripts read *Jonathan son of Shammah.*

2 SAMUEL 24:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Sam 24:2 As in Greek version (see also 24:4 and 1 Chr 21:2); Hebrew reads *Joab the commander.*

*2 Sam 24:6 Greek version reads *to Gilead and to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites.*

*2 Sam 24:7 Or *they went to the Negev of Judah.*

*2 Sam 24:13 As in Greek version (see also 1 Chr 21:12); Hebrew reads *seven.*

*2 Sam 24:15 Hebrew *for the designated time.*

*2 Sam 24:24 Hebrew *50 shekels of silver,* about 20 ounces or 570 grams in weight.

1 Kings Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

1 KINGS 1:1-53 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 1:9 Or *to the Serpent's Stone;* Greek version supports reading *Zoheleth* as a proper name.

*1 Kgs 1:38 Hebrew *the Kerethites and Pelethites;* also in 1:44.

1 KINGS 2:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 2:5a Or *He murdered them during a time of peace as revenge for deaths they had caused in time of war.*

*1 Kgs 2:5b As in some Greek and Old Latin manuscripts; Hebrew reads *with the blood of war.*

*1 Kgs 2:6 Hebrew *don't let his white head go down to Sheol in peace.*

*1 Kgs 2:9 Hebrew *how to bring his white head down to Sheol in blood.*

*1 Kgs 2:32 Hebrew *will return his blood on his own head.*

1 KINGS 3:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

1 KINGS 4:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 4:11 Hebrew *Naphath-dor,* a variant spelling of Naphoth-dor.

*1 Kgs 4:12 Hebrew *Beth-shean,* a variant spelling of Beth-shan; also in 4:12b.

*1 Kgs 4:13 Hebrew *Jair son of Manasseh;* compare 1 Chr 2:22.

*1 Kgs 4:19a Greek version reads *of Gad;* compare 4:13.

*1 Kgs 4:19b As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew lacks *of Judah.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Kgs 4:21a Verses 4:21-34 are numbered 5:1-14 in Hebrew text.

*1 Kgs 4:21b Hebrew *the river;* also in 4:24.

*1 Kgs 4:22 Hebrew *30 cors* [6.6 kiloliters] *of choice flour and 60 cors* [13.2 kiloliters] *of meal.*

*1 Kgs 4:23 Or *and fattened geese.*

*1 Kgs 4:25 Hebrew *each family lived under its own grapevine and under its own fig tree.*

*1 Kgs 4:26a As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 2 Chr 9:25); Hebrew reads *40,000.*

*1 Kgs 4:26b Or *12,000 charioteers.*

1 KINGS 5:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 5:1 Verses 5:1-18 are numbered 5:15-32 in Hebrew text.

*1 Kgs 5:9 Hebrew *the sea.*

*1 Kgs 5:11a Hebrew *20,000 cors* [4,400 kiloliters].

*1 Kgs 5:11b As in Greek version, which reads *20,000 baths* [420 kiloliters] (see also 2 Chr 2:10); Hebrew reads *20 cors,* about 1,000 gallons or 4.4 kiloliters in volume.

*1 Kgs 5:16 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 2 Chr 2:2, 18); Hebrew reads *3,300.*

1 KINGS 6:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 6:1 Hebrew *It was in the month of Ziv, which is the second month.* This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of April and May.

*1 Kgs 6:2 Hebrew *60 cubits* [27.6 meters] *long, 20 cubits* [9.2 meters] *wide, and 30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *high.*

*1 Kgs 6:3a Hebrew *20 cubits* [9.2 meters]; also in 6:16, 20.

*1 Kgs 6:3b Hebrew *10 cubits* [4.6 meters].

*1 Kgs 6:6 Hebrew *the bottom floor being 5 cubits* [2.3 meters] *wide, the second floor 6 cubits* [2.8 meters] *wide, and the top floor 7 cubits* [3.2 meters] *wide*.

*1 Kgs 6:8 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *middle floor*.

*1 Kgs 6:10 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters].

*1 Kgs 6:17 Hebrew *40 cubits* [18.4 meters].

*1 Kgs 6:20 Or *overlaid the altar with cedar*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Kgs 6:21 Or *to draw curtains across*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Kgs 6:23a Or *pine;* Hebrew reads *oil tree;* also in 6:31, 33.

*1 Kgs 6:23b Hebrew *10 cubits* [4.6 meters]; also in 6:24, 25.

*1 Kgs 6:24 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters].

*1 Kgs 6:31 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Kgs 6:37 Hebrew *was laid in the month of Ziv.* This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of April and May.

*1 Kgs 6:38 Hebrew *by the month of Bul, which is the eighth month.* This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of October and November.

1 KINGS 7:1-51 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 7:2 Hebrew *100 cubits* [46 meters] *long, 50 cubits* [23 meters] *wide, and 30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *high.*

*1 Kgs 7:3 Or *45 rafters,* or *45 beams,* or *45 pillars.* The architectural details in 7:2-6 can be interpreted in many different ways.

*1 Kgs 7:5 Greek version reads *windows.*

*1 Kgs 7:6 Hebrew *50 cubits* [23 meters] *long and 30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *wide.*

*1 Kgs 7:7 As in Syriac version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *from floor to floor.*

*1 Kgs 7:10 Hebrew *10 cubits* [4.6 meters] . . . *8 cubits* [3.7 meters].

*1 Kgs 7:13 Hebrew *Hiram* (also in 7:40, 45); compare 2 Chr 2:13. This is not the same person mentioned in 5:1.

*1 Kgs 7:15 Hebrew *18 cubits* [8.3 meters] *tall and 12 cubits* [5.5 meters] *in circumference.*

*1 Kgs 7:16 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters].

*1 Kgs 7:19 Hebrew *4 cubits* [1.8 meters]; also in 7:38.

*1 Kgs 7:21 *Jakin* probably means “he establishes”; *Boaz* probably means “in him is strength.”

*1 Kgs 7:23 Hebrew *10 cubits* [4.6 meters] *across. . . . 5 cubits* [2.3 meters] *deep and 30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *in circumference.*

*1 Kgs 7:24 Or *20 gourds per meter;* Hebrew reads *10 per cubit.*

*1 Kgs 7:25 Hebrew *12 oxen;* compare 2 Kgs 16:17, which specifies

bronze oxen.

*1 Kgs 7:26a Hebrew *a handbreadth* [8 centimeters].

*1 Kgs 7:26b Hebrew *2,000 baths* [42 kiloliters].

*1 Kgs 7:27 Hebrew *4 cubits* [1.8 meters] *long, 4 cubits wide, and 3 cubits* [1.4 meters] *high.*

*1 Kgs 7:31a Hebrew *a cubit* [46 centimeters].

*1 Kgs 7:31b Hebrew *1 1/2 cubits* [69 centimeters]; also in 7:32.

*1 Kgs 7:35 Hebrew *half a cubit wide* [23 centimeters].

*1 Kgs 7:38 Hebrew *40 baths* [840 liters].

1 KINGS 8:1-66 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 8:2 Hebrew *at the festival in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.* The Festival of Shelters began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day occurred in late September, October, or early November.

*1 Kgs 8:4 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* i.e., the tent mentioned in 2 Sam 6:17 and 1 Chr 16:1.

*1 Kgs 8:9 Hebrew *at Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*1 Kgs 8:13 Some Greek texts add the line *Is this not written in the Book of Jashar?*

*1 Kgs 8:65a Hebrew *the festival;* see note on 8:2.

*1 Kgs 8:65b Hebrew *seven days and seven days, fourteen days;* compare parallel text at 2 Chr 7:8-10.

*1 Kgs 8:66 Hebrew *On the eighth day,* probably referring to the day following the seven-day Festival of Shelters; compare parallel text at 2 Chr 7:9-10.

1 KINGS 9:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 9:14a Or *For Hiram had paid.*

*1 Kgs 9:14b Hebrew *120 talents* [4,000 kilograms].

*1 Kgs 9:15 Hebrew *the millo;* also in 9:24. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Kgs 9:18 An alternate reading in the Masoretic Text reads *Tadmor*.

*1 Kgs 9:19 Or *and charioteers*.

*1 Kgs 9:21 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*1 Kgs 9:26a As in Greek version (see also 2 Kgs 14:22; 16:6); Hebrew reads *Eloth,* a variant spelling of Elath.

*1 Kgs 9:26b Hebrew *sea of reeds*.

*1 Kgs 9:28 Hebrew *420 talents* [14 metric tons].

1 KINGS 10:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 10:1 Or *which was due to the name of the LORD*. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Kgs 10:6 Hebrew *your words*.

*1 Kgs 10:8 Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate read *your wives.*

*1 Kgs 10:10 Hebrew *120 talents* [4,000 kilograms].

*1 Kgs 10:11 Hebrew *almug wood;* also in 10:12.

*1 Kgs 10:14 Hebrew *666 talents* [23 metric tons].

*1 Kgs 10:16 Hebrew *600 [shekels] of gold* [6.8 kilograms].

*1 Kgs 10:17 Hebrew *3 minas* [1.8 kilograms].

*1 Kgs 10:22 Or *and baboons.*

*1 Kgs 10:26 Or *charioteers;* also in 10:26b.

*1 Kgs 10:27 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*1 Kgs 10:28a Possibly *Muzur,* a district near Cilicia; also in 10:29.

*1 Kgs 10:28b Hebrew *Kue,* probably another name for Cilicia.

*1 Kgs 10:29a Hebrew *600 [shekels] of silver,* about 15 pounds or 6.8 kilograms in weight.

*1 Kgs 10:29b Hebrew *150 [shekels],* about 3.8 pounds or 1.7 kilograms in weight.

1 KINGS 11:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 11:5 Hebrew *Milcom,* a variant spelling of Molech; also in 11:33.

*1 Kgs 11:7 Hebrew *On the mountain east of Jerusalem.*

*1 Kgs 11:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *weaned him.*

*1 Kgs 11:27 Hebrew *the millo.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Kgs 11:33 As in Greek, Syriac, and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *For they have.*

1 KINGS 12:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 12:2 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate (see also 2 Chr 10:2); Hebrew reads *he lived in Egypt.*

*1 Kgs 12:18 As in some Greek manuscripts and Syriac version (see also 4:6; 5:14); Hebrew reads *Adoram.*

*1 Kgs 12:25 Hebrew *Penuel,* a variant spelling of Peniel.

*1 Kgs 12:28 Hebrew *to them.*

*1 Kgs 12:32 This day of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late October or early November, exactly one month after the annual Festival of Shelters in Judah (see Lev 23:34).

1 KINGS 13:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 13:11 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *son.*

*1 Kgs 13:12 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *They had seen.*

1 KINGS 14:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 14:15 Hebrew *the river.*

*1 Kgs 14:31 Also known as *Abijah.*

1 KINGS 15:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 15:1 Also known as *Abijah.*

*1 Kgs 15:2 Hebrew *Abishalom* (also in 15:10), a variant spelling of Absalom; compare 2 Chr 11:20.

*1 Kgs 15:6 As in a few Hebrew and Greek manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts read *between Rehoboam and Jeroboam.*

*1 Kgs 15:10 Or *The queen mother;* Hebrew reads *His mother* (also in 15:13); compare 15:2.

*1 Kgs 15:12 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

*1 Kgs 15:19 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *There is a treaty*.

1 KINGS 16:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 16:24 Hebrew *for 2 talents* [68 kilograms] *of silver.*

*1 Kgs 16:34 An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition reads *He killed his oldest son when he laid its foundations, and he killed his youngest son when he set up its gates.*

1 KINGS 17:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

1 KINGS 18:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 18:19 Hebrew *who eat at Jezebel's table.*

*1 Kgs 18:27 Or *is busy somewhere else,* or *is engaged in business.*

*1 Kgs 18:31 Hebrew *each of the tribes of the sons of Jacob to whom the LORD had said, "Your name will be Israel."*

*1 Kgs 18:32 Hebrew *2 seahs* [14.6 liters] *of seed.*

*1 Kgs 18:33 Verse 18:34 in the Hebrew text begins here.

*1 Kgs 18:36 Hebrew *and Israel.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*1 Kgs 18:46 Hebrew *He bound up his loins.*

1 KINGS 19:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 19:8 Hebrew *to Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*1 Kgs 19:16 Hebrew *descendant of Nimshi;* compare 2 Kgs 9:2, 14.

1 KINGS 20:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 20:12 Or *in Succoth;* also in 20:16.

*1 Kgs 20:22 Hebrew *at the turn of the year;* similarly in 20:26. The first day of the year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April.

*1 Kgs 20:39 Hebrew *1 talent* [34 kilograms].

*1 Kgs 20:42 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

1 KINGS 21:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 21:17 Hebrew *Elijah the Tishbite;* also in 21:28.

*1 Kgs 21:21 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks *So now the LORD says.*

*1 Kgs 21:23 As in several Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and Latin Vulgate (see also 2 Kgs 9:26, 36); most Hebrew manuscripts read *at the city wall.*

*1 Kgs 21:26 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

1 KINGS 22:1-53 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Kgs 22:17 Hebrew *These people have no master.*

*1 Kgs 22:34 Hebrew *Turn your hand.*

*1 Kgs 22:38 Or *his blood, and the prostitutes bathed [in it];* or *his blood, and they washed his armor.*

*1 Kgs 22:43 Verses 22:43b-53 are numbered 22:44-54 in Hebrew text.

*1 Kgs 22:48 Hebrew *fleet of ships of Tarshish.*

2 Kings Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

2 KINGS 1:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 1:8 Or *He was wearing clothing made of hair.*

*2 Kgs 1:17 Hebrew *Jehoram,* a variant spelling of Joram.

2 KINGS 2:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 2:21 Or *or make the land unproductive;* Hebrew reads *or barrenness.*

2 KINGS 3:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 3:1 Hebrew *Jehoram,* a variant spelling of Joram; also in 3:6.

*2 Kgs 3:11 Hebrew *He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.*

*2 Kgs 3:13 Hebrew *What is there in common between you and me?*

*2 Kgs 3:15 Hebrew *the hand.*

*2 Kgs 3:24 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Kgs 3:27 Or *So Israel's anger was great.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

2 KINGS 4:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 4:29 Hebrew *Bind up your loins.*

2 KINGS 5:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 5:1 Or *from a contagious skin disease.* The Hebrew word used here and throughout this passage can describe various skin diseases.

*2 Kgs 5:5 Hebrew *10 talents* [340 kilograms] *of silver, 6,000 [shekels]* [68 kilograms] *of gold.*

*2 Kgs 5:13 Hebrew *My father.*

*2 Kgs 5:22 Hebrew *1 talent* [34 kilograms].

*2 Kgs 5:23 Hebrew *take 2 talents* [150 pounds or 68 kilograms].

*2 Kgs 5:24 Hebrew *the Ophel.*

2 KINGS 6:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 6:25 Hebrew *sold for 80 [shekels]* [2 pounds or 0.9 kilograms] *of silver, and 1/4 of a cab* [0.3 liters] *of dove's dung sold for 5 [shekels]* [2 ounces or 57 grams]. *Dove's dung* may be a variety of wild vegetable.

*2 Kgs 6:33 Hebrew *he.*

2 KINGS 7:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 7:1a Hebrew *1 seah* [7.3 liters] *of choice flour will cost 1 shekel* [0.4 ounces or 11 grams]; also in 7:16, 18.

*2 Kgs 7:1b Hebrew *2 seahs* [14.6 liters] *of barley grain will cost 1 shekel* [0.4 ounces or 11 grams]; also in 7:16, 18.

*2 Kgs 7:3 Or *with a contagious skin disease.* The Hebrew word used here and throughout this passage can describe various skin diseases.

*2 Kgs 7:6 Possibly *and the people of Muzur,* a district near Cilicia.

2 KINGS 8:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 8:11a Hebrew *He stared at him.*

*2 Kgs 8:11b The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Kgs 8:13 Hebrew *a dog.*

*2 Kgs 8:21a Hebrew *Joram,* a variant spelling of Jehoram; also in 8:23, 24.

*2 Kgs 8:21b Greek version reads *Seir.*

*2 Kgs 8:21c Or *he went out and escaped.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Kgs 8:29 Hebrew *Ramah,* a variant spelling of Ramoth.

2 KINGS 9:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 9:1 Hebrew *Bind up your loins.*

*2 Kgs 9:15 Hebrew *Jehoram,* a variant spelling of Joram; also in 9:17, 21, 22, 23, 24.

*2 Kgs 9:23 Hebrew *turned his hands*.

*2 Kgs 9:27 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew lacks *So they shot Ahaziah.*

*2 Kgs 9:31 See 1 Kgs 16:9-10, where Zimri killed his master, King Elah.

2 KINGS 10:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 10:1 As in some Greek manuscripts and Latin Vulgate (see also 10:6); Hebrew reads *of Jezreel.*

*2 Kgs 10:25a Or *and they left their bodies lying there;* or *and they threw them out into the outermost court.*

*2 Kgs 10:25b Hebrew *city*.

*2 Kgs 10:26 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *sacred pillars.*

2 KINGS 11:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 11:2 Hebrew *Joram,* a variant spelling of Jehoram.

*2 Kgs 11:12 Or *a copy of the covenant.*

*2 Kgs 11:15 Or *Bring her out from between the ranks;* or *Take her out of the Temple precincts.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Kgs 11:21a Verse 11:21 is numbered 12:1 in Hebrew text.

*2 Kgs 11:21b Hebrew *Jehoash,* a variant spelling of Joash.

2 KINGS 12:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 12:1a Verses 12:1-21 are numbered 12:2-22 in Hebrew text.

*2 Kgs 12:1b Hebrew *Jehoash,* a variant spelling of Joash; also in 12:2, 4, 6, 7, 18.

*2 Kgs 12:21 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *Jozabad.*

2 KINGS 13:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 13:9 Hebrew *Joash,* a variant spelling of Jehoash; also in 13:10, 12, 13, 14, 25.

2 KINGS 14:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 14:1 Hebrew *Joash,* a variant spelling of Jehoash; also in 14:13, 23, 27.

*2 Kgs 14:6 Deut 24:16.

*2 Kgs 14:8 Hebrew *Come, let us look one another in the face.*

*2 Kgs 14:13 Hebrew *400 cubits* [180 meters].

*2 Kgs 14:21 Hebrew *Azariah,* a variant spelling of Uzziah.

*2 Kgs 14:25 Hebrew *the sea of the Arabah.*

*2 Kgs 14:28 Or *to Yaudi.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Kgs 14:29 As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew lacks *he was buried in Samaria.*

2 KINGS 15:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 15:1 Hebrew *Azariah,* a variant spelling of Uzziah; also in 15:6, 7, 8, 17, 23, 27.

*2 Kgs 15:5 Or *with a contagious skin disease.* The Hebrew word used here and throughout this passage can describe various skin diseases.

*2 Kgs 15:10 Or *at Ibleam.*

*2 Kgs 15:16 As in some Greek manuscripts; Hebrew reads *Tiphsah.*

*2 Kgs 15:19a Hebrew *Pul,* another name for Tiglath-pileser.

*2 Kgs 15:19b Hebrew *1,000 talents* [34 metric tons].

*2 Kgs 15:20 Hebrew *50 shekels* [20 ounces or 570 grams].

2 KINGS 16:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 16:3 Or *even making his son pass through the fire.*

*2 Kgs 16:6a As in Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *Rezin king of Aram.*

*2 Kgs 16:6b As in Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *Aram.*

*2 Kgs 16:6c As in Greek version, Latin Vulgate, and an alternate reading of the Masoretic Text; the other alternate reads *Arameans.*

*2 Kgs 16:7 Hebrew *your son.*

*2 Kgs 16:15 Hebrew *the great altar.*

*2 Kgs 16:18 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

2 KINGS 17:1-41 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 17:4 Or *by asking the king of Egypt at Sais.*

*2 Kgs 17:12 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

*2 Kgs 17:17 Or *They even made their sons and daughters pass through the fire.*

*2 Kgs 17:21 Hebrew *he;* compare 1 Kgs 11:31-32.

2 KINGS 18:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 18:2 As in parallel text at 2 Chr 29:1; Hebrew reads *Abi,* a variant spelling of Abijah.

*2 Kgs 18:4 *Nehushtan* sounds like the Hebrew terms that mean "snake," "bronze," and "unclean thing."

*2 Kgs 18:13 The fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign was 701 B.C.

*2 Kgs 18:14 Hebrew *300 talents* [10 metric tons] *of silver and 30 talents* [1 metric ton] *of gold.*

*2 Kgs 18:17a Or *the rabshakeh;* also in 18:19, 26, 27, 28, 37.

*2 Kgs 18:17b Or *bleached.*

*2 Kgs 18:26 Hebrew *in the dialect of Judah;* also in 18:28.

2 KINGS 19:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 19:4 Or *the rabshakeh;* also in 19:8.

*2 Kgs 19:7 Hebrew *I will put a spirit in him.*

*2 Kgs 19:9 Hebrew *of Cush.*

*2 Kgs 19:31 As in Greek and Syriac versions, Latin Vulgate, and an alternate reading of the Masoretic Text (see also Isa 37:32); the other alternate reads *the LORD.*

*2 Kgs 19:35 Hebrew *When they.*

*2 Kgs 19:37 As in Greek version and an alternate reading of the Masoretic Text (see also Isa 37:38); the other alternate reading lacks *his sons.*

2 KINGS 20:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 20:4 As in Greek version and an alternate reading in the Masoretic Text; the other alternate reads *the middle of the city.*

*2 Kgs 20:9 Or *The shadow on the sundial has gone forward ten steps; do you want it to go backward ten steps?*

*2 Kgs 20:11 Hebrew *the steps.*

*2 Kgs 20:12 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions (see also Isa 39:1); Masoretic Text reads *Berodach-baladan.*

*2 Kgs 20:20 Hebrew *watercourse.*

2 KINGS 21:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 21:6 Or *also made his son pass through the fire.*

*2 Kgs 21:11 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung; also in 21:21.

*2 Kgs 21:13 Hebrew *the same plumb line I used for Samaria and the same plumb bob.*

2 KINGS 22:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 22:14 Or *the Second Quarter,* a newer section of Jerusalem. Hebrew reads *the Mishneh.*

*2 Kgs 22:16 Hebrew *this place;* also in 22:19, 20.

2 KINGS 23:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 23:9 Hebrew *did not come up to.*

*2 Kgs 23:10 Or *to make a son or daughter pass through the fire.*

*2 Kgs 23:11 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Kgs 23:12 Or *He quickly removed them.*

*2 Kgs 23:13 Hebrew *Milcom,* a variant spelling of Molech.

*2 Kgs 23:16 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks *when Jeroboam stood beside the altar at the festival. Then Josiah turned and looked up at the tomb of the man of God.*

*2 Kgs 23:19 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *the LORD.*

*2 Kgs 23:24 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

*2 Kgs 23:29a Or *Josiah went out to meet him.*

*2 Kgs 23:29b Hebrew *he.*

*2 Kgs 23:33a The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Kgs 23:33b Hebrew *100 talents* [3,400 kilograms] *of silver and 1 talent* [34 kilograms] *of gold.*

2 KINGS 24:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 24:2 Or *Chaldean.*

*2 Kgs 24:13 Or *He cut apart.*

*2 Kgs 24:17 Hebrew *his.*

2 KINGS 25:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Kgs 25:1 Hebrew *on the tenth day of the tenth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. A number of events in 2 Kings can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Babylonian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This day was January 15, 588 B.C.

*2 Kgs 25:3 Hebrew *By the ninth day of the [fourth] month* [in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign] (compare Jer 39:2; 52:6 and the

notes there). This day was July 18, 586 B.C.; also see note on 25:1.

*2 Kgs 25:4a Or *the Chaldeans;* also in 25:13, 25, 26.

*2 Kgs 25:4b As in Greek version (see also Jer 39:4; 52:7); Hebrew lacks *escaped.*

*2 Kgs 25:4c Hebrew *the Arabah.*

*2 Kgs 25:5 Or *Chaldean*; also in 25:10, 24.

*2 Kgs 25:8 Hebrew *On the seventh day of the fifth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was August 14, 586 B.C.; also see note on 25:1.

*2 Kgs 25:9 Or *destroyed the houses of all the important people.*

*2 Kgs 25:17a Hebrew *18 cubits* [8.3 meters].

*2 Kgs 25:17b As in parallel texts at 1 Kgs 7:16, 2 Chr 3:15, and Jer 52:22, all of which read *5 cubits* [2.3 meters]; Hebrew reads *3 cubits,* which is 4.5 feet or 1.4 meters.

*2 Kgs 25:23 As in parallel text at Jer 40:8; Hebrew reads *Jaazaniah*, a variant spelling of Jezaniah.

*2 Kgs 25:25 Hebrew *in the seventh month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This month occurred within the months of October and November 586 B.C.; also see note on 25:1.

*2 Kgs 25:27a Hebrew *He raised the head of.*

*2 Kgs 25:27b As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions (see also Jer 52:31); Masoretic Text lacks *released him.*

*2 Kgs 25:27c Hebrew *on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 2, 561 B.C.; also see note on 25:1.

1 Chronicles Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

1 CHRONICLES 1:1-54 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 1:4 As in Greek version (see also Gen 5:3-32); Hebrew lacks *The sons of Noah were.*

*1 Chr 1:6 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also Gen 10:3); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Diphath.*

*1 Chr 1:8 Or *Egypt;* also in 1:11.

*1 Chr 1:12 Hebrew *Casluhites, from whom the Philistines came, Caphtorites.* See Jer 47:4; Amos 9:7.

*1 Chr 1:13 Hebrew *ancestor of Heth.*

*1 Chr 1:17a As in one Hebrew manuscript and some Greek manuscripts (see also Gen 10:23); most Hebrew manuscripts lack *The descendants of Aram were.*

*1 Chr 1:17b As in parallel text at Gen 10:23; Hebrew reads *and Meshech.*

*1 Chr 1:22 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version (see also Gen 10:28); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Ebal.*

*1 Chr 1:24 Some Greek manuscripts read *Arphaxad, Cainan, Shelah.* See notes on Gen 10:24; 11:12-13.

*1 Chr 1:34 *Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob.

*1 Chr 1:36a As in many Hebrew manuscripts and a few Greek manuscripts (see also Gen 36:11); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Zephi.*

*1 Chr 1:36b As in some Greek manuscripts (see also Gen 36:12); Hebrew reads *Kenaz, Timna, and Amalek*.

*1 Chr 1:39 As in parallel text at Gen 36:22; Hebrew reads *and Homam*.

*1 Chr 1:40a As in many Hebrew manuscripts and a few Greek manuscripts (see also Gen 36:23); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Alian*.

*1 Chr 1:40b As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Gen 36:23); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Shephi*.

*1 Chr 1:41 As in many Hebrew manuscripts and some Greek manuscripts (see also Gen 36:26); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Hamran*.

*1 Chr 1:42a As in many Hebrew and Greek manuscripts (see also Gen 36:27); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Jaakan*.

*1 Chr 1:42b Hebrew *Dishon;* compare 1:38 and parallel text at Gen 36:28.

*1 Chr 1:43 Or *before an Israelite king ruled over them*.

*1 Chr 1:50 As in many Hebrew manuscripts, some Greek manuscripts, Syriac version, and Latin Vulgate (see also Gen 36:39);

most Hebrew manuscripts read *Pai.*

*1 Chr 1:51 As in an alternate reading of the Masoretic Text (see also Gen 36:40); the other alternate reads *Aliah.*

1 CHRONICLES 2:1-55 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 2:1 *Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob.

*1 Chr 2:6 As in many Hebrew manuscripts, some Greek manuscripts, and Syriac version (see also 1 Kgs 4:31); Hebrew reads *Dara.*

*1 Chr 2:7a Hebrew *Achar;* compare Josh 7:1. *Achar* means "disaster."

*1 Chr 2:7b The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*1 Chr 2:9 Hebrew *Kelubai,* a variant spelling of Caleb; compare 2:18.

*1 Chr 2:11 As in Greek version (see also Ruth 4:20); Hebrew reads *Salma.*

*1 Chr 2:18 Or *Caleb had a daughter named Jerioth from his wife, Azubah.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 2:19 Hebrew *Ephrath,* a variant spelling of Ephrathah; compare 2:50 and 4:4.

*1 Chr 2:23 Or *captured Havvoth-jair.*

*1 Chr 2:24 Or *the founder of;* also in 2:42, 45, 49.

*1 Chr 2:42 Or *who founded Hebron.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 2:55 Or *the founder of Beth-recab.*

1 CHRONICLES 3:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 3:5a As in Syriac version (see also 14:4; 2 Sam 5:14); Hebrew reads *Shimea.*

*1 Chr 3:5b Hebrew *Bathshua,* a variant spelling of Bathsheba.

*1 Chr 3:6a As in some Hebrew and Greek manuscripts (see also 14:5-7 and 2 Sam 5:15); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Elishama.*

*1 Chr 3:6b Hebrew *Eliphelet;* compare parallel text at 14:5-7.

*1 Chr 3:11 Hebrew *Joram,* a variant spelling of Jehoram.

*1 Chr 3:12 Hebrew *Azariah,* a variant spelling of Uzziah.

*1 Chr 3:15 Hebrew *Shallum,* another name for Jehoahaz.

*1 Chr 3:16 Hebrew *The sons of Jehoiakim were his son Jeconiah* [a variant spelling of Jehoiachin] *and his son Zedekiah.*

*1 Chr 3:17 Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin.

1 CHRONICLES 4:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 4:3 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *father of.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 4:4 Or *the founder of;* also in 4:5, 12, 14, 17, 18, and perhaps other instances where the text reads *the father of.*

*1 Chr 4:7 As in an alternate reading in the Masoretic Text (see also Latin Vulgate); the other alternate and the Greek version read

Zohar.

*1 Chr 4:9 *Jabez* sounds like a Hebrew word meaning “distress” or “pain.”

*1 Chr 4:13 As in some Greek manuscripts and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *and Meonothai.*

*1 Chr 4:14 Or *Joab, the father of Ge-harashim.*

*1 Chr 4:17 Or *Jether’s wife became;* Hebrew reads *She became.*

*1 Chr 4:24a As in Syriac version (see also Gen 46:10; Exod 6:15); Hebrew reads *Nemuel.*

*1 Chr 4:24b As in parallel texts at Gen 46:10 and Exod 6:15; Hebrew reads *Zerah.*

*1 Chr 4:33 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also Josh 19:8); Hebrew reads *Baal.*

*1 Chr 4:39 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Gedor.*

*1 Chr 4:41 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying

them or by giving them as an offering.

1 CHRONICLES 5:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 5:1 *Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob.

*1 Chr 5:2 Or *and from Judah came a prince.*

*1 Chr 5:6 Hebrew *Tilgath-pilneser,* a variant spelling of Tiglath-pileser; also in 5:26.

*1 Chr 5:7 Hebrew *His.*

*1 Chr 5:24 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *and Epher.*

1 CHRONICLES 6:1-81 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 6:1 Verses 6:1-15 are numbered 5:27-41 in Hebrew text.

*1 Chr 6:10 Hebrew *the house.*

*1 Chr 6:16a Verses 6:16-81 are numbered 6:1-66 in Hebrew text.

*1 Chr 6:16b Hebrew *Gershom,* a variant spelling of Gershon (see 6:1); also in 6:17, 20, 43, 62, 71.

*1 Chr 6:23 Hebrew *Ebiasaph,* a variant spelling of Abiasaph (also in 6:37); compare parallel text at Exod 6:24.

*1 Chr 6:27 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 6:33-34); Hebrew lacks *and Samuel.*

*1 Chr 6:28 As in some Greek manuscripts and the Syriac version (see also 6:33 and 1 Sam 8:2); Hebrew lacks *Joel.*

*1 Chr 6:32 Hebrew *the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting.*

*1 Chr 6:38 *Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob.

*1 Chr 6:39 Hebrew lacks *from the clan of Gershon;* see 6:43.

*1 Chr 6:57 As in parallel text at Josh 21:13; Hebrew reads *were given the cities of refuge: Hebron, and the following towns, each with its pasturelands.*

*1 Chr 6:58 As in parallel text at Josh 21:15; Masoretic Text reads *Hilez;* other manuscripts read *Hilen.*

*1 Chr 6:59a As in parallel text at Josh 21:16; Hebrew reads *Ashan.*

*1 Chr 6:59b As in Syriac version (see also Josh 21:16); Hebrew lacks *Juttah.*

*1 Chr 6:60 As in parallel text at Josh 21:17; Hebrew lacks *Gibeon.*

*1 Chr 6:66-67 As in parallel text at Josh 21:21. Hebrew text reads *were given the cities of refuge: Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and the following towns, each with its pasturelands.*

*1 Chr 6:77a As in Greek version (see also Josh 21:34); Hebrew lacks *Jokneam, Kartah.*

*1 Chr 6:77b As in Greek version (see also Josh 19:13); Hebrew reads *Rimmono.*

*1 Chr 6:78 Hebrew *Jahzah,* a variant spelling of Jahaz.

1 CHRONICLES 7:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 7:13a As in parallel text at Gen 46:24; Hebrew reads *Jahziel,* a variant spelling of Jahzeel.

*1 Chr 7:13b As in some Hebrew and Greek manuscripts (see also Gen 46:24; Num 26:49); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Shallum.*

*1 Chr 7:15 Or *Makir took a wife from.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 7:23 *Beriah* sounds like a Hebrew term meaning “tragedy” or “misfortune.”

*1 Chr 7:29a Hebrew *Beth-shean,* a variant spelling of Beth-shan.

*1 Chr 7:29b *Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob.

*1 Chr 7:34 Or *The sons of Shomer, his brother, were.*

*1 Chr 7:35 Possibly another name for *Hotham;* compare 7:32.

*1 Chr 7:37 Possibly another name for *Jether;* compare 7:38.

1 CHRONICLES 8:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 8:3 Possibly *Gera the father of Ehud;* compare 8:6.

*1 Chr 8:7 Or *Gera, that is Heglam, was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.*

*1 Chr 8:29a As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 9:35); Hebrew lacks *Jeiel.*

*1 Chr 8:29b Or *the founder of.*

*1 Chr 8:30 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 9:36); Hebrew lacks *Ner.*

*1 Chr 8:31 As in parallel text at 9:37; Hebrew reads *Zeker,* a variant spelling of Zechariah.

*1 Chr 8:32 As in parallel text at 9:38; Hebrew reads *Shimeah,* a variant spelling of Shimeam.

*1 Chr 8:35 As in parallel text at 9:41; Hebrew reads *Tarea,* a variant spelling of Tahrea.

*1 Chr 8:36 As in parallel text at 9:42; Hebrew reads *Jehoaddah,* a variant spelling of Jadah.

*1 Chr 8:37 As in parallel text at 9:43; Hebrew reads *Raphah,* a variant spelling of Rephaiah.

1 CHRONICLES 9:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 9:19 Hebrew *Ebiasaph,* a variant spelling of Abiasaph; compare Exod 6:24.

*1 Chr 9:21 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting.*

*1 Chr 9:35 Or *the founder of.*

*1 Chr 9:41 As in Syriac version and Latin Vulgate (see also 8:35); Hebrew lacks *and Ahaz.*

*1 Chr 9:42 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 8:36); Hebrew reads *Jarah.*

1 CHRONICLES 10:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

1 CHRONICLES 11:1-47 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 11:2 Or *For some time.*

*1 Chr 11:8 Hebrew *the millo.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 11:11 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 2 Sam 23:8); Hebrew reads *leader of the Thirty,* or *leader of the captains.*

*1 Chr 11:12 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 23:9 (see also 1 Chr 27:4); Hebrew reads *Dodo,* a variant spelling of Dodai.

*1 Chr 11:14 Hebrew *they.*

*1 Chr 11:19 Hebrew *Shall I drink the lifeblood of these men?*

*1 Chr 11:20 As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *the Three;* also in 11:21.

*1 Chr 11:22 Or *two sons of Ariel.*

*1 Chr 11:23 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters].

*1 Chr 11:27 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 23:25; Hebrew reads *Shammoth from Haror.*

*1 Chr 11:29 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 23:28; Hebrew reads *Ilai.*

*1 Chr 11:32a Or *from the ravines of Gaash.*

*1 Chr 11:32b As in parallel text at 2 Sam 23:31; Hebrew reads *Abiel.*

*1 Chr 11:33 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 23:31; Hebrew reads *Baharum.*

*1 Chr 11:34 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 23:32; Hebrew reads *sons of Hashem.*

*1 Chr 11:35 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 23:33; Hebrew reads *son of Sacar.*

*1 Chr 11:37 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 23:35; Hebrew reads *Naarai.*

*1 Chr 11:47 Or *the Mezobaite.*

1 CHRONICLES 12:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 12:4 Verses 12:4b-40 are numbered 12:5-41 in Hebrew text.

1 CHRONICLES 13:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 13:1 Hebrew *the commanders of thousands and of hundreds.*

*1 Chr 13:6 Or *the Ark of God, where the Name is proclaimed—the name.*

*1 Chr 13:9 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 6:6; Hebrew reads *Kidon.*

1 CHRONICLES 14:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 14:7 Hebrew *Beeliada,* a variant spelling of Eliada; compare 3:8 and parallel text at 2 Sam 5:16.

*1 Chr 14:14 Or *aspen,* or *balsam;* also in 14:15. The exact identification of this tree is uncertain.

1 CHRONICLES 15:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 15:7 Hebrew *Gershom,* a variant spelling of Gershon.

*1 Chr 15:18 As in several Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also parallel lists in 15:20; 16:5); Masoretic Text reads *Zechariah ben Jaaziel.*

*1 Chr 15:20 Hebrew adds *according to Alamoth,* which is probably a musical term. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 15:21 Hebrew adds *according to the Sheminith,* which is probably a musical term. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 15:23 Hebrew *chosen as gatekeepers for;* also in 15:24.

*1 Chr 15:25 Hebrew *the commanders of thousands.*

*1 Chr 15:27 Hebrew *a linen ephod.*

1 CHRONICLES 16:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 16:3 Or *a portion of meat.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 16:42 Or *to accompany the sacred music;* or *to accompany singing to God.*

1 CHRONICLES 17:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 17:1 Hebrew *a house of cedar.*

*1 Chr 17:17 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

1 CHRONICLES 18:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 18:3 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 18:6 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate (see also 2 Sam 8:6); Hebrew lacks *several army garrisons.*

*1 Chr 18:8 Hebrew reads *Tibhath,* a variant spelling of Tebah; compare parallel text at 2 Sam 8:8.

*1 Chr 18:9 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 8:9; Hebrew reads *Tou;* also in 18:10.

*1 Chr 18:10 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 8:10; Hebrew reads *Hadoram,* a variant spelling of Joram.

*1 Chr 18:16a As in some Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac version, and Latin Vulgate (see also 2 Sam 8:17); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Abimelech.*

*1 Chr 18:16b As in parallel text at 2 Sam 8:17; Hebrew reads *Shavsha.*

*1 Chr 18:17 Hebrew *of the Kerethites and Pelethites.*

1 CHRONICLES 19:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 19:1 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 10:1; Hebrew lacks *Hanun.*

*1 Chr 19:6 Hebrew *1,000 talents* [34,000 kilograms].

*1 Chr 19:16a Hebrew *the river.*

*1 Chr 19:16b As in parallel text at 2 Sam 10:16; Hebrew reads *Shophach;* also in 19:18.

1 CHRONICLES 20:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 20:1 Hebrew *At the turn of the year.* The first day of the year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April.

*1 Chr 20:2a Or *from the head of Milcom* (as in Greek version and Latin Vulgate). Milcom, also called Molech, was the god of the Ammonites.

*1 Chr 20:2b Hebrew *1 talent* [34 kilograms].

*1 Chr 20:3 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 12:31; Hebrew reads *and cut them with saws, iron picks, and saws.*

*1 Chr 20:4a As in parallel text at 2 Sam 21:18; Hebrew reads *Sippai.*

*1 Chr 20:4b Hebrew *descendant of the Rephaites;* also in 20:6, 8.

1 CHRONICLES 21:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 21:15 As in parallel text at 2 Sam 24:16; Hebrew reads *Ornan,* another name for Araunah; also in 21:18-28.

*1 Chr 21:25 Hebrew *600 shekels of gold,* about 15 pounds or 6.8 kilograms in weight.

1 CHRONICLES 22:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 22:9 *Solomon* sounds like and is probably derived from the Hebrew word for “peace.”

*1 Chr 22:14 Hebrew *100,000 talents* [3,400 metric tons] *of gold, 1,000,000 talents* [34,000 metric tons] *of silver.*

1 CHRONICLES 23:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 23:7 Hebrew *Ladan* (also in 23:8, 9), a variant spelling of Libni; compare 6:17.

*1 Chr 23:10 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate (see also 23:11); Hebrew reads *Zina.*

*1 Chr 23:32 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting and the sanctuary.*

1 CHRONICLES 24:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 24:20 Hebrew *Shubael* (also in 24:20b), a variant spelling of Shebuel; compare 23:16 and 26:24.

*1 Chr 24:22 Hebrew *Shelomoth* (also in 24:22b), a variant spelling of Shelomith; compare 23:18.

*1 Chr 24:23 Hebrew *From the descendants of Jeriah;* compare 23:19.

1 CHRONICLES 25:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 25:3 As in one Hebrew manuscript and some Greek manuscripts (see also 25:17); most Hebrew manuscripts lack *Shimei.*

*1 Chr 25:4 Hebrew *Shebuel,* a variant spelling of Shubael; compare

25:20.

*1 Chr 25:9 As in Greek version; Hebrew lacks *and twelve of his sons and relatives.*

*1 Chr 25:11 Hebrew *Izri,* a variant spelling of Zeri; compare 25:3.

*1 Chr 25:14 Hebrew *Jesarelah,* a variant spelling of Asarelah; compare 25:2.

*1 Chr 25:18 Hebrew *Azarel,* a variant spelling of Uzziel; compare 25:4.

*1 Chr 25:22 Hebrew *Jeremoth,* a variant spelling of Jerimoth; compare 25:4.

*1 Chr 25:24 Hebrew *Joshbekasha,* a variant spelling of Joshbekashah; compare 25:4.

1 CHRONICLES 26:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 26:1 As in Greek version (see also Exod 6:24); Hebrew reads *Asaph.*

*1 Chr 26:14 Hebrew *Shelemiah,* a variant spelling of Meshelemiah;

compare 26:2.

*1 Chr 26:16 Or *the gate of Shalleketh on the upper road* (also in 26:18). The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 26:18 Or *the colonnade.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*1 Chr 26:21a Hebrew *Ladan,* a variant spelling of Libni; compare 6:17.

*1 Chr 26:21b Hebrew *Jehieli* (also in 26:22), a variant spelling of Jehiel; compare 23:8.

*1 Chr 26:26 Hebrew *the commanders of thousands and of hundreds.*

*1 Chr 26:28 Hebrew *Shelomith,* a variant spelling of Shelomoth.

*1 Chr 26:29 Or *were given outside work;* or *were given work away from the Temple area.*

*1 Chr 26:31 Hebrew *Jerijah,* a variant spelling of Jeriah; compare 23:19.

1 CHRONICLES 27:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 27:1 Hebrew *commanders of thousands and of hundreds.*

*1 Chr 27:8 Hebrew *Shamhuth,* a variant spelling of Shammah; compare 11:27 and 2 Sam 23:25.

*1 Chr 27:15 Hebrew *Heldai,* a variant spelling of Heled; compare 11:30 and 2 Sam 23:29.

*1 Chr 27:24 Or *never finished it, and yet.*

*1 Chr 27:28 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

1 CHRONICLES 28:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 28:1 Hebrew *the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.*

*1 Chr 28:12 Or *the plans of the spirit that was with him.*

*1 Chr 28:18 Hebrew *for the gold cherub chariot.*

*1 Chr 28:19 Or *was written under the direction of the LORD.*

1 CHRONICLES 29:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Chr 29:4a Hebrew *3,000 talents* [102 metric tons] *of gold.*

*1 Chr 29:4b Hebrew *7,000 talents* [238 metric tons] *of silver.*

*1 Chr 29:6 Hebrew *the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.*

*1 Chr 29:7a Hebrew *5,000 talents* [170 metric tons] *of gold.*

*1 Chr 29:7b Hebrew *10,000 darics* [a Persian coin] *of gold,* about 185 pounds or 84 kilograms in weight.

*1 Chr 29:7c Hebrew *10,000 talents* [340 metric tons] *of silver.*

*1 Chr 29:7d Hebrew *18,000 talents* [612 metric tons] *of bronze.*

*1 Chr 29:7e Hebrew *100,000 talents* [3,400 metric tons] *of iron.*

*1 Chr 29:10 *Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob.

2 Chronicles Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

2 CHRONICLES 1:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 1:2 Hebrew *the commanders of thousands and of hundreds.*

*2 Chr 1:3 Hebrew *Tent of Meeting;* also in 1:6, 13.

*2 Chr 1:5a As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate, and some Hebrew manuscripts. Masoretic Text reads *he placed.*

*2 Chr 1:5b Hebrew *to consult him.*

*2 Chr 1:10 Hebrew *to go out and come in before this people.*

*2 Chr 1:14 Or *charioteers;* also in 1:14b.

*2 Chr 1:15 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*2 Chr 1:16a Possibly *Muzur,* a district near Cilicia; also in 1:17.

*2 Chr 1:16b Hebrew *Kue,* probably another name for Cilicia.

*2 Chr 1:17a Hebrew *600 [shekels] of silver,* about 15 pounds or 6.8 kilograms in weight.

*2 Chr 1:17b Hebrew *150 [shekels],* about 3.8 pounds or 1.7 kilograms in weight.

2 CHRONICLES 2:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 2:1 Verse 2:1 is numbered 1:18 in Hebrew text.

*2 Chr 2:2 Verses 2:2-18 are numbered 2:1-17 in Hebrew text.

*2 Chr 2:3 Hebrew *Huram,* a variant spelling of Hiram; also in 2:11.

*2 Chr 2:8 Or *juniper;* Hebrew reads *algum,* perhaps a variant spelling of *almug;* compare 9:10-11 and parallel text at 1 Kgs 10:11-12.

*2 Chr 2:10a Hebrew *20,000 cors* [4,400 kiloliters] *of crushed wheat, 20,000 cors of barley*.

*2 Chr 2:10b Hebrew *20,000 baths* [420 kiloliters] *of wine, and 20,000 baths of olive oil.*

*2 Chr 2:16 Hebrew *the sea.*

2 CHRONICLES 3:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 3:1 Hebrew reads *Ornan,* a variant spelling of Araunah; compare 2 Sam 24:16.

*2 Chr 3:2 Hebrew *on the second [day] of the second month.* This day of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in April or May.

*2 Chr 3:3a The "old standard of measurement" was a cubit equal to 18 inches [46 centimeters]. The new standard was a cubit of approximately 21 inches [53 centimeters].

*2 Chr 3:3b Hebrew *60 cubits* [27.6 meters] *long and 20 cubits* [9.2 meters] *wide.*

*2 Chr 3:4a Hebrew *20 cubits* [9.2 meters]; also in 3:8, 11, 13.

*2 Chr 3:4b As in some Greek and Syriac manuscripts, which read *20 cubits* [9.2 meters]; Hebrew reads *120 [cubits],* which is 180 feet or 55 meters.

*2 Chr 3:8 Hebrew *600 talents* [20.4 metric tons].

*2 Chr 3:9 Hebrew *50 shekels* [570 grams].

*2 Chr 3:11 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters]; also in 3:11b, 12, 15.

*2 Chr 3:15 As in Syriac version (see also 1 Kgs 7:15; 2 Kgs 25:17; Jer 52:21), which reads *18 cubits* [8.3 meters]; Hebrew reads *35 cubits,* which is 52.5 feet or 16.5 meters.

*2 Chr 3:16 Hebrew *He made chains in the inner sanctuary.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Chr 3:17 *Jakin* probably means "he establishes"; *Boaz* probably means "in him is strength."

2 CHRONICLES 4:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 4:1a Or *Huram-abi;* Hebrew reads *He.*

*2 Chr 4:1b Hebrew *20 cubits* [9.2 meters] *long, 20 cubits wide, and 10 cubits* [4.6 meters] *high.*

*2 Chr 4:2 Hebrew *10 cubits* [4.6 meters] *across . . . 5 cubits* [2.3 meters] *deep and 30 cubits* [13.8 meters] *in circumference.*

*2 Chr 4:3 Or *20 oxen per meter;* Hebrew reads *10 per cubit.*

*2 Chr 4:5a Hebrew *a handbreadth* [8 centimeters].

*2 Chr 4:5b Hebrew *3,000 baths* [63 kiloliters].

*2 Chr 4:17 As in parallel text at 1 Kgs 7:46; Hebrew reads *Zeredah.*

2 CHRONICLES 5:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 5:3 Hebrew *at the festival that is in the seventh month.* The Festival of Shelters began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day occurred in late September, October, or early November.

*2 Chr 5:5 Hebrew *the Tent of Meeting;* i.e., the tent mentioned in 2 Sam 6:17 and 1 Chr 16:1.

*2 Chr 5:9 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also 1 Kgs 8:8); Masoretic Text reads *from the Ark.*

*2 Chr 5:10 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

2 CHRONICLES 6:1-42 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 6:13 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters] *long, 5 cubits wide, and 3 cubits* [1.4 meters] *high.*

2 CHRONICLES 7:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 7:8 Hebrew *the festival* (also in 7:9); see note on 5:3.

*2 Chr 7:10 Hebrew *Then on the twenty-third day of the seventh month.* This day of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in October or early November.

2 CHRONICLES 8:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 8:2 Hebrew *Huram,* a variant spelling of Hiram; also in 8:18.

*2 Chr 8:6 Or *and charioteers.*

*2 Chr 8:13 Or *Festival of Weeks.*

*2 Chr 8:17a As in Greek version (see also 2 Kgs 14:22; 16:6); Hebrew reads *Eloth,* a variant spelling of Elath.

*2 Chr 8:17b As in parallel text at 1 Kgs 9:26; Hebrew reads *the sea.*

*2 Chr 8:18 Hebrew *450 talents* [15.3 metric tons].

2 CHRONICLES 9:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 9:4 As in Greek and Syriac versions (see also 1 Kgs 10:5); Hebrew reads *and the ascent.*

*2 Chr 9:5 Hebrew *your words.*

*2 Chr 9:9 Hebrew *120 talents* [4,000 kilograms].

*2 Chr 9:10 Hebrew *algum wood* (also in 9:11); perhaps a variant spelling of *almug.* Compare parallel text at 1 Kgs 10:11-12.

*2 Chr 9:11 Or *gateways.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Chr 9:13 Hebrew *666 talents* [23 metric tons].

*2 Chr 9:15 Hebrew *600 [shekels] of hammered gold* [6.8 kilograms].

*2 Chr 9:16 Hebrew *300 [shekels] of gold* [3.4 kilograms].

*2 Chr 9:21a Hebrew *Huram,* a variant spelling of Hiram.

*2 Chr 9:21b Or *and baboons.*

*2 Chr 9:25 Or *12,000 charioteers.*

*2 Chr 9:26 Hebrew *the river.*

*2 Chr 9:27 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*2 Chr 9:28 Possibly *Muzur,* a district near Cilicia.

2 CHRONICLES 10:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 10:14 As in Greek version and many Hebrew manuscripts (see also 1 Kgs 12:14); Masoretic Text reads *I will lay.*

*2 Chr 10:16 As in Syriac version, Latin Vulgate, and many Hebrew manuscripts (see also 1 Kgs 12:16); Masoretic Text lacks *realized.*

*2 Chr 10:18 Hebrew *Hadoram,* a variant spelling of Adoniram; compare 1 Kgs 4:6; 5:14; 12:18.

2 CHRONICLES 11:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

2 CHRONICLES 12:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 12:3a Or *charioteers,* or *horsemen.*

*2 Chr 12:3b Hebrew *and Cushites.*

2 CHRONICLES 13:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 13:2 As in most Greek manuscripts and Syriac version (see also 2 Chr 11:20-21; 1 Kgs 15:2); Hebrew reads *Micaiah,* a variant spelling of Maacah.

*2 Chr 13:5 Hebrew *a covenant of salt.*

2 CHRONICLES 14:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 14:1 Verse 14:1 is numbered 13:23 in Hebrew text.

*2 Chr 14:2 Verses 14:2-15 are numbered 14:1-14 in Hebrew text.

*2 Chr 14:9a Hebrew *a Cushite.*

*2 Chr 14:9b Or *an army of thousands and thousands;* Hebrew reads *an army of a thousand thousands.*

*2 Chr 14:10 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *valley of Zephathah near Mareshah.*

*2 Chr 14:12 Hebrew *Cushites;* also in 14:13.

2 CHRONICLES 15:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 15:8 As in Syriac version and Latin Vulgate (see also 15:1); Hebrew reads *from Oded the prophet.*

*2 Chr 15:10 Hebrew *in the third month.* This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of May and June.

*2 Chr 15:16 Hebrew *his mother.*

2 CHRONICLES 16:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 16:3 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *There is a treaty.*

*2 Chr 16:4 As in parallel text at 1 Kgs 15:20; Hebrew reads *Abel-maim,* another name for Abel-beth-maacah.

*2 Chr 16:8a Hebrew *Cushites.*

*2 Chr 16:8b Or *and horsemen?*

2 CHRONICLES 17:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 17:3 Some Hebrew manuscripts read *the example of his father, David.*

*2 Chr 17:6 Hebrew *His heart was courageous in.*

2 CHRONICLES 18:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 18:16 Hebrew *These people have no master.*

*2 Chr 18:33 Hebrew *Turn your hand.*

2 CHRONICLES 19:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 19:8 As in Greek version; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

2 CHRONICLES 20:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 20:1 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 26:7); Hebrew repeats *Ammonites*.

*2 Chr 20:2a As in one Hebrew manuscript; most Hebrew manuscripts and ancient versions read *Aram*.

*2 Chr 20:2b Hebrew *the sea*.

*2 Chr 20:9 Or *sword of judgment;* or *sword, judgment*.

*2 Chr 20:25 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Latin Vulgate; most Hebrew manuscripts read *corpses*.

*2 Chr 20:26 Hebrew *valley of Beracah*.

*2 Chr 20:35 Or *who made him do what was wicked*.

*2 Chr 20:36 Hebrew *fleet of ships that could go to Tarshish*.

*2 Chr 20:37 Hebrew *never set sail for Tarshish.*

2 CHRONICLES 21:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 21:2 Masoretic Text reads *of Israel;* also in 21:4. The author of Chronicles sees Judah as representative of the true Israel. (Some Hebrew manuscripts, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate read *of Judah.*)

*2 Chr 21:9 Or *he went out and escaped.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Chr 21:16 Hebrew *the Cushites.*

*2 Chr 21:17 Hebrew *Jehoahaz,* a variant spelling of Ahaziah; compare 22:1.

2 CHRONICLES 22:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 22:1 Or *marauding bands of Arabs.*

*2 Chr 22:2 As in some Greek manuscripts and Syriac version (see also 2 Kgs 8:26); Hebrew reads *forty-two.*

*2 Chr 22:5a Hebrew *Jehoram,* a variant spelling of Joram; also in

22:6, 7.

*2 Chr 22:5b As in two Hebrew manuscripts and Latin Vulgate (see also 2 Kgs 8:28); Masoretic Text reads *the archers.*

*2 Chr 22:6a Hebrew *Ramah,* a variant spelling of Ramoth.

*2 Chr 22:6b As in some Hebrew manuscripts, Greek and Syriac versions, and Latin Vulgate (see also 2 Kgs 8:29); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Azariah.*

*2 Chr 22:7 Hebrew *descendant of Nimshi;* compare 2 Kgs 9:2, 14.

*2 Chr 22:8 As in Greek version (see also 2 Kgs 10:13); Hebrew reads *and sons of the brothers of Ahaziah.*

*2 Chr 22:11 As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 11:2; Hebrew lacks *Ahaziah's sister* and reads *Jehoshabeath* [a variant spelling of Jehosheba].

2 CHRONICLES 23:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 23:11 Or *a copy of the covenant.*

*2 Chr 23:14 Or *Bring her out from between the ranks;* or *Take her out*

of the Temple precincts. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

2 CHRONICLES 24:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 24:6 Hebrew *Tent of the Testimony.*

*2 Chr 24:23 Hebrew *At the turn of the year.* The first day of the year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April.

*2 Chr 24:25 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *sons.*

*2 Chr 24:26a As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 12:21; Hebrew reads *Zabad.*

*2 Chr 24:26b As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 12:21; Hebrew reads *Shimrith,* a variant spelling of Shomer.

2 CHRONICLES 25:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 25:1 As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 14:2; Hebrew reads *Jehoaddan,* a variant spelling of Jehoaddin.

*2 Chr 25:4 Deut 24:16.

*2 Chr 25:5 Hebrew *commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.*

*2 Chr 25:6 Hebrew *100 talents* [3,400 kilograms].

*2 Chr 25:17a Hebrew *Joash,* a variant spelling of Jehoash; also in 25:18, 21, 23, 25.

*2 Chr 25:17b Hebrew *Come, let us look one another in the face.*

*2 Chr 25:23 Hebrew *400 cubits* [180 meters].

*2 Chr 25:28 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and other ancient versions (see also 2 Kgs 14:20); most Hebrew manuscripts read *the city of Judah.*

2 CHRONICLES 26:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 26:2 As in Greek version (see also 2 Kgs 14:22; 16:6); Hebrew reads *Eloth,* a variant spelling of Elath.

*2 Chr 26:5 As in Syriac and Greek versions; Hebrew reads *who instructed him in divine visions.*

*2 Chr 26:7 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Gur-baal.*

*2 Chr 26:8 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Ammonites.* Compare 26:7.

*2 Chr 26:10 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*2 Chr 26:15 Or *to shoot arrows and hurl large stones.*

*2 Chr 26:19 Or *a contagious skin disease.* The Hebrew word used here and throughout this passage can describe various skin diseases.

2 CHRONICLES 27:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 27:5a Hebrew *100 talents* [3,400 kilograms].

*2 Chr 27:5b Hebrew *10,000 cors* [2,200 kiloliters] *of wheat, and 10,000 cors of barley.*

2 CHRONICLES 28:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 28:3 Or *even making his sons pass through the fire.*

*2 Chr 28:12 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

*2 Chr 28:18 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*2 Chr 28:19 Masoretic Text reads *of Israel;* also in 28:23, 27. The author of Chronicles sees Judah as representative of the true Israel. (Some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version read *of Judah.*)

*2 Chr 28:20 Hebrew *Tilgath-pilneser,* a variant spelling of Tiglath-pileser.

2 CHRONICLES 29:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 29:17 Hebrew *on the first day of the first month.* This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or early April, 715 B.C.

2 CHRONICLES 30:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 30:2 Hebrew *in the second month.* Passover was normally observed in the first month (of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar).

*2 Chr 30:6 *Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob.

*2 Chr 30:13 Hebrew *in the second month.* The second month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of April and May.

*2 Chr 30:15 Hebrew *On the fourteenth day of the second month.* Passover normally began on the fourteenth day of the first month (see Lev 23:5).

*2 Chr 30:21 Or *sang to the LORD with all their strength.*

2 CHRONICLES 31:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 31:7 Hebrew *in the third month . . . until the seventh month.* The third month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of May and June; the seventh month usually occurs within September and October.

2 CHRONICLES 32:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 32:5 Hebrew *the millo.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Chr 32:18 Hebrew *in the dialect of Judah.*

2 CHRONICLES 33:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 33:6 Or *also made his sons pass through the fire.*

*2 Chr 33:19 Or *The Record of Hozai.*

2 CHRONICLES 34:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 34:6 As in Syriac version. Hebrew reads *in their temples,* or *in their ruins.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*2 Chr 34:20 As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 22:12; Hebrew reads *Abdon son of Micah.*

*2 Chr 34:22a Or *the Second Quarter,* a newer section of Jerusalem. Hebrew reads *the Mishneh.*

*2 Chr 34:22b As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 22:14; Hebrew reads *son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah.*

*2 Chr 34:24 Hebrew *this place;* also in 34:27, 28.

2 CHRONICLES 35:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 35:1 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar was April 5, 622 B.C.

*2 Chr 35:20 Or *Josiah went out to meet him.*

2 CHRONICLES 36:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Chr 36:2 Hebrew *Joahaz,* a variant spelling of Jehoahaz; also in 36:4.

*2 Chr 36:3 Hebrew *100 talents* [3,400 kilograms] *of silver and 1 talent* [34 kilograms] *of gold.*

*2 Chr 36:7 Or *temple.*

*2 Chr 36:9 As in one Hebrew manuscript, some Greek manuscripts, and Syriac version (see also 2 Kgs 24:8); most Hebrew manuscripts read *eight.*

*2 Chr 36:10a Hebrew *At the turn of the year.* The first day of this year in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar was April 13, 597 B.C.

*2 Chr 36:10b As in parallel text at 2 Kgs 24:17; Hebrew reads *brother,* or *relative.*

*2 Chr 36:17 Or *Chaldeans.*

*2 Chr 36:19 Or *destroyed all the valuable articles from the Temple.*

*2 Chr 36:22a The first year of Cyrus's reign over Babylon was 538 B.C.

*2 Chr 36:22b See Jer 25:11-12; 29:10.

Ezra Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EZRA 1:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 1:1a The first year of Cyrus's reign over Babylon was 538 B.C.

*Ezra 1:1b See Jer 25:11-12; 29:10.

*Ezra 1:8 Hebrew *Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.*

*Ezra 1:9 The meaning of this Hebrew word is uncertain.

EZRA 2:1-70 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 2:24 As in parallel text at Neh 7:28; Hebrew reads *Azmaveth.*

*Ezra 2:25 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version (see also Neh 7:29); Hebrew reads *Kiriath-arim.*

*Ezra 2:31 Or *of the other Elam.*

*Ezra 2:46 As in an alternate reading of the Masoretic Text (see also Neh 7:48); the other alternate reads *Shamlai.*

*Ezra 2:69a Hebrew *61,000 darics of gold,* about 1,100 pounds or 500 kilograms in weight.

*Ezra 2:69b Hebrew *5,000 minas* [3,000 kilograms].

EZRA 3:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 3:1 Hebrew *In the seventh month.* The year is not specified, so it may have been during Cyrus's first year (538 B.C.) or second year (537 B.C.). The seventh month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of September/October 538 B.C. and October/November 537 B.C.

*Ezra 3:2 Hebrew *Jozadak,* a variant spelling of Jehozadak; also in 3:8.

*Ezra 3:6 Hebrew *On the first day of the seventh month.* This day in

the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in September or October. The Festival of Shelters began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month.

*Ezra 3:7 Hebrew *the sea.*

*Ezra 3:8 Hebrew *in the second month.* This month in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of April and May 536 B.C.

*Ezra 3:9 Hebrew *sons of Judah* (i.e., *bene Yehudah*). *Bene* might also be read here as the proper name Binnui; *Yehudah* is probably another name for Hodaviah. Compare 2:40; Neh 7:43; 1 Esdras 5:58.

EZRA 4:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 4:5 Darius reigned 521–486 B.C.

*Ezra 4:6 Hebrew *Ahasuerus,* another name for Xerxes. He reigned 486–465 B.C.

*Ezra 4:7 Artaxerxes reigned 465–424 B.C.

*Ezra 4:8 The original text of 4:8–6:18 is in Aramaic.

*Ezra 4:10a Aramaic *Osnappar,* another name for Ashurbanipal.

*Ezra 4:10b Aramaic *the province beyond the river;* also in 4:11, 16, 17, 20.

*Ezra 4:14 Aramaic *Since we eat the salt of the palace.*

*Ezra 4:24 The second year of Darius's reign was 520 B.C. The narrative started in 4:1-5 is resumed at verse 24.

EZRA 5:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 5:2 Aramaic *Jozadak,* a variant spelling of Jehozadak.

*Ezra 5:3 Aramaic *the province beyond the river;* also in 5:6.

*Ezra 5:4 As in one Hebrew manuscript and Greek and Syriac versions; Masoretic Text reads *Then we told them.*

*Ezra 5:12 Aramaic *Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean.*

*Ezra 5:13 King Cyrus of Persia is here identified as the king of Babylon because Persia had conquered the Babylonian Empire.

EZRA 6:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 6:3 Aramaic *Its height will be 60 cubits* [27.6 meters], *and its width will be 60 cubits.* It is commonly held that this verse should be emended to read: "Its height will be 30 cubits [45 feet or 13.8 meters], its length will be 60 cubits [90 feet or 27.6 meters], and its width will be 20 cubits [30 feet or 9.2 meters]"; compare 1 Kgs 6:2. The emendation regarding the width is supported by the Syriac version.

*Ezra 6:6 Aramaic *the province beyond the river;* also in 6:6b, 8, 13.

*Ezra 6:11 Aramaic *a dunghill.*

*Ezra 6:15 Aramaic *on the third day of the month Adar,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. A number of events in Ezra can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This day was March 12, 515 B.C.

*Ezra 6:19 Hebrew *On the fourteenth day of the first month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 21, 515 B.C.; also see note on 6:15.

*Ezra 6:22 King Darius of Persia is here identified as the king of Assyria because Persia had conquered the Babylonian Empire, which included the earlier Assyrian Empire.

EZRA 7:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 7:1a Artaxerxes reigned 465–424 B.C.

*Ezra 7:1b Or *descendant;* see 1 Chr 6:14.

*Ezra 7:3 Or *descendant;* see 1 Chr 6:6-10.

*Ezra 7:5 Or *the first priest.*

*Ezra 7:8 Hebrew *in the fifth month.* This month in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of August and September 458 B.C.

*Ezra 7:9a Hebrew *on the first day of the first month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 8, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15.

*Ezra 7:9b Hebrew *on the first day of the fifth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was August 4, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15.

*Ezra 7:12 The original text of 7:12-26 is in Aramaic.

*Ezra 7:21 Aramaic *the province beyond the river;* also in 7:25.

*Ezra 7:22a Aramaic *100 talents* [3,400 kilograms].

*Ezra 7:22b Aramaic *100 cors* [22 kiloliters].

*Ezra 7:22c Aramaic *100 baths* [2.1 kiloliters] *of wine, 100 baths of olive oil.*

EZRA 8:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 8:5 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Esdras 8:32); Hebrew lacks *Zattu.*

*Ezra 8:10 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 1 Esdras 8:36); Hebrew lacks *Bani.*

*Ezra 8:13 Or *who were the last of his family.*

*Ezra 8:14 As in Greek and Syriac versions and an alternate reading of the Masoretic Text; the other alternate reads *Zabbud.*

*Ezra 8:18 *Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob.

*Ezra 8:22 Or *charioteers.*

*Ezra 8:26a Hebrew *650 talents* [22 metric tons].

*Ezra 8:26b Hebrew *100 talents* [3,400 kilograms]; also in 8:26c.

*Ezra 8:27 Hebrew *1,000 darics,* about 19 pounds or 8.6 kilograms in weight.

*Ezra 8:31 Hebrew *on the twelfth day of the first month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 19, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15.

*Ezra 8:36 Hebrew *the province beyond the river.*

EZRA 9:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

EZRA 10:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezra 10:6 As in parallel text at 1 Esdras 9:2; Hebrew reads *He went.*

*Ezra 10:9 Hebrew *on the twentieth day of the ninth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was December 19, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15.

*Ezra 10:16 Hebrew *On the first day of the tenth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was December 29, 458 B.C.; also see note on 6:15.

*Ezra 10:17 Hebrew *By the first day of the first month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was March 27, 457 B.C.; also see note on 6:15.

*Ezra 10:18 Hebrew *Jozadak,* a variant spelling of Jehozadak.

*Ezra 10:25 As in parallel text at 1 Esdras 9:26; Hebrew reads *Malkijah.*

*Ezra 10:37-38 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Jaasu,* 38*Bani, Binnui.*

*Ezra 10:44 Or *and they sent them away with their children.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

Nehemiah Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

NEHEMIAH 1:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 1:1 Hebrew *In the month of Kislev of the twentieth year.* A number of dates in the book of Nehemiah can be cross-checked with

dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of November and December 446 B.C. The *twentieth year* probably refers to the reign of King Artaxerxes I; compare 2:1; 5:14.

*Neh 1:9 Hebrew *of the heavens.*

*Neh 1:11 Hebrew *today in the sight of this man.*

NEHEMIAH 2:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 2:1 Hebrew *In the month of Nisan.* This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of April and May 445 B.C.

*Neh 2:7 Hebrew *the province beyond the river;* also in 2:9.

*Neh 2:9 Or *charioteers.*

*Neh 2:13 Or *Serpent's Well.*

*Neh 2:15 Hebrew *the valley.*

NEHEMIAH 3:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 3:6 Or *The Mishneh Gate,* or *The Jeshanah Gate.*

*Neh 3:7 Hebrew *the province beyond the river.*

*Neh 3:8 Or *They fortified Jerusalem up to the Broad Wall.*

*Neh 3:13 Hebrew *1,000 cubits* [460 meters].

*Neh 3:15a As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *Shallun.*

*Neh 3:15b Hebrew *pool of Shelah,* another name for the pool of Siloam.

*Neh 3:18 As in a few Hebrew manuscripts, some Greek manuscripts, and Syriac version (see also 3:24; 10:9); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Bavvai.*

NEHEMIAH 4:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 4:1 Verses 4:1-6 are numbered 3:33-38 in Hebrew text.

*Neh 4:2 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Neh 4:5 Or *for they have thrown insults in the face of.*

*Neh 4:7 Verses 4:7-23 are numbered 4:1-17 in Hebrew text.

*Neh 4:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Neh 4:23 Or *Each carried his weapon in his right hand.* Hebrew reads *Each his weapon the water.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

NEHEMIAH 5:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 5:14 That is, 445–433 B.C.

*Neh 5:15 Hebrew *40 shekels* [1 pound or 456 grams].

NEHEMIAH 6:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 6:2 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *at Kephirim.*

*Neh 6:6 Hebrew *Gashmu,* a variant spelling of Geshem.

*Neh 6:9 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *But now to strengthen my hands.*

*Neh 6:15 Hebrew *on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was October 2, 445 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

NEHEMIAH 7:1-73 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 7:3 Or *Keep the gates of Jerusalem closed until the sun is hot.*

*Neh 7:7a As in parallel text at Ezra 2:2; Hebrew reads *Azariah.*

*Neh 7:7b As in parallel text at Ezra 2:2; Hebrew reads *Raamiah.*

*Neh 7:7c As in parallel text at Ezra 2:2; Hebrew reads *Mispereth.*

*Neh 7:7d As in parallel text at Ezra 2:2; Hebrew reads *Nehum.*

*Neh 7:15 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:10; Hebrew reads *Binnui.*

*Neh 7:24 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:18; Hebrew reads *Hariph.*

*Neh 7:25 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:20; Hebrew reads *Gibeon.*

*Neh 7:33 Or *of the other Nebo.*

*Neh 7:34 Or *of the other Elam.*

*Neh 7:43 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:40; Hebrew reads *Hodevah.*

*Neh 7:47 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:44; Hebrew reads *Sia.*

*Neh 7:52 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:50; Hebrew reads *Nephushesim.*

*Neh 7:54 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:52; Hebrew reads *Bazlith.*

*Neh 7:57 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:55; Hebrew reads *Sotai, Sophereth, Perida.*

*Neh 7:58 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:56; Hebrew reads *Jaala.*

*Neh 7:59 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:57; Hebrew reads *Amon.*

*Neh 7:61 As in parallel text at Ezra 2:59; Hebrew reads *Addon.*

*Neh 7:68 As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Ezra 2:66); most Hebrew manuscripts lack this verse. Verses 7:69-73 are numbered 7:68-72 in Hebrew text.

*Neh 7:70 Hebrew *1,000 darics of gold,* about 19 pounds or 8.6 kilograms in weight.

*Neh 7:71a Hebrew *20,000 darics of gold,* about 375 pounds or 170 kilograms in weight; also in 7:72.

*Neh 7:71b Hebrew *2,200 minas* [1,300 kilograms].

*Neh 7:72 Hebrew *2,000 minas* [1,200 kilograms].

*Neh 7:73 Hebrew *in the seventh month.* This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of October and November 445 B.C.

In print editions of the NLT, the preceding sentence fragment is included at the beginning of 8:1*Neh 7:73 In print editions of the NLT, the preceding sentence fragment is included at the beginning of 8:1

NEHEMIAH 8:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

In print editions of the NLT, the second half of 7:73 (“In October, . . .”) is set at the beginning of chapter 8.*Neh 8:1 In print editions of the NLT, the second half of 7:73 (“In October, . . .”) is set at the beginning of chapter 8.

*Neh 8:2 Hebrew *on the first day of the seventh month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was October 8, 445 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Neh 8:10 Hebrew *he.*

*Neh 8:13 Hebrew *On the second day,* of the seventh month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was October 9, 445 B.C.; also see notes on 1:1 and 8:2.

*Neh 8:14 Hebrew *in the seventh month.* This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of September and October. See Lev 23:39-43.

*Neh 8:15 Or *pine;* Hebrew reads *oil tree.*

*Neh 8:17 Hebrew *Jeshua,* a variant spelling of Joshua.

NEHEMIAH 9:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 9:1 Hebrew *On the twenty-fourth day of that same month,* the seventh month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was

October 31, 445 B.C.; also see notes on 1:1 and 8:2.

*Neh 9:3 Hebrew *for a quarter of a day*.

*Neh 9:9 Hebrew *sea of reeds*.

*Neh 9:17 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *in their rebellion*.

*Neh 9:22 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Neh 9:38a Verse 9:38 is numbered 10:1 in Hebrew text.

*Neh 9:38b Or *In spite of all this*.

NEHEMIAH 10:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 10:1 Verses 10:1-39 are numbered 10:2-40 in Hebrew text.

*Neh 10:32 Hebrew *tax of 1/3 of a shekel* [4 grams].

NEHEMIAH 11:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 11:5 Hebrew *son of the Shilonite.*

*Neh 11:14 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *their.*

*Neh 11:35 Or *and Ge-harashim.*

NEHEMIAH 12:1-47 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 12:3 Hebrew *Rehum;* compare 7:42; 12:15; Ezra 2:39.

*Neh 12:4 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Latin Vulgate (see also 12:16); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Ginnethoi.*

*Neh 12:5 Hebrew *Mijamin, Maadiah;* compare 12:17.

*Neh 12:11 Hebrew *Jonathan;* compare 12:22.

*Neh 12:14a As in Greek version (see also 10:4; 12:2); Hebrew reads *Malluchi.*

*Neh 12:14b As in many Hebrew manuscripts, some Greek manuscripts, and Syriac version (see also 12:3); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Shebaniah.*

*Neh 12:15 As in some Greek manuscripts (see also 12:3); Hebrew reads *Meraioth.*

*Neh 12:17 Hebrew lacks the name of this family leader.

*Neh 12:20 Hebrew *Sallai;* compare 12:7.

*Neh 12:22 *Darius the Persian* is probably Darius II, who reigned 423–404 B.C., or possibly Darius III, who reigned 336–331 B.C.

*Neh 12:23 Hebrew *descendant;* compare 12:10-11.

*Neh 12:24 Hebrew *son of* (i.e., *ben*), which should probably be read here as the proper name Binnui; compare Ezra 3:9 and the note there.

*Neh 12:26 Hebrew *Jozadak,* a variant spelling of Jehozadak.

*Neh 12:31 Hebrew *to the right.*

*Neh 12:38 Hebrew *to the left.*

*Neh 12:39 Or *the Mishneh Gate,* or *the Jeshanah Gate.*

NEHEMIAH 13:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Neh 13:1 See Deut 23:3-6.

*Neh 13:6 King Artaxerxes of Persia is here identified as the king of Babylon because Persia had conquered the Babylonian Empire. The thirty-second year of Artaxerxes was 433 B.C.

*Neh 13:19 Hebrew *on the day before the Sabbath.*

Esther Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ESTHER 1:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Esth 1:1a Hebrew *Ahasuerus,* another name for Xerxes; also throughout the book of Esther. Xerxes reigned 486–465 B.C.

*Esth 1:1b Hebrew *to Cush.*

*Esth 1:22 Or *and should speak in the language of his own people.*

ESTHER 2:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Esth 2:6a Hebrew *He.*

*Esth 2:6b Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin.

*Esth 2:14 Or *to another part of the harem.*

*Esth 2:16 Hebrew *in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth.* A number of dates in the book of Esther can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of December 479 B.C. and January 478 B.C.

*Esth 2:19a The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Esth 2:19b Hebrew *and Mordecai was sitting in the gate of the king.*

*Esth 2:21 Hebrew *Bigthan;* compare 6:2.

ESTHER 3:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Esth 3:7a Hebrew *in the first month, the month of Nisan.* This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of April and May 474 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

*Esth 3:7b As in 3:13, which reads *the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar;* Hebrew reads *in the twelfth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. The date selected was March 7, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

*Esth 3:9 Hebrew *10,000 talents,* about 375 tons or 340 metric tons in weight.

*Esth 3:12 Hebrew *On the thirteenth day of the first month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was April 17, 474 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

*Esth 3:13 Hebrew *on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. The date selected was March 7, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

ESTHER 4:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Esth 4:12 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *they*.

ESTHER 5:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Esth 5:14 Hebrew *50 cubits* [23 meters].

ESTHER 6:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

ESTHER 7:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Esth 7:9 Hebrew *50 cubits* [23 meters].

ESTHER 8:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Esth 8:9a Hebrew *on the twenty-third day of the third month, the month of Sivan,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was June 25, 474 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

*Esth 8:9b Hebrew *to Cush.*

*Esth 8:12 Hebrew *the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. The date selected was March 7, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

ESTHER 9:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Esth 9:1 Hebrew *on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was March 7, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

*Esth 9:15 Hebrew *the fourteenth day of the month of Adar,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was March 8, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

*Esth 9:17 Hebrew *on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth day they rested.* These days were March 7 and 8, 473 B.C.; also see note on 2:16.

*Esth 9:18 Hebrew *killed their enemies on the thirteenth day and the fourteenth day, and then rested on the fifteenth day,* of the Hebrew month of Adar.

*Esth 9:19 Hebrew *on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar.* This day of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurs in February or March.

*Esth 9:21 Hebrew *on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar.

ESTHER 10:1-3 NLT TEXT NOTES

Job Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42

JOB 1:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 1:6a Hebrew *the sons of God.*

*Job 1:6b Hebrew *and the satan;* similarly throughout this chapter.

JOB 2:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 2:1a Hebrew *the sons of God.*

*Job 2:1b Hebrew *and the satan;* similarly throughout this chapter.

JOB 3:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 3:8 The identification of Leviathan is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature.

JOB 4:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 4:15a Or *wind;* also in 4:16.

*Job 4:15b Or *its wind sent shivers up my spine.*

JOB 5:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 5:1 Hebrew *the holy ones.*

*Job 5:5a The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

*Job 5:5b As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *A snare snatches their wealth.*

JOB 6:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 6:6 Or *the tasteless juice of the mallow plant?*

*Job 6:14 Or *friend, / or he might lose his fear of the Almighty.*

*Job 6:27 Hebrew *even gamble over an orphan.*

JOB 7:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 7:9 Hebrew *who go down to Sheol.*

*Job 7:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *target, so that I am a burden to myself?*

JOB 8:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOB 9:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 9:3 Or *If God wanted to take someone to court.*

*Job 9:13 Hebrew *the helpers of Rahab,* the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature.

*Job 9:19 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *me.*

*Job 9:20 Or *he.*

*Job 9:23 Or *disaster.*

JOB 10:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 10:10 Hebrew *You poured me out like milk / and curdled me like cheese.*

JOB 11:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 11:8 Hebrew *than Sheol.*

*Job 11:12 Or *than a wild male donkey can bear a tame colt.*

JOB 12:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 12:6 Or *safety—those who try to manipulate God.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Job 12:9 Hebrew *that this.*

JOB 13:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 13:14 Hebrew *Why should I take my flesh in my teeth.*

*Job 13:15 An alternate reading in the Masoretic Text reads *God might kill me, but I hope in him.*

JOB 14:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 14:13 Hebrew *in Sheol.*

JOB 15:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 15:12 Or *Why do your eyes flash with anger;* Hebrew reads *Why do your eyes blink.*

*Job 15:15 Hebrew *the holy ones.*

*Job 15:23 Greek version reads *He is appointed to be food for a vulture.*

JOB 16:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 16:13 Hebrew *my gall.*

JOB 17:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 17:13 Hebrew *to Sheol;* also in 17:16.

JOB 18:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOB 19:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 19:6 Or *for I am like a city under siege.*

*Job 19:26 Or *without my body I will see God.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

JOB 20:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 20:25 Hebrew *with gall.*

JOB 21:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 21:13 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

JOB 22:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOB 23:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOB 24:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 24:19 Hebrew *Sheol.*

JOB 25:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOB 26:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 26:6a Hebrew *Sheol.*

*Job 26:6b Hebrew *Abaddon.*

*Job 26:9 Or *covers his throne.*

*Job 26:12 Hebrew *Rahab,* the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature.

JOB 27:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 27:18 As in Greek and Syriac versions (see also 8:14); Hebrew reads *a moth.*

JOB 28:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 28:13 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *knows its value.*

*Job 28:19 Hebrew *from Cush.*

*Job 28:22 Hebrew *Abaddon.*

JOB 29:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 29:18 Hebrew *after I have counted my days like sand.*

JOB 30:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 30:18 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *hand, my garment is disfigured.*

JOB 31:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 31:10 Hebrew *grind for.*

*Job 31:12 Hebrew *to Abaddon.*

JOB 32:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 32:3 As in ancient Hebrew scribal tradition; the Masoretic Text reads *Job.*

*Job 32:8 Or *Spirit;* also in 32:18.

JOB 33:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 33:27 Greek version reads *but he* [God] *did not punish me as my sin deserved.*

JOB 34:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOB 35:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 35:13-14 These verses can also be translated as follows: 13*Indeed, God doesn't listen to their empty plea; the Almighty is not concerned.* 14*How much less will he listen when you say you don't see him, / and that your case is before him and you're waiting for justice.*

*Job 35:15 As in Greek and Latin versions; the meaning of this Hebrew word is uncertain.

JOB 36:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 36:18 Or *But don't let your anger lead you to mockery.*

*Job 36:19 Or *Could all your cries for help.*

*Job 36:16-20 The meaning of the Hebrew in this passage is uncertain.

*Job 36:31 Or *he governs.*

*Job 36:33 Or *even the cattle know when a storm is coming.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

JOB 37:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 37:20 Or *speak without being swallowed up?*

*Job 37:22 Or *from the north;* or *from the abode.*

*Job 37:24 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *He is not impressed by the wise.*

JOB 38:1-41 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 38:7 Hebrew *the sons of God.*

*Job 38:14 Or *its features stand out like folds in a robe.*

JOB 39:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

JOB 40:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 40:15 The identification of Behemoth is disputed, ranging

from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature.

*Job 40:21 Or *bramble bushes;* also in 40:22.

JOB 41:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 41:1a Verses 41:1-8 are numbered 40:25-32 in Hebrew text.

*Job 41:1b The identification of Leviathan is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature.

*Job 41:9 Verses 41:9-34 are numbered 41:1-26 in Hebrew text.

*Job 41:13 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *its bridle?*

*Job 41:15 As in some Greek manuscripts and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *Its pride is in its.*

JOB 42:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Job 42:11 Hebrew *a kesitah;* the value or weight of the kesitah is no longer known.

Psalms Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67
68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88
89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106
107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121
122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136
137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150

PSALM 1:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 2:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 2:6 Hebrew *on Zion.*

*Ps 2:7a Or *Son;* also in 2:12.

*Ps 2:7b Or *Today I reveal you as my son.*

*Ps 2:9 Greek version reads *rule.* Compare Rev 2:27.

*Ps 2:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

PSALM 3:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 3:2 Hebrew *Selah.* The meaning of this word is uncertain, though it is probably a musical or literary term. It is rendered *Interlude* throughout the Psalms.

PSALM 4:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 5:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 5:9 Greek version reads *with lies.* Compare Rom 3:13.

PSALM 6:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 6:1-10 **TITLE** Hebrew *with stringed instruments; according to the sheminith.*

*Ps 6:5 Hebrew *from Sheol?*

PSALM 7:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 7:1-17 **TITLE** Hebrew *A shiggaion,* probably indicating a musical setting for the psalm.

*Ps 7:12 Hebrew *he.*

PSALM 8:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 8:1-9 **TITLE** Hebrew *according to the gittith.*

*Ps 8:2 Greek version reads *to give you praise.* Compare Matt 21:16.

*Ps 8:4 Hebrew *what is man that you should think of him, / the son of man that you should care for him?*

*Ps 8:5a Or *Yet you made them only a little lower than the angels;* Hebrew reads *Yet you made him* [i.e., man] *a little lower than Elohim.*

*Ps 8:5b Hebrew *him* [i.e., man]; similarly in 8:6.

PSALM 9:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 9:11 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 9:14.

*Ps 9:16 Hebrew *Higgaion Selah.* The meaning of this phrase is uncertain.

*Ps 9:17 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

PSALM 10:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 10:7 Greek version reads *cursing and bitterness.* Compare Rom 3:14.

PSALM 11:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 12:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 12:1-8 **TITLE** Hebrew *according to the sheminith.*

PSALM 13:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 14:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 14:3 Greek version reads *have become useless.* Compare Rom 3:12.

PSALM 15:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 16:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 16:1-11 **TITLE** Hebrew *miktam.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 16:9 Greek version reads *and my tongue shouts his praises.* Compare Acts 2:26.

*Ps 16:10a Hebrew *in Sheol.*

*Ps 16:10b Or *your Holy One.*

*Ps 16:11 Greek version reads *You have shown me the way of life, / and you will fill me with the joy of your presence.* Compare Acts 2:28.

PSALM 17:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 17:8 Hebrew *as the pupil of your eye.*

PSALM 18:1-50 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 18:5 Hebrew *Sheol.*

*Ps 18:10 Hebrew *a cherub.*

*Ps 18:12 Or *and lightning bolts;* also in 18:13.

*Ps 18:35 Hebrew *your humility;* compare 2 Sam 22:36.

PSALM 19:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 19:3 Or *There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.*

PSALM 20:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 20:2 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 21:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 22:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 22:16 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions; most Hebrew manuscripts read *They are like a lion at.*

*Ps 22:18 Hebrew *cast lots.*

*Ps 22:22 Hebrew *my brothers.*

PSALM 23:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 23:4 Or *the dark valley of death.*

PSALM 24:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 24:6 As in two Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions; most Hebrew manuscripts read *O Jacob.*

PSALM 25:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 25:1-22 This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic poem; each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

PSALM 26:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 27:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 28:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 28:9 Hebrew *Bless your inheritance.*

PSALM 29:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 29:1 Hebrew *you sons of God.*

*Ps 29:6 Hebrew *Sirion,* another name for Mount Hermon.

*Ps 29:9 Or *causes the deer to writhe in labor.*

PSALM 30:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 30:3 Hebrew *from Sheol.*

PSALM 31:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 31:17 Hebrew *in Sheol.*

PSALM 32:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 32:1-11 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 32:2 Greek version reads *of sin.* Compare Rom 4:8.

PSALM 33:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 34:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 34:1-22 This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic poem; each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

PSALM 35:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 36:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 36:1 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version, which read *in his heart.* Masoretic Text reads *in my heart.*

PSALM 37:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 37:1-40 This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic poem; each stanza begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

PSALM 38:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 39:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 40:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 40:6 Greek text reads *You have given me a body.* Compare Heb 10:5.

PSALM 41:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 42:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 42:1-11 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

PSALM 43:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 44:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 44:1-26 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 44:4 Hebrew *for Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

PSALM 45:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 45:1-17 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 45:6 Or *Your divine throne.*

*Ps 45:12 Hebrew *The daughter of Tyre.*

PSALM 46:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 46:1-11 **TITLE** Hebrew *according to alamoth.*

*Ps 46:7 Hebrew *of Jacob;* also in 46:11. See note on 44:4.

PSALM 47:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 47:7 Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

PSALM 48:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 48:2 Or *Mount Zion, in the far north;* Hebrew reads *Mount Zion, the heights of Zaphon.*

*Ps 48:12 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 49:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 49:7 Some Hebrew manuscripts read *no one can redeem the life of another.*

*Ps 49:11 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *Their inward [thought].*

*Ps 49:13 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Ps 49:14 Hebrew *Sheol;* also in 49:14b, 15.

PSALM 50:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 51:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 51:4 Greek version reads *and you will win your case in court.* Compare Rom 3:4.

*Ps 51:6 Or *from the heart;* Hebrew reads *in the inward parts.*

*Ps 51:7 Hebrew *Purify me with the hyssop branch.*

*Ps 51:11 Or *your spirit of holiness.*

PSALM 52:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 52:1-9 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

PSALM 53:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 53:1-6 **TITLE** Hebrew *According to mahalath; a maskil.* These may be literary or musical terms.

*Ps 53:3 Greek version reads *have become useless.* Compare Rom 3:12.

PSALM 54:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 54:1-7 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

PSALM 55:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 55:1-23 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 55:15 Hebrew *let Sheol.*

PSALM 56:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 56:1-13 **TITLE** Hebrew *miktam.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 56:8 Or *my wanderings.*

PSALM 57:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 57:1-11 **TITLE** Hebrew *miktam.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 57:2 Hebrew *Elohim-Elyon.*

PSALM 58:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 58:1-11 **TITLE** Hebrew *miktam.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 58:1 Or *you gods.*

*Ps 58:7 Or *Let them be trodden down and wither like grass.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

PSALM 59:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 59:1-17 **TITLE** Hebrew *miktam.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 59:13 Hebrew *in Jacob.* See note on 44:4.

*Ps 59:15 Or *and growl if they don't get enough.*

PSALM 60:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 60:1-12 **TITLE** Hebrew *miktam.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 60:6 Or *in his sanctuary.*

PSALM 61:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 62:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 63:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 64:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 65:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 66:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 66:6 Hebrew *the sea.*

*Ps 66:12 Or *You made people ride over our heads.*

PSALM 67:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 68:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 68:4 Or *rides through the deserts.*

*Ps 68:11 Or *a host of women.*

*Ps 68:23 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *shatter.*

*Ps 68:28 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions; most Hebrew manuscripts read *Your God has commanded your strength.*

*Ps 68:31a Or *of rich cloth.*

*Ps 68:31b Hebrew *Cush.*

PSALM 69:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 69:21 Or *gall.*

*Ps 69:22 Greek version reads *Let their bountiful table set before them become a snare, a trap that makes them think all is well. Let their blessings cause them to stumble, / and let them get what they deserve.* Compare Rom 11:9.

*Ps 69:23 Greek version reads *and let their backs be bent forever.* Compare Rom 11:10.

*Ps 69:35 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 70:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 71:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 71:15 Or *though I cannot count it.*

PSALM 72:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 72:5 Greek version reads *May they endure.*

*Ps 72:8 Hebrew *the river.*

PSALM 73:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 74:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 74:1-23 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 74:2 Hebrew *Mount Zion.*

*Ps 74:14 The identification of Leviathan is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature.

*Ps 74:16 Or *moon;* Hebrew reads *light.*

PSALM 75:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 75:6 Hebrew *should lift.*

PSALM 76:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 76:2 Hebrew *Salem,* another name for Jerusalem.

*Ps 76:4 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *than mountains filled with beasts of prey.*

*Ps 76:10 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

PSALM 77:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 77:16 Hebrew *the waters.*

PSALM 78:1-72 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 78:1-72 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 78:35 Hebrew *El-Elyon.*

*Ps 78:51 Hebrew *in the tents of Ham.*

PSALM 79:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 79:7 Hebrew *devoured Jacob.* See note on 44:4.

PSALM 80:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 80:6 As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *the strife.*

*Ps 80:11 Hebrew *west to the sea, . . . east to the river.*

PSALM 81:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 81:1-16 **TITLE** Hebrew *according to the gittith.*

*Ps 81:5 Hebrew *for Joseph.*

PSALM 82:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 83:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 84:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 84:1-12 **TITLE** Hebrew *according to the gittith.*

*Ps 84:6 Or *Valley of Poplars;* Hebrew reads *valley of Baca.*

*Ps 84:7 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 85:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 85:1 Hebrew *of Jacob.* See note on 44:4.

PSALM 86:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 86:13 Hebrew *of Sheol.*

PSALM 87:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 87:2 Hebrew *He loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.* See note on 44:4.

*Ps 87:4a Hebrew *Rahab,* the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature. The name is used here as a poetic name for Egypt.

*Ps 87:4b Hebrew *Cush.*

*Ps 87:5 Hebrew *Zion.*

*Ps 87:7 Or *will dance.*

PSALM 88:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 88:1-18 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 88:3 Hebrew *Sheol.*

*Ps 88:11 Hebrew *in Abaddon?*

PSALM 89:1-52 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 89:1-52 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

*Ps 89:10 Hebrew *Rahab,* the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature.

*Ps 89:48 Hebrew *of Sheol.*

PSALM 90:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 91:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 92:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 93:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 94:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 94:7 Hebrew *of Jacob.* See note on 44:4.

PSALM 95:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 96:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 97:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 97:8 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 98:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 99:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 99:2 Hebrew *Zion.*

*Ps 99:4 Hebrew *Jacob.* See note on 44:4.

PSALM 100:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 100:3 As in an alternate reading in the Masoretic Text; the other alternate and some ancient versions read *and not we ourselves.*

PSALM 101:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 102:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 102:13 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 102:16.

PSALM 103:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 104:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 104:4 Greek version reads *He sends his angels like the winds, / his servants like flames of fire.* Compare Heb 1:7.

*Ps 104:18 Or *coneys,* or *rock badgers.*

*Ps 104:26 The identification of Leviathan is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature.

*Ps 104:30 Or *When you send your Spirit.*

PSALM 105:1-45 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 105:19 Hebrew *his word.*

*Ps 105:22 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *bind* or *imprison.*

*Ps 105:28 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *had not defied.*

PSALM 106:1-48 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 106:7 Hebrew *at the sea, the sea of reeds.*

*Ps 106:9 Hebrew *sea of reeds;* also in 106:22.

*Ps 106:19 Hebrew *at Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

*Ps 106:27 As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *he would cause their descendants to fall.*

*Ps 106:33 Hebrew *They embittered his spirit.*

PSALM 107:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 107:3 Hebrew *and sea.*

PSALM 108:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 108:7 Or *in his sanctuary.*

PSALM 109:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 109:6 Hebrew lacks *They say*.

*Ps 109:10 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *and seek*.

PSALM 110:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 110:1 Or *my lord*.

*Ps 110:2 Hebrew *Zion*.

PSALM 111:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 111:1-10 This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic poem; after the introductory note of praise, each line begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

PSALM 112:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 112:1-10 This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic poem; after the introductory note of praise, each line begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

PSALM 113:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 114:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 114:3 Hebrew *the sea;* also in 114:5.

PSALM 115:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 116:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 116:3 Hebrew *of Sheol.*

PSALM 117:1-2 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 118:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 119:1-176 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 119:1-176 This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic poem; there are twenty-two stanzas, one for each successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each of the eight verses within each stanza begins with the Hebrew letter named in its heading.

*Ps 119:37 Some manuscripts read *in your ways.*

PSALM 120:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 121:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 122:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 123:1-4 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 124:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 125:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 126:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 126:1 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 127:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 128:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 129:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 129:5 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 130:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 131:1-3 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 132:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 132:2 Hebrew *of Jacob;* also in 132:5. See note on 44:4.

*Ps 132:13 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 133:1-3 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 134:1-3 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 134:3 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 135:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 136:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 136:13 Hebrew *sea of reeds;* also in 136:15.

PSALM 137:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 137:1 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 137:3.

PSALM 138:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 139:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 139:8 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

*Ps 139:17 Or *How precious to me are your thoughts.*

PSALM 140:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 141:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 141:7 Hebrew *our bones will be scattered at the mouth of Sheol.*

PSALM 142:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 142:1-7 **TITLE** Hebrew *maskil.* This may be a literary or musical term.

PSALM 143:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

PSALM 144:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 144:2 Some manuscripts read *my people.*

PSALM 145:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 145:1-21 This psalm is a Hebrew acrostic poem; each verse (including 13b) begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

*Ps 145:13 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek and Syriac versions; the Masoretic Text lacks the final two lines of this verse.

PSALM 146:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 146:5 Hebrew *of Jacob.* See note on 44:4.

*Ps 146:10 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 147:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 147:17 Hebrew *like bread crumbs.*

PSALM 148:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 148:8 Or *mist,* or *smoke.*

PSALM 149:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ps 149:2 Hebrew *Zion.*

PSALM 150:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

Proverbs Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

PROVERBS 1:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 1:8 Hebrew *My son;* also in 1:10, 15.

*Prov 1:12 Hebrew *like Sheol.*

PROVERBS 2:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 2:1 Hebrew *My son.*

*Prov 2:18 Hebrew *to the spirits of the dead.*

PROVERBS 3:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 3:1 Hebrew *My son;* also in 3:11, 21.

*Prov 3:12 Greek version reads *loves, / and he punishes those he accepts as his children.* Compare Heb 12:6.

*Prov 3:34 Greek version reads *The LORD opposes the proud / but gives grace to the humble.* Compare Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5.

PROVERBS 4:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 4:1 Hebrew *My sons.*

*Prov 4:10 Hebrew *My son;* also in 4:20.

PROVERBS 5:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 5:5 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

*Prov 5:15 Hebrew *Drink water from your own cistern, / flowing water from your own well.*

*Prov 5:16 Hebrew *Why spill your springs in the streets, / your streams in the city squares?*

PROVERBS 6:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 6:1 Hebrew *My son.*

*Prov 6:26 Hebrew *to a loaf of bread.*

PROVERBS 7:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 7:2 Hebrew *as the pupil of your eye.*

*Prov 7:20 Hebrew *until the moon is full.*

*Prov 7:22 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *slaughter, as shackles are for the discipline of a fool.*

*Prov 7:27 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

PROVERBS 8:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 8:16 Some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version read *and nobles are judges over the earth.*

*Prov 8:32 Hebrew *my sons.*

PROVERBS 9:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 9:18 Hebrew *in Sheol.*

PROVERBS 10:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 10:1 Hebrew *son;* also in 10:1b.

*Prov 10:10 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *but babbling fools*

fall flat on their faces.

PROVERBS 11:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 11:30 Or *and those who win souls are wise.*

*Prov 11:31 Greek version reads *If the righteous are barely saved, / what will happen to godless sinners?* Compare 1 Pet 4:18.

PROVERBS 12:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 12:26 Or *The godly are cautious in friendship;* or *The godly are freed from evil.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

PROVERBS 13:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 13:1 Hebrew *A wise son accepts his father's discipline.*

*Prov 13:15 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *the way of the treacherous is lasting.*

PROVERBS 14:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 14:16 Hebrew *The wise fear.*

*Prov 14:18 Or *inherit foolishness.*

*Prov 14:33 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew lacks *not.*

PROVERBS 15:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 15:5 Hebrew *father's.*

*Prov 15:11 Hebrew *Sheol and Abaddon.*

*Prov 15:24 Hebrew *Sheol.*

PROVERBS 16:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 16:33 Hebrew *We may cast lots.*

PROVERBS 17:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 17:6 Hebrew *fathers.*

*Prov 17:25 Hebrew *A foolish son.*

PROVERBS 18:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 18:18 Hebrew *Casting lots.*

PROVERBS 19:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 19:13 Hebrew *son;* also in 19:27.

PROVERBS 20:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 20:10 Hebrew *A stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah.*

*Prov 20:16 An alternate reading in the Masoretic Text is *for a promiscuous woman.*

*Prov 20:27 Or *The human spirit is the LORD's light.*

*Prov 20:30 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

PROVERBS 21:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 21:6 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *mist for those who seek death.*

*Prov 21:12 Or *The righteous man.*

PROVERBS 22:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 22:8 The Greek version includes an additional proverb: *God blesses a man who gives cheerfully, / but his worthless deeds will come to an end.* Compare 2 Cor 9:7.

*Prov 22:20 Or *excellent sayings;* the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

PROVERBS 23:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 23:7 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Prov 23:11 Or *redeemer.*

*Prov 23:14 Hebrew *from Sheol.*

*Prov 23:15 Hebrew *My son;* also in 23:19.

*Prov 23:24 Hebrew *to have a wise son.*

PROVERBS 24:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 24:5 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *A wise man is strength.*

*Prov 24:13 Hebrew *My son;* also in 24:21.

PROVERBS 25:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 25:20 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *pouring vinegar on soda.*

PROVERBS 26:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 26:23 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Burning.*

*Prov 26:25 Hebrew *seven evils.*

PROVERBS 27:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 27:11 Hebrew *my son.*

*Prov 27:13 As in Greek and Latin versions (see also 20:16); Hebrew reads *for a promiscuous woman.*

*Prov 27:20 Hebrew *Sheol and Abaddon.*

*Prov 27:21 Or *by flattery*.

PROVERBS 28:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 28:7 Hebrew *their father*.

*Prov 28:14 Or *those who fear the LORD;* Hebrew reads *those who fear*.

PROVERBS 29:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 29:10 Or *The bloodthirsty hate blameless people, / and they seek to kill the upright;* Hebrew reads *The bloodthirsty hate blameless people; / as for the upright, they seek their life.*

PROVERBS 30:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 30:1a Or *son of Jakeh from Massa;* or *son of Jakeh, an oracle.*

*Prov 30:1b The Hebrew can also be translated *The man declares this to Ithiel, / to Ithiel and to Ucal.*

*Prov 30:15 Hebrew *two daughters who cry out, "Give, give!"*

*Prov 30:16 Hebrew *Sheol.*

*Prov 30:26 Or *Coneys,* or *Rock badgers.*

PROVERBS 31:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Prov 31:1 Or *of Lemuel, king of Massa;* or *of King Lemuel, an oracle.*

*Prov 31:10 Verses 10-31 comprise a Hebrew acrostic poem; each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

*Prov 31:21 As in Greek and Latin versions; Hebrew reads *scarlet.*

Ecclesiastes Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

ECCLESIASTES 1:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 1:1 Hebrew *Qoheleth;* this term is rendered "the Teacher" throughout this book.

ECCLESIASTES 2:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 2:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Eccl 2:25 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *apart from me?*

ECCLESIASTES 3:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 3:19 Or *both have the same spirit.*

ECCLESIASTES 4:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 4:15 Hebrew *the second youth.*

*Eccl 4:16 Hebrew *There is no end to all the people, to all those who are before them.*

ECCLESIASTES 5:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 5:1 Verse 5:1 is numbered 4:17 in Hebrew text.

*Eccl 5:2 Verses 5:2-20 are numbered 5:1-19 in Hebrew text.

*Eccl 5:9 The meaning of the Hebrew in verses 8 and 9 is uncertain.

ECCLESIASTES 6:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

ECCLESIASTES 7:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 7:18 Or *will follow them both.*

*Eccl 7:26 Hebrew *a woman.*

ECCLESIASTES 8:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 8:10 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version; many Hebrew manuscripts read *and are forgotten.*

ECCLESIASTES 9:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 9:2 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew lacks *or bad.*

*Eccl 9:10 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

ECCLESIASTES 10:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 10:16 Or *a child.*

ECCLESIASTES 11:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 11:1 Or *Give generously, / for your gifts will return to you later.* Hebrew reads *Throw your bread on the waters, / for after many days you will find it again.*

*Eccl 11:2 Hebrew *among seven or even eight.*

*Eccl 11:5 Some manuscripts read *Just as you cannot understand how breath comes to a tiny baby in its mother's womb.*

*Eccl 11:9 Hebrew *Young man.*

ECCLESIASTES 12:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eccl 12:10 Or *sought to write what was upright and true.*

*Eccl 12:11 Or *one shepherd.*

*Eccl 12:12 Hebrew *my son.*

Song of Songs Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

SONG OF SONGS 1:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Song 1:1 The headings identifying the speakers are not in the original text, though the Hebrew usually gives clues by means of the gender of the person speaking.

*Song 1:7 Hebrew *like a veiled woman.*

SONG OF SONGS 2:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Song 2:1 Traditionally rendered *I am the rose of Sharon.* Sharon Plain is a region in the coastal plain of Palestine.

*Song 2:7 Or *not to awaken love until it is ready.*

*Song 2:12 Or *the season of pruning vines.*

*Song 2:17 Or *on the hills of Bether.*

SONG OF SONGS 3:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Song 3:5 Or *not to awaken love until it is ready.*

*Song 3:11 Hebrew *of Zion.*

SONG OF SONGS 4:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Song 4:2 Hebrew *Not one is missing; each has a twin.*

*Song 4:8 Or *Look down.*

*Song 4:9 Hebrew *my sister;* also in 4:10, 12.

SONG OF SONGS 5:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Song 5:1 Hebrew *my sister;* also in 5:2.

SONG OF SONGS 6:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Song 6:6 Hebrew *Not one is missing; each has a twin.*

*Song 6:12 Or *to the royal chariots of my people,* or *to the chariots of Amminadab.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Song 6:13a Verse 6:13 is numbered 7:1 in Hebrew text.

*Song 6:13b Or *as you would at the movements of two armies?* or *as you would at the dance of Mahanaim?* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

SONG OF SONGS 7:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Song 7:1 Verses 7:1-13 are numbered 7:2-14 in Hebrew text.

*Song 7:9 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *over lips of sleepers.*

*Song 7:11 Or *in the villages.*

SONG OF SONGS 8:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Song 8:2 Or *there she will teach me.*

*Song 8:4 Or *not to awaken love until it is ready.*

*Song 8:6a Or *its passion.*

*Song 8:6b Hebrew *as Sheol.*

Isaiah Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66

ISAIAH 1:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 1:1 These kings reigned from 792 to 686 B.C.

*Isa 1:8 Hebrew *The daughter of Zion.*

*Isa 1:9 Greek version reads *a few of our children.* Compare Rom 9:29.

ISAIAH 2:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 2:16 Hebrew *every ship of Tarshish.*

ISAIAH 3:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 3:13 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *against the peoples.*

*Isa 3:16 Or *The women of Zion* (with corresponding changes to plural forms through verse 24); Hebrew reads *The daughters of Zion;* also in 3:17.

*Isa 3:24 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads *robes / because instead of beauty*.

ISAIAH 4:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 4:2 Or *the Branch.*

*Isa 4:4 Or *from the women of Zion;* Hebrew reads *from the daughters of Zion.*

ISAIAH 5:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 5:10a Hebrew *A ten yoke,* that is, the area of land plowed by ten teams of oxen in one day.

*Isa 5:10b Hebrew *a bath* [21 liters].

*Isa 5:10c Hebrew *A homer* [5 bushels or 220 liters] *of seed will yield only an ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters].

*Isa 5:14 Hebrew *Sheol.*

*Isa 5:17 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *and strangers.*

ISAIAH 6:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 6:1 King Uzziah died in 740 B.C.

*Isa 6:9-10 Greek version reads *And he said, "Go and say to this people, / 'When you hear what I say, you will not understand. / When you see what I do, you will not comprehend.' For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them."* Compare Matt 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26-27.

ISAIAH 7:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 7:1 Hebrew *Aram;* also in 7:2, 4, 5, 8.

*Isa 7:2 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 7:5, 8, 9, 17.

*Isa 7:3a *Shear-jashub* means "A remnant will return."

*Isa 7:3b Or *bleached.*

*Isa 7:11 Hebrew *as deep as Sheol.*

*Isa 7:14 Or *young woman.*

*Isa 7:15 Or *curds;* also in 7:22.

*Isa 7:20a Hebrew *the river.*

*Isa 7:20b Hebrew *shave off the head, the hair of the legs, and the beard.*

*Isa 7:23 Hebrew *1,000 [shekels] of silver,* about 25 pounds or 11.4 kilograms in weight.

ISAIAH 8:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 8:1 *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* means “Swift to plunder and quick to carry away.”

*Isa 8:6a Or *They are rejoicing because of.*

*Isa 8:6b Hebrew *and the son of Remaliah.*

*Isa 8:7 Hebrew *the river.*

*Isa 8:10 Hebrew *Immanuel!*

ISAIAH 9:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 9:1 Verse 9:1 is numbered 8:23 in Hebrew text.

*Isa 9:2a Verses 9:2-21 are numbered 9:1-20 in Hebrew text.

*Isa 9:2b Greek version reads *a land where death casts its shadow.*

Compare Matt 4:16.

*Isa 9:6 Or *Wonderful, Counselor.*

*Isa 9:9 Hebrew *of Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Isa 9:12 Hebrew *Arameans.*

*Isa 9:20 Or *eat their own arms.*

ISAIAH 10:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 10:21 Hebrew *Shear-jashub;* see 7:3; 8:18.

*Isa 10:22-23 Greek version reads *only a remnant of them will be saved. For he will carry out his sentence quickly and with finality and righteousness; for God will carry out his sentence upon all the world with finality.* Compare Rom 9:27-28.

*Isa 10:27 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *The yoke will be broken, / for you have grown so fat.*

*Isa 10:34 Or *with an ax / as even the mighty trees of Lebanon fall.*

ISAIAH 11:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 11:1 Hebrew *the stump of the line of Jesse.* Jesse was King David's father.

*Isa 11:10a Hebrew *the root of Jesse.*

*Isa 11:10b Greek version reads *In that day the heir to David's throne* [literally *the root of Jesse*] *will come, and he will rule over the Gentiles. They will place their hopes on him.* Compare Rom 15:12.

*Isa 11:11a Hebrew *in Pathros, Cush.*

*Isa 11:11b Hebrew *in Shinar.*

*Isa 11:13 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Isa 11:15a Hebrew *will destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt.*

*Isa 11:15b Hebrew *the river.*

ISAIAH 12:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 12:6 Hebrew *Zion.*

ISAIAH 13:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

ISAIAH 14:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 14:1 Hebrew *the house of Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*Isa 14:4 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; the meaning of the Masoretic Text is uncertain.

*Isa 14:9 Hebrew *Sheol;* also in 14:15.

*Isa 14:11 Hebrew *were brought down to Sheol.*

*Isa 14:13 Or *on the heights of Zaphon.*

*Isa 14:28 King Ahaz died in 715 B.C.

*Isa 14:32 Hebrew *Zion.*

ISAIAH 15:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 15:9 As in Dead Sea Scrolls, some Greek manuscripts, and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *Dimon;* also in 15:9b.

ISAIAH 16:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 16:8 Hebrew *the sea.*

*Isa 16:11 Hebrew *Kir-heres,* a variant spelling of Kir-hareseth.

*Isa 16:14 Hebrew *Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them.*

ISAIAH 17:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 17:3a Hebrew *of Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Isa 17:3b Hebrew *Aram.*

*Isa 17:4 Hebrew *Jacob's.* See note on 14:1.

*Isa 17:9 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *like places of the wood and the highest bough.*

ISAIAH 18:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 18:1a Hebrew *Cush.*

*Isa 18:1b Or *land of many locusts;* Hebrew reads *land of whirring wings.*

*Isa 18:7 Hebrew *to Mount Zion.*

ISAIAH 19:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 19:13 Hebrew *Noph.*

*Isa 19:18 Or *will be the City of Destruction.*

ISAIAH 20:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 20:1 Ashdod was captured by Assyria in 711 B.C.

*Isa 20:3 Hebrew *Cush;* also in 20:5.

*Isa 20:4 Hebrew *Cushites.*

ISAIAH 21:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 21:1 Hebrew *concerning the desert by the sea.*

*Isa 21:8 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Syriac version; Masoretic Text reads *a lion.*

*Isa 21:11a Hebrew *Dumah,* which means "silence" or "stillness." It is a wordplay on the word *Edom.*

*Isa 21:11b Hebrew *Seir,* another name for Edom.

*Isa 21:16 Hebrew *Within a year, as a servant bound by contract would count it.* Some ancient manuscripts read *Within three years,* as in 16:14.

ISAIAH 22:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 22:1 Hebrew *concerning the Valley of Vision.*

*Isa 22:8 Hebrew *to the House of the Forest;* see 1 Kgs 7:2-5.

*Isa 22:9 Hebrew *the city of David.*

*Isa 22:24 Hebrew *They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house: its offspring and offshoots, all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars.*

ISAIAH 23:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 23:1 Hebrew *Kittim;* also in 23:12.

*Isa 23:2 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *Those who have gone over the sea have filled you.*

*Isa 23:3 Hebrew *from Shihor,* a branch of the Nile River.

*Isa 23:4 Or *for the god of the sea says;* Hebrew reads *for the sea, the fortress of the sea, says.*

*Isa 23:10 The meaning of the Hebrew in this verse is uncertain.

*Isa 23:11 Hebrew *Canaan.*

*Isa 23:13 Or *Chaldea.*

ISAIAH 24:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

ISAIAH 25:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 25:6 Hebrew *On this mountain;* also in 25:10.

ISAIAH 26:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 26:9 Hebrew *within me.*

ISAIAH 27:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 27:1 The identification of Leviathan is disputed, ranging from an earthly creature to a mythical sea monster in ancient literature.

*Isa 27:9 Hebrew *Jacob's.* See note on 14:1.

*Isa 27:12 Hebrew *the river.*

ISAIAH 28:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 28:1 Hebrew *What sorrow awaits the crowning glory of the drunks of Ephraim,* referring to Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Isa 28:3 Hebrew *The crowning glory of the drunks of Ephraim;* see note on 28:1.

*Isa 28:15 Hebrew *Sheol;* also in 28:18.

*Isa 28:16a Hebrew *in Zion.*

*Isa 28:16b Greek version reads *Look! I am placing a stone in the foundation of Jerusalem* [literally *Zion*], *a precious cornerstone for its foundation, chosen for great honor. Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.* Compare Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:6.

ISAIAH 29:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 29:1 *Ariel* sounds like a Hebrew term that means "hearth" or "altar."

*Isa 29:7 Hebrew *Ariel.*

*Isa 29:13 Greek version reads *Their worship is a farce, / for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.* Compare Mark 7:7.

*Isa 29:22 Hebrew *of Jacob.* See note on 14:1.

ISAIAH 30:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 30:7 Hebrew *Rahab who sits still.* Rahab is the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature. The name is used here as a poetic name for Egypt.

*Isa 30:32 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version; Masoretic Text reads *with the founded rod.*

ISAIAH 31:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

ISAIAH 32:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 32:14 Hebrew *the Ophel.*

ISAIAH 33:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 33:1 Hebrew *What sorrow awaits you, O destroyer.* The Hebrew text does not specifically name Assyria as the object of the prophecy in this chapter.

*Isa 33:5 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 33:14.

*Isa 33:8 As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads *care nothing for the cities.*

ISAIAH 34:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 34:2 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering; similarly in 34:5.

*Isa 34:8 Hebrew *to Zion.*

*Isa 34:11 The identification of some of these birds is uncertain.

*Isa 34:12 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Isa 34:14 Hebrew *Lilith,* possibly a reference to a mythical demon of the night.

ISAIAH 35:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 35:10 Hebrew *Zion.*

ISAIAH 36:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 36:1 The fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign was 701 B.C.

*Isa 36:2a Or *the rabshakeh;* also in 36:4, 11, 12, 22.

*Isa 36:2b Or *bleached.*

*Isa 36:5 As in Dead Sea Scrolls (see also 2 Kgs 18:20); Masoretic Text reads *Do I think.*

*Isa 36:11 Hebrew *in the dialect of Judah;* also in 36:13.

ISAIAH 37:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 37:4 Or *the rabshakeh;* also in 37:8.

*Isa 37:7 Hebrew *I will put a spirit in him.*

*Isa 37:9 Hebrew *of Cush.*

*Isa 37:20 As in Dead Sea Scrolls (see also 2 Kgs 19:19); Masoretic Text reads *you alone are the LORD.*

*Isa 37:25 As in Dead Sea Scrolls (see also 2 Kgs 19:24); Masoretic Text lacks *in many foreign lands.*

*Isa 37:27 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and some Greek manuscripts (see also 2 Kgs 19:26); most Hebrew manuscripts read *like a terraced field.*

*Isa 37:36 Hebrew *When they.*

ISAIAH 38:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 38:8 Hebrew *the steps.*

*Isa 38:10 Hebrew *enter the gates of Sheol?*

*Isa 38:18 Hebrew *Sheol.*

ISAIAH 39:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

ISAIAH 40:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 40:3-5 Greek version reads *He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, / "Prepare the way for the LORD's coming! / Clear a road*

for our God! Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills. / And then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, / and all people will see the salvation sent from God. / The LORD has spoken!" Compare Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6.

*Isa 40:9 Or *O messenger of good news, shout to Zion from the mountaintops! Shout it louder to Jerusalem.*

*Isa 40:13 Greek version reads *Who can know the LORD's thoughts?* Compare Rom 11:34; 1 Cor 2:16.

ISAIAH 41:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 41:21 Hebrew *the King of Jacob.* See note on 14:1.

*Isa 41:27 Or *'Look! They are coming home.'*

ISAIAH 42:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 42:4 Greek version reads *And his name will be the hope of all the world.* Compare Matt 12:21.

ISAIAH 43:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 43:3 Hebrew *Cush.*

*Isa 43:14 Or *Chaldeans.*

*Isa 43:28 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

ISAIAH 44:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 44:2 Hebrew *Jeshurun,* a term of endearment for Israel.

ISAIAH 45:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 45:2 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *the swellings.*

*Isa 45:14 Hebrew *Cushites.*

*Isa 45:19 Hebrew *of Jacob.* See note on 14:1.

*Isa 45:23 Hebrew *will confess;* Greek version reads *will declare allegiance to God.* Compare Rom 14:11.

ISAIAH 46:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 46:13 Hebrew *Zion.*

ISAIAH 47:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 47:1 Or *Chaldea;* also in 47:5.

*Isa 47:2 Hebrew *Bare your legs; pass through the rivers.*

ISAIAH 48:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 48:14 Or *Chaldean.*

*Isa 48:20a Or *the Chaldeans.*

*Isa 48:20b Hebrew *his servant, Jacob.* See note on 14:1.

ISAIAH 49:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 49:8 Greek version reads *I heard you.* Compare 2 Cor 6:2.

*Isa 49:12 As in Dead Sea Scrolls, which read *from the region of*

Aswan, which is in southern Egypt. Masoretic Text reads *from the region of Sinim.*

*Isa 49:14 Hebrew *Zion.*

*Isa 49:24 As in Dead Sea Scrolls, Syriac version, and Latin Vulgate (also see 49:25); Masoretic Text reads *a righteous person.*

*Isa 49:26 Hebrew *of Jacob.* See note on 14:1.

ISAIAH 50:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

ISAIAH 51:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 51:3 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 51:16.

*Isa 51:9 Hebrew *You slew Rahab; you pierced the dragon.* Rahab is the name of a mythical sea monster that represents chaos in ancient literature. The name is used here as a poetic name for Egypt.

*Isa 51:11 Hebrew *Zion.*

*Isa 51:16 As in Syriac version (see also 51:13); Hebrew reads *planted.*

*Isa 51:19 As in Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek, Latin, and Syriac versions; Masoretic Text reads *How can I comfort you?*

ISAIAH 52:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 52:5a As in Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text reads *Those who rule them wail.*

*Isa 52:5b Greek version reads *The Gentiles continually blaspheme my name because of you.* Compare Rom 2:24.

*Isa 52:7 Hebrew *of Zion.*

*Isa 52:8 Hebrew *to Zion.*

*Isa 52:14 As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *you.*

*Isa 52:15a Or *cleanse.*

*Isa 52:15b Greek version reads *Those who have never been told about him will see, / and those who have never heard of him will understand.* Compare Rom 15:21.

ISAIAH 53:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 53:4 Or *Yet it was our sicknesses he carried; / it was our diseases.*

*Isa 53:8a Greek version reads *He was humiliated and received no justice.* Compare Acts 8:33.

*Isa 53:8b Or *As for his contemporaries, / who cared that his life was cut short in midstream?* Greek version reads *Who can speak of his descendants? / For his life was taken from the earth.* Compare Acts 8:33.

ISAIAH 54:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

ISAIAH 55:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

ISAIAH 56:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

ISAIAH 57:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 57:9a Or *to the king.*

*Isa 57:9b Hebrew *to Sheol.*

ISAIAH 58:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 58:1 Hebrew *Jacob.* See note on 14:1.

ISAIAH 59:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 59:19 Or *When the enemy comes like a raging flood tide, / the Spirit of the LORD will drive him back.*

*Isa 59:20 Hebrew *The Redeemer will come to Zion to buy back those in Jacob who have turned from their sins.* Greek version reads *The one who rescues will come on behalf of Zion, / and he will turn Jacob away from ungodliness.* Compare Rom 11:26.

ISAIAH 60:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 60:16 Hebrew *of Jacob.* See note on 14:1.

ISAIAH 61:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 61:1 Greek version reads *and the blind will see.* Compare Luke 4:18.

*Isa 61:2 Or *to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.*

*Isa 61:3 Hebrew *in Zion.*

ISAIAH 62:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 62:4a Hebrew *Azubah,* which means “forsaken.”

*Isa 62:4b Hebrew *Shemamah,* which means “desolate.”

*Isa 62:4c Hebrew *Hephzibah,* which means “my delight is in her.”

*Isa 62:4d Hebrew *Beulah,* which means “married.”

*Isa 62:11 Hebrew *Tell the daughter of Zion.*

ISAIAH 63:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 63:9 Hebrew *and the angel of his presence.*

*Isa 63:16 Hebrew *Israel.* See note on 14:1.

ISAIAH 64:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 64:1 In the Hebrew text this verse is included in 63:19.

*Isa 64:2 Verses 64:2-12 are numbered 64:1-11 in Hebrew text.

*Isa 64:7 As in Greek, Syriac, and Aramaic versions; Hebrew reads *melted us.*

ISAIAH 65:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 65:1 Or *to a nation that did not bear my name.*

*Isa 65:1-2 Greek version reads *I was found by people who were not looking for me. I showed myself to those who were not asking for me. All day long I opened my arms to them, / but they were disobedient and rebellious.* Compare Rom 10:20-21.

*Isa 65:6 Or *their sins are written out;* Hebrew reads *it stands written.*

*Isa 65:9 Hebrew *remnant of Jacob.* See note on 14:1.

ISAIAH 66:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Isa 66:2 As in Greek, Latin, and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *these things are.*

*Isa 66:8 Hebrew *Zion's.*

*Isa 66:19a As in some Greek manuscripts, which read *Put* [that is, *Libya*]; Hebrew reads *Pul.*

*Isa 66:19b Hebrew *Lud.*

*Isa 66:19c Hebrew *Javan.*

Jeremiah Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

JEREMIAH 1:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 1:2 The thirteenth year of Josiah's reign was 627 B.C.

*Jer 1:3 Hebrew *In the fifth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. A number of events in Jeremiah can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Babylonian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. The fifth month in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign occurred within the months of August and September 586 B.C. Also see 52:12 and the note there.

*Jer 1:12 The Hebrew word for “watching” *(shoqed)* sounds like the word for “almond tree” *(shaqed)*.

JEREMIAH 2:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 2:3 Hebrew *the firstfruits of his harvest.*

*Jer 2:10 Hebrew *Kittim.*

*Jer 2:11 Hebrew *their glory*.

*Jer 2:16 Hebrew *Noph.*

*Jer 2:18a Hebrew *of Shihor,* a branch of the Nile River.

*Jer 2:18b Hebrew *the river?*

JEREMIAH 3:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 3:8 As in Dead Sea Scrolls, one Greek manuscript, and Syriac version; Masoretic Text reads *I saw*.

*Jer 3:12 Hebrew *toward the north.*

*Jer 3:14 Hebrew *to Zion.*

JEREMIAH 4:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 4:4 Hebrew *Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart.*

*Jer 4:6 Hebrew *Zion.*

*Jer 4:31 Hebrew *the daughter of Zion.*

JEREMIAH 5:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 5:20 Hebrew *to the house of Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

JEREMIAH 6:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 6:2 Hebrew *Daughter of Zion.*

*Jer 6:23 Hebrew *daughter of Zion.*

*Jer 6:27 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *a tester of my people a fortress.*

JEREMIAH 7:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 7:15 Hebrew *of Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

JEREMIAH 8:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 8:7 The identification of some of these birds is uncertain.

*Jer 8:19 Hebrew *Zion?*

JEREMIAH 9:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 9:1 Verse 9:1 is numbered 8:23 in Hebrew text.

*Jer 9:2 Verses 9:2-26 are numbered 9:1-25 in Hebrew text.

*Jer 9:7 Hebrew *with the daughter of my people?* Greek version reads *with the evil daughter of my people?*

*Jer 9:19 Hebrew *Zion.*

*Jer 9:26 Or *in the desert and clip the corners of their hair.*

JEREMIAH 10:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 10:11 The original text of this verse is in Aramaic.

*Jer 10:16 Hebrew *the Portion of Jacob.* See note on 5:20.

*Jer 10:25 Hebrew *devoured Jacob.* See note on 5:20.

JEREMIAH 11:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

JEREMIAH 12:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 12:9 Or *speckled hyenas.*

JEREMIAH 13:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 13:4 Hebrew *Perath;* also in 13:5, 6, 7.

*Jer 13:23 Hebrew *a Cushite.*

JEREMIAH 14:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 14:19 Hebrew *Zion?*

JEREMIAH 15:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 15:14 As in some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 17:4); most Hebrew manuscripts read *will burn against you.*

JEREMIAH 16:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

JEREMIAH 17:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 17:26 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

JEREMIAH 18:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

JEREMIAH 19:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

JEREMIAH 20:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 20:3 Hebrew *Magor-missabib,* which means “surrounded by terror”; also in 20:10.

JEREMIAH 21:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 21:2 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar; also in 21:7.

*Jer 21:4 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 21:9.

JEREMIAH 22:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 22:11 Hebrew *Shallum,* another name for Jehoahaz.

*Jer 22:13a The brother and successor of the exiled Jehoahaz. See 22:18.

*Jer 22:13b Hebrew *by unrighteousness.*

*Jer 22:20 Or *in Abarim.*

*Jer 22:24 Hebrew *Coniah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin; also 22:28.

*Jer 22:25a Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Jer 22:25b Or *Chaldean.*

JEREMIAH 23:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 23:5 Hebrew *a righteous branch.*

*Jer 23:6 Hebrew *Yahweh Tsidqenu.*

*Jer 23:33 As in Greek version and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *What burden?*

*Jer 23:39 Some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version read *I will surely lift you up.*

JEREMIAH 24:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 24:1a Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Jer 24:1b Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin.

*Jer 24:5 Or *Chaldeans.*

JEREMIAH 25:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 25:1a The fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign and the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was 605 B.C.

*Jer 25:1b Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar; also in 25:9.

*Jer 25:3 The thirteenth year of Josiah's reign was 627 B.C.

*Jer 25:9 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*Jer 25:12 Or *Chaldeans.*

*Jer 25:23 Or *who clip the corners of their hair.*

*Jer 25:26 Hebrew *of Sheshach,* a code name for Babylon.

*Jer 25:38 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *by the anger.*

JEREMIAH 26:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 26:1 The first year of Jehoiakim's reign was 608 B.C.

*Jer 26:18 Mic 3:12.

JEREMIAH 27:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 27:1 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version (see also 27:3, 12); most Hebrew manuscripts read *Jehoiakim.*

*Jer 27:20 Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin.

JEREMIAH 28:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 28:1 Hebrew *In the fifth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. The fifth month in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign occurred within the months of August and September 593 B.C. Also see note on 1:3.

*Jer 28:4 Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin.

*Jer 28:17 Hebrew *In the seventh month of that same year.* See 28:1 and the note there.

JEREMIAH 29:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 29:2 Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin.

*Jer 29:21 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

JEREMIAH 30:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 30:7 Hebrew *Jacob;* also in 30:10b, 18. See note on 5:20.

*Jer 30:17 Hebrew *Zion.*

JEREMIAH 31:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 31:6 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 31:12.

*Jer 31:7 Hebrew *Jacob;* also in 31:11. See note on 5:20.

*Jer 31:18 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 31:20.

*Jer 31:22 Hebrew *a woman will surround a man.*

JEREMIAH 32:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 32:1a The tenth year of Zedekiah's reign and the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was 587 B.C.

*Jer 32:1b Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar; also in 32:28.

*Jer 32:4 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 32:5, 24, 25, 28, 29, 43.

*Jer 32:9 Hebrew *17 shekels,* about 7 ounces or 194 grams in weight.

*Jer 32:44 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

JEREMIAH 33:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 33:5 Or *Chaldeans.*

*Jer 33:13 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*Jer 33:15 Hebrew *a righteous branch.*

*Jer 33:16 Hebrew *Yahweh Tsidqenu.*

JEREMIAH 34:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 34:1 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

JEREMIAH 35:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 35:6 Hebrew *Jonadab,* a variant spelling of Jehonadab; also in 35:10, 19. See 2 Kgs 10:15.

*Jer 35:11a Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Jer 35:11b Or *Chaldean and Aramean.*

JEREMIAH 36:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 36:1 The fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign was 605 B.C.

*Jer 36:9 Hebrew *in the ninth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar (also in 36:22). The ninth month in the fifth year of Jehoiakim's reign occurred within the months of November and December 604 B.C. Also see note on 1:3.

JEREMIAH 37:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 37:1a Hebrew *Coniah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin.

*Jer 37:1b Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Jer 37:5a Hebrew *army of Pharaoh;* see 44:30.

*Jer 37:5b Or *Chaldean;* also in 37:10, 11.

*Jer 37:8 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 37:9, 13.

*Jer 37:12 Hebrew *to separate from there in the midst of the people.*

JEREMIAH 38:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 38:1 Hebrew *Jucal,* a variant spelling of Jehucal; see 37:3.

*Jer 38:2 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 38:18, 19, 23.

*Jer 38:7 Hebrew *the Cushite.*

JEREMIAH 39:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 39:1a Hebrew *in the tenth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. A number of events in Jeremiah can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Babylonian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This event occurred on January 15, 588 B.C.; see 52:4a and the note there.

*Jer 39:1b Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar; also in 39:5, 11.

*Jer 39:2 Hebrew *On the ninth day of the fourth month.* This day was July 18, 586 B.C.; also see note on 39:1a.

*Jer 39:3 Or *Nergal-sharezer, Samgar-nebo, Sarsekim.*

*Jer 39:4 Hebrew *the Arabah.*

*Jer 39:5 Or *Chaldean;* similarly in 39:8.

*Jer 39:16 Hebrew *the Cushite.*

JEREMIAH 40:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 40:9 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 40:10.

JEREMIAH 41:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 41:1 Hebrew *in the seventh month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This month occurred within the months of October and November 586 B.C.; also see note on 39:1a.

*Jer 41:3 Or *Chaldean.*

*Jer 41:9 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *murdered because of Gedaliah was one.*

*Jer 41:16 Or *eunuchs.*

*Jer 41:18 Or *Chaldeans.*

JEREMIAH 42:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 42:1 Greek version reads *Azariah;* compare 43:2.

JEREMIAH 43:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 43:3 Or *Chaldeans.*

*Jer 43:10 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Jer 43:13 Or *in Heliopolis.*

JEREMIAH 44:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 44:1a Hebrew *Noph.*

*Jer 44:1b Hebrew *in Pathros.*

*Jer 44:15 Hebrew *in Egypt, in Pathros.*

*Jer 44:30 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

JEREMIAH 45:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 45:1 The fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign was 605 B.C.

JEREMIAH 46:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 46:2a This event occurred in 605 B.C., during the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign (according to the calendar system in which the new year begins in the spring).

*Jer 46:2b Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar; also in 46:13, 26.

*Jer 46:9 Hebrew *from Cush, Put, and Lud.*

*Jer 46:14 Hebrew *Noph;* also in 46:19.

*Jer 46:25 Hebrew *of No.*

*Jer 46:27 Hebrew *Jacob.* See note on 5:20.

JEREMIAH 47:1-7 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 47:4 Hebrew *from Caphtor.*

*Jer 47:5 Hebrew *the plain.*

JEREMIAH 48:1-47 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 48:2 *Madmen* sounds like the Hebrew word for "silence"; it should not be confused with the English word *madmen.*

*Jer 48:4 Greek version reads *Her cries are heard as far away as Zoar.*

*Jer 48:6 Or *Hide like a wild donkey;* or *Hide like a juniper shrub;* or *Be like* [the town of] *Aroer.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Jer 48:9 Or *Put salt on Moab, / for she will be laid waste.*

*Jer 48:13 Hebrew *ashamed when they trusted in Bethel.*

*Jer 48:21 Hebrew *Jahzah,* a variant spelling of Jahaz.

*Jer 48:31 Hebrew *Kir-heres,* a variant spelling of Kir-hareseth; also in 48:36.

*Jer 48:32 Hebrew *the sea of Jazer.*

JEREMIAH 49:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 49:1 Hebrew *Malcam,* a variant spelling of Molech; also in 49:3.

*Jer 49:8 Hebrew *Esau;* also in 49:10.

*Jer 49:21 Hebrew *sea of reeds.*

*Jer 49:28 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar; also in 49:30.

*Jer 49:32 Or *who clip the corners of their hair.*

JEREMIAH 50:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 50:1 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 50:8, 25, 35, 45.

*Jer 50:2 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

*Jer 50:5 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 50:28.

*Jer 50:10 Or *Chaldea.*

*Jer 50:12 Hebrew *your mother.*

*Jer 50:17 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Jer 50:21 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*Jer 50:38 Or *sword;* the Hebrew words for *drought* and *sword* are very similar.

*Jer 50:40 Hebrew *as God.*

JEREMIAH 51:1-64 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 51:1 Hebrew *of Leb-kamai,* a code name for Babylonia.

*Jer 51:3 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete

consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

*Jer 51:4 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 51:54.

*Jer 51:10 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 51:24.

*Jer 51:11 Greek version reads *Fill up the quivers.*

*Jer 51:19 Hebrew *the Portion of Jacob.* See note on 5:20.

*Jer 51:20 Possibly Cyrus, whom God used to conquer Babylon. Compare Isa 44:28; 45:1.

*Jer 51:24 Or *Chaldea;* also in 51:35.

*Jer 51:34 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Jer 51:41 Hebrew *Sheshach,* a code name for Babylon.

*Jer 51:59 The fourth year of Zedekiah's reign was 593 B.C.

JEREMIAH 52:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jer 52:4a Hebrew *on the tenth day of the tenth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. A number of events in Jeremiah can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Babylonian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This day was January 15, 588 B.C.

*Jer 52:4b Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar; also in 52:12, 28, 29, 30.

*Jer 52:6 Hebrew *By the ninth day of the fourth month* [in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign]. This day was July 18, 586 B.C.; also see note on 52:4a.

*Jer 52:7a Or *the Chaldeans;* similarly in 52:8, 17.

*Jer 52:7b Hebrew *the Arabah.*

*Jer 52:12 Hebrew *On the tenth day of the fifth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was August 17, 586 B.C.; also see note on 52:4a.

*Jer 52:13 Or *destroyed the houses of all the important people.*

*Jer 52:14 Or *Chaldean.*

*Jer 52:21a Hebrew *18 cubits* [8.3 meters] *tall and 12 cubits* [5.5 meters] *in circumference.*

*Jer 52:21b Hebrew *4 fingers thick* [8 centimeters].

*Jer 52:22 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.3 meters].

*Jer 52:28 This exile in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign occurred in 597 B.C.

*Jer 52:29 This exile in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign occurred in 586 B.C.

*Jer 52:30 This exile in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign occurred in 581 B.C.

*Jer 52:31a Hebrew *He raised the head of.*

*Jer 52:31b Hebrew *on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was March 31, 561 B.C.; also see note on 52:4a.

Lamentations Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5

LAMENTATIONS 1:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lam 1:1-22 Each of the first four chapters of this book is an acrostic, laid out in the order of the Hebrew alphabet. The first word of each verse begins with a successive Hebrew letter. Chapters 1, 2, and 4 have one verse for each of the 22 Hebrew letters. Chapter 3 contains 22 stanzas of three verses each. Though chapter 5 has 22 verses, it is not an acrostic.

*Lam 1:4 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 1:17.

*Lam 1:6 Hebrew *of the daughter of Zion.*

*Lam 1:15 Hebrew *the virgin daughter of Judah.*

*Lam 1:17 Hebrew *Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

LAMENTATIONS 2:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lam 2:1a Hebrew *the daughter of Zion;* also in 2:8, 10, 18.

*Lam 2:1b Hebrew *his footstool.*

*Lam 2:2a Hebrew *Jacob;* also in 2:3b. See note on 1:17.

*Lam 2:2b Hebrew *the daughter of Judah;* also in 2:5.

*Lam 2:4 Hebrew *on the tent of the daughter of Zion.*

*Lam 2:15 Hebrew *the daughter of Jerusalem.*

*Lam 2:18 Hebrew *Their heart cried.*

LAMENTATIONS 3:1-66 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lam 3:19 Or *is wormwood and gall.*

*Lam 3:22 As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *of the LORD keeps us from destruction.*

LAMENTATIONS 4:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lam 4:2 Hebrew *precious sons of Zion.*

*Lam 4:6 Or *punishment.*

*Lam 4:7 Hebrew *like lapis lazuli.*

*Lam 4:11 Hebrew *in Zion.*

*Lam 4:22 Hebrew *O daughter of Zion.*

LAMENTATIONS 5:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Lam 5:11 Hebrew *in Zion.*

*Lam 5:16 Or *The crown has.*

*Lam 5:18 Hebrew *Mount Zion.*

Ezekiel Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

EZEKIEL 1:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 1:1a Hebrew *On the fifth day of the fourth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. A number of dates in Ezekiel can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Babylonian records and

related accurately to our modern calendar. This event occurred on July 31, 593 B.C.

*Ezek 1:1b Or *in the thirtieth year.*

*Ezek 1:3 Or *Chaldeans.*

*Ezek 1:4 Or *like burnished metal;* also in 1:27.

*Ezek 1:24 Hebrew *Shaddai.*

EZEKIEL 2:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

EZEKIEL 3:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 3:12 A possible reading for this verse is *Then the Spirit lifted me up, and as the glory of the LORD rose from its place, I heard a loud rumbling sound behind me.*

EZEKIEL 4:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 4:10 Hebrew *20 shekels* [228 grams].

*Ezek 4:11 Hebrew *1/6 of a hin* [about 1 pint or 0.6 liters].

EZEKIEL 5:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

EZEKIEL 6:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 6:4 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung; also in 6:5, 6, 9, 13.

*Ezek 6:14 As in some Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts read *Diblah*.

EZEKIEL 7:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

EZEKIEL 8:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 8:1 Hebrew *on the fifth [day] of the sixth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on September 17, 592 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 8:2a As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *appeared to be fire*.

*Ezek 8:2b Or *like burnished metal*.

*Ezek 8:10 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

EZEKIEL 9:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

EZEKIEL 10:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 10:5 Hebrew *El-Shaddai.*

*Ezek 10:14 Hebrew *the face of a cherub;* compare 1:10.

EZEKIEL 11:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 11:3 Hebrew *This city is the pot, and we are the meat.*

*Ezek 11:19 Hebrew *a heart of flesh.*

*Ezek 11:24 Or *Chaldea.*

EZEKIEL 12:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 12:10 Hebrew *the prince in Jerusalem;* similarly in 12:12.

*Ezek 12:13 Or *Chaldeans.*

EZEKIEL 13:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

EZEKIEL 14:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 14:3 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung; also in 14:4, 5, 6, 7.

EZEKIEL 15:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

EZEKIEL 16:1-63 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 16:29 Or *Chaldea.*

*Ezek 16:36 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

*Ezek 16:50 As in a few Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *as I have seen.*

*Ezek 16:57 As in many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version; Masoretic Text reads *Aram.*

EZEKIEL 17:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 17:21 As in many Hebrew manuscripts; Masoretic Text reads *his fleeing warriors.* The meaning is uncertain.

EZEKIEL 18:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 18:6 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung; also in 18:12, 15.

*Ezek 18:17 Greek version reads *He refuses to do evil.*

EZEKIEL 19:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 19:7 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *He knew widows.*

EZEKIEL 20:1-49 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 20:1 Hebrew *In the fifth month, on the tenth day,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This day was August 14, 591 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 20:7 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably

alludes to dung; also in 20:8, 16, 18, 24, 31, 39.

*Ezek 20:25-26 Or *I gave them worthless decrees and regulations. . . . I polluted them.*

*Ezek 20:31 Or *and make your little children pass through the fire.*

*Ezek 20:34 Greek version reads *I will welcome you.* Compare 2 Cor 6:17.

*Ezek 20:45 Verses 20:45-49 are numbered 21:1-5 in Hebrew text.

*Ezek 20:46 Hebrew *toward Teman.*

EZEKIEL 21:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 21:1 Verses 21:1-32 are numbered 21:6-37 in Hebrew text.

*Ezek 21:10 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Ezek 21:13 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

EZEKIEL 22:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 22:3 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung; also in 22:4.

*Ezek 22:16 As in one Hebrew manuscript and Greek and Syriac versions; Masoretic Text reads *when you have been dishonored among the nations.*

*Ezek 22:25 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *prophets.*

EZEKIEL 23:1-49 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 23:7 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung; also in 23:30, 37, 39, 49.

*Ezek 23:14 Or *Chaldean.*

*Ezek 23:15 Or *Chaldea;* also in 23:16.

*Ezek 23:24 As in Greek version; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Ezek 23:42 Or *Sabeans.*

EZEKIEL 24:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 24:1 Hebrew *On the tenth day of the tenth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on January 15, 588 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

EZEKIEL 25:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 25:8 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *Moab and Seir.*

EZEKIEL 26:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 26:1 Hebrew *In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar year. Since an element is missing in the date formula here, scholars have reconstructed this probable reading: *In the eleventh [month of the twelfth] year, on the first day of the month.* This reading would put this message on February 3, 585 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 26:7 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

EZEKIEL 27:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 27:5 Or *Hermon.*

*Ezek 27:6 Hebrew *Kittim.*

*Ezek 27:10 Hebrew *Paras, Lud, and Put.*

*Ezek 27:13 Hebrew *Javan.*

*Ezek 27:15 Greek version reads *Rhodes.*

*Ezek 27:16 Hebrew *Aram;* some manuscripts read *Edom.*

*Ezek 27:17 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Ezek 27:19 Hebrew *Vedan and Javan from Uzal.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Ezek 27:36 Hebrew *hiss at you.*

EZEKIEL 28:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 28:10 Hebrew *will die the death of the uncircumcised.*

*Ezek 28:13 The identification of some of these gemstones is uncertain.

*Ezek 28:14 Hebrew *guardian cherub;* similarly in 28:16.

EZEKIEL 29:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 29:1 Hebrew *On the twelfth day of the tenth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on January 7, 587 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 29:10 Hebrew *from Migdol to Syene as far as the border of Cush.*

*Ezek 29:17 Hebrew *On the first day of the first month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on April 26, 571 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 29:18 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar; also in 29:19.

*Ezek 29:21 Hebrew *I will cause a horn to sprout for the house of Israel.*

EZEKIEL 30:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 30:4 Hebrew *Cush;* similarly in 30:9.

*Ezek 30:5 Hebrew *Cush, Put, Lud, all Arabia, Cub. Cub* is otherwise unknown and may be another spelling for *Lub* (Libya).

*Ezek 30:6 Hebrew *to Syene.*

*Ezek 30:10 Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* a variant spelling of Nebuchadnezzar.

*Ezek 30:13a The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

*Ezek 30:13b Hebrew *Noph;* also in 30:16.

*Ezek 30:14a Hebrew *Pathros.*

*Ezek 30:14b Hebrew *No;* also in 30:15, 16.

*Ezek 30:15 Hebrew *Sin;* also in 30:16.

*Ezek 30:17a Hebrew *of Awen and Pi-beseth.*

*Ezek 30:17b Or *and her cities.*

*Ezek 30:20 Hebrew *On the seventh day of the first month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on April 29, 587 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

EZEKIEL 31:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 31:1 Hebrew *On the first day of the third month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on June 21, 587 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 31:10 Hebrew *you.*

*Ezek 31:15 Hebrew *to Sheol;* also in 31:16, 17.

*Ezek 31:18 Hebrew *among the uncircumcised.*

EZEKIEL 32:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 32:1 Hebrew *On the first day of the twelfth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on March 3, 585 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 32:17 Hebrew *On the fifteenth day of the month,* presumably in the twelfth month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar (see 32:1). This would put this message at the end of King Jehoiachin's twelfth year of captivity, on March 17, 585 B.C.; also see note on 1:1. Greek version reads *On the fifteenth day of the first month,* which

would put this message on April 27, 586 B.C., at the beginning of Jehoiachin's twelfth year.

*Ezek 32:18 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Ezek 32:19 Hebrew *the uncircumcised;* also in 32:21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 32.

*Ezek 32:21 Hebrew *in Sheol.*

*Ezek 32:27a Hebrew *to Sheol.*

*Ezek 32:27b The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

EZEKIEL 33:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 33:21 Hebrew *On the fifth day of the tenth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on January 8, 585 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 33:25 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

EZEKIEL 34:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

EZEKIEL 35:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 35:11 Hebrew *to them;* Greek version reads *to you.*

EZEKIEL 36:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 36:18 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung; also in 36:25.

*Ezek 36:26 Hebrew *a heart of flesh.*

EZEKIEL 37:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 37:16 Hebrew *This is Ephraim's wood, representing Joseph and all the house of Israel;* similarly in 37:19.

*Ezek 37:23a The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung.

*Ezek 37:23b As in many Hebrew manuscripts and Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *from all their dwelling places where they sinned.*

*Ezek 37:26 Hebrew reads *I will give them and increase their*

numbers; Greek version lacks the entire phrase.

EZEKIEL 38:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 38:5 Hebrew *Paras, Cush, and Put.*

*Ezek 38:14 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *then you will know.*

EZEKIEL 39:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 39:11 Hebrew *the sea.*

*Ezek 39:25 Hebrew *of Jacob.*

*Ezek 39:26 A few Hebrew manuscripts read *They will forget.*

EZEKIEL 40:1-49 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 40:1 Hebrew *At the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on April 28, 573 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Ezek 40:5a Hebrew *6 long cubits* [3.2 meters], *each being a cubit*

[18 inches or 45 centimeters] *and a handbreadth* [3 inches or 8 centimeters] *in length.*

*Ezek 40:5b Hebrew *1 rod* [3.2 meters]; also in 40:5c, 7.

*Ezek 40:6 As in Greek version, which reads *1 rod* [3.2 meters] *deep;* Hebrew reads *1 rod deep, and 1 threshold, 1 rod deep.*

*Ezek 40:7 Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.7 meters]; also in 40:48.

*Ezek 40:8 As in many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac version; other Hebrew manuscripts add *which faced inward toward the Temple; it was 1 rod* [10.5 feet or 3.2 meters] *deep.* 9*Then he measured the entry room of the gateway.*

*Ezek 40:9a Hebrew *8 cubits* [4.2 meters].

*Ezek 40:9b Hebrew *2 cubits* [1.1 meters].

*Ezek 40:11a Hebrew *10 cubits* [5.3 meters].

*Ezek 40:11b Hebrew *13 cubits* [6.9 meters].

*Ezek 40:12a Hebrew *1 cubit* [53 centimeters].

*Ezek 40:12b Hebrew *6 cubits* [3.2 meters].

*Ezek 40:13 Hebrew *25 cubits* [13.3 meters]; also in 40:21, 25, 29, 30, 33, 36.

*Ezek 40:14 Hebrew *60 cubits* [31.8 meters]. Greek version reads *20 cubits* [35 feet or 10.6 meters]. The meaning of the Hebrew in this verse is uncertain.

*Ezek 40:15 Hebrew *50 cubits* [26.5 meters]; also in 40:21, 25, 29, 33, 36.

*Ezek 40:19 Hebrew *100 cubits* [53 meters]; also in 40:23, 27, 47.

*Ezek 40:30 As in 40:9, which reads *8 cubits* [14 feet or 4.2 meters]; here the Hebrew reads *5 cubits* [83/4 feet or 2.7 meters]. Some Hebrew manuscripts and the Greek version lack this entire verse.

*Ezek 40:37 As in Greek version (compare parallels at 40:26, 31, 34); Hebrew reads *Its dividing wall.*

*Ezek 40:42 Hebrew *1 1/2 cubits* [80 centimeters] *long and 1 1/2 cubits wide and 1 cubit* [53 centimeters] *high.*

*Ezek 40:43 Hebrew *a handbreadth* [8 centimeters].

*Ezek 40:44a As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *rooms for singers.*

*Ezek 40:44b As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *east.*

*Ezek 40:48 As in Greek version, which reads *The entrance was 14 cubits* [7.4 meters] *wide, and the walls of the entrance were 3 cubits* [1.6 meters] *on each side;* Hebrew lacks *14 cubits wide, and the walls of the entrance were.*

*Ezek 40:49a Hebrew *20 cubits* [10.6 meters].

*Ezek 40:49b As in Greek version, which reads *12 cubits* [21 feet or 6.4 meters]; Hebrew reads *11 cubits* [191/4 feet or 5.8 meters].

*Ezek 40:49c As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *There were steps that were.*

EZEKIEL 41:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 41:1a As in Greek version; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Ezek 41:1b Hebrew *6 cubits* [3.2 meters]; also in 41:3, 5.

*Ezek 41:2a Hebrew *10 cubits* [5.3 meters].

*Ezek 41:2b Hebrew *5 cubits* [2.7 meters]; also in 41:9, 11.

*Ezek 41:2c Hebrew *40 cubits* [21.2 meters] *long and 20 cubits* [10.6 meters] *wide.*

*Ezek 41:3a Hebrew *2 cubits* [1.1 meters].

*Ezek 41:3b Hebrew *7 cubits* [3.7 meters].

*Ezek 41:4 Hebrew *20 cubits* [10.6 meters]; also in 41:4b, 10.

*Ezek 41:5 Hebrew *4 cubits* [2.1 meters].

*Ezek 41:8 Hebrew *1 rod, 6 cubits* [3.2 meters].

*Ezek 41:12 Hebrew *70 cubits* [37.1 meters] *wide and 90 cubits* [47.7 meters] *long, and its walls were 5 cubits* [2.7 meters] *thick.*

*Ezek 41:13 Hebrew *100 cubits* [53 meters]; also in 41:13b, 14, 15.

*Ezek 41:22 Hebrew *3 cubits* [1.6 meters] *high and 2 cubits* [1.1 meters] *across.*

EZEKIEL 42:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 42:2a Hebrew *100 cubits* [53 meters]; also in 42:8.

*Ezek 42:2b Hebrew *50 cubits* [26.5 meters]; also in 42:7, 8.

*Ezek 42:3 Hebrew *20[-cubit]* [10.6-meter].

*Ezek 42:4a Hebrew *10 cubits* [5.3 meters].

*Ezek 42:4b As in Greek and Syriac versions, which read *Its length was 100 cubits* [53 meters]; Hebrew reads *and a passage 1 cubit* [21 inches or 53 centimeters] *wide.*

*Ezek 42:10 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *east.*

*Ezek 42:16 As in 45:2 and in Greek version at 42:17, which reads *500 cubits* [265 meters]; Hebrew reads *500 rods* [5,250 feet or 1,590 meters]; similarly in 42:17, 18, 19, 20.

EZEKIEL 43:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 43:3 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Latin Vulgate; Masoretic Text reads *I came.*

*Ezek 43:7 Or *kings on their high places.*

*Ezek 43:11 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *if they are ashamed.*

*Ezek 43:13a Hebrew *measurements of the altar in long cubits, each being a cubit* [18 inches or 45 centimeters] *and a handbreadth* [3 inches or 8 centimeters] *in length.*

*Ezek 43:13b Hebrew *a cubit* [53 centimeters] *deep and a cubit wide.*

*Ezek 43:13c Hebrew *1 span* [23 centimeters].

*Ezek 43:13d As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *base.*

*Ezek 43:14a Hebrew *2 cubits* [1.1 meters].

*Ezek 43:14b Hebrew *1 cubit* [53 centimeters]; also in 43:14d.

*Ezek 43:14c Hebrew *4 cubits* [2.1 meters]; also in 43:15.

*Ezek 43:16 Hebrew *12 [cubits]* [6.4 meters] *long and 12 [cubits] wide.*

*Ezek 43:17a Hebrew *14 [cubits]* [7.4 meters] *long and 14 [cubits] wide.*

*Ezek 43:17b Hebrew *a gutter of 1 cubit* [53 centimeters] *and a curb of 1/2 a cubit* [27 centimeters].

EZEKIEL 44:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 44:10 The Hebrew term (literally *round things*) probably alludes to dung; also in 44:12.

*Ezek 44:29 The Hebrew term used here refers to the complete consecration of things or people to the LORD, either by destroying them or by giving them as an offering.

EZEKIEL 45:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 45:1 As in Greek version, which reads *25,000 [cubits]* [13.3 kilometers] *long and 20,000 [cubits]* [10.6 kilometers] *wide;* Hebrew reads *25,000 [cubits] long and 10,000 [cubits]* [31/3 miles or 5.3 kilometers] *wide.* Compare 45:3, 5; 48:9.

*Ezek 45:2a Hebrew *500 [cubits]* [265 meters] *by 500 [cubits], a square.*

*Ezek 45:2b Hebrew *50 cubits* [26.5 meters].

*Ezek 45:3 Hebrew *25,000 [cubits]* [13.3 kilometers] *long and 10,000 [cubits]* [5.3 kilometers] *wide;* also in 45:5.

*Ezek 45:5 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *They will have as their possession 20 rooms.*

*Ezek 45:6 Hebrew *25,000 [cubits]* [13.3 kilometers] *long and 5,000 [cubits]* [2.65 kilometers] *wide.*

*Ezek 45:10 Hebrew *Use honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath.*

*Ezek 45:11a The *homer* measures about 50 gallons or 220 liters.

*Ezek 45:11b The *ephah* is a dry measure; the *bath* is a liquid measure.

*Ezek 45:12a The *shekel* weighs about 0.4 ounces or 11 grams.

*Ezek 45:12b Elsewhere the *mina* is equated to 50 shekels.

*Ezek 45:13 Hebrew *1/6 of an ephah from each homer of wheat and 1/6 of an ephah from each homer of barley.*

*Ezek 45:14 Hebrew *the portion of oil, measured by the bath, is 1/10 of a bath from each cor, which consists of 10 baths or 1 homer, for 10 baths are equivalent to a homer.*

*Ezek 45:17 Or *to make atonement for the people of Israel.*

*Ezek 45:18 Hebrew *On the first day of the first month,* of the Hebrew calendar. This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in March or April.

*Ezek 45:20 Or *will make atonement for.*

*Ezek 45:21 This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late March, April, or early May.

*Ezek 45:24 Hebrew *an ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters] *of flour . . . and a hin* [3.8 liters] *of olive oil.*

*Ezek 45:25 Hebrew *the festival which begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month* (see Lev 23:34). This day in the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred in late September, October, or early November.

EZEKIEL 46:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 46:5 Hebrew *an ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters] *of choice flour . . . a hin* [3.8 liters] *of olive oil;* similarly in 46:7, 11.

*Ezek 46:14 Hebrew *1/6 of an ephah* [3.7 liters] *of flour with 1/3 of a hin* [1.3 liters] *of olive oil.*

*Ezek 46:17 Hebrew *until the Year of Release;* see Lev 25:8-17.

*Ezek 46:22 Hebrew *40 [cubits]* [21.2 meters] *long and 30 [cubits]* [15.9 meters] *wide.*

EZEKIEL 47:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 47:3 Hebrew *1,000 cubits* [530 meters]; also in 47:4, 5.

*Ezek 47:8 Hebrew *the sea.*

*Ezek 47:9 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *of these two rivers flow.*

*Ezek 47:10 Hebrew *the great sea;* also in 47:15, 17, 19, 20.

*Ezek 47:13 It was important to retain twelve portions of land. Since Levi had no portion, the descendants of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, received land as two tribes.

*Ezek 47:15-16 As in Greek version; Masoretic Text reads *then on through Lebo to Zedad;* 16*then it will run to Hamath, Berothah, and Sibraim.*

*Ezek 47:18a Hebrew *the eastern sea.*

*Ezek 47:18b As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *you will measure.*

*Ezek 47:19 Hebrew *waters of Meribath-kadesh.*

EZEKIEL 48:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Ezek 48:8 Hebrew *25,000 [cubits]* [13.3 kilometers].

*Ezek 48:9 As in one Greek manuscript and the Greek reading in 45:1: *25,000 [cubits]* [13.3 kilometers] *long and 20,000 [cubits]* [10.6 kilometers] *wide;* Hebrew reads *25,000 [cubits] long and 10,000 [cubits]* [31/3 miles or 5.3 kilometers] *wide.* Similarly in 48:13b. Compare 45:1-5; 48:10-13.

*Ezek 48:10 Hebrew *25,000 [cubits]* [13.3 kilometers] *long by 10,000 [cubits]* [5.3 kilometers] *wide;* also in 48:13a.

*Ezek 48:13 See note on 48:9.

*Ezek 48:15 Hebrew *25,000 [cubits]* [13.3 kilometers] *long by 5,000 [cubits]* [2.65 kilometers] *wide.*

*Ezek 48:16 Hebrew *4,500 [cubits]* [2.4 kilometers]; also in 48:30, 32, 33, 34.

*Ezek 48:17 Hebrew *250 [cubits]* [133 meters].

*Ezek 48:18 Hebrew *10,000 [cubits]* [5.3 kilometers] *to the east and 10,000 [cubits] to the west.*

*Ezek 48:20 Hebrew *25,000 [cubits]* [13.3 kilometers]; also in 48:21.

*Ezek 48:28a Hebrew *waters of Meribath-kadesh.*

*Ezek 48:28b Hebrew *the great sea.*

*Ezek 48:35a Hebrew *18,000 [cubits]* [9.6 kilometers].

*Ezek 48:35b Hebrew *Yahweh Shammah.*

Daniel Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

DANIEL 1:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 1:1 This event occurred in 605 B.C., during the third year of Jehoiakim's reign (according to the calendar system in which the new year begins in the spring).

*Dan 1:2 Hebrew *the land of Shinar.*

*Dan 1:4 Or *of the Chaldeans.*

*Dan 1:21 Cyrus began his reign (over Babylon) in 539 B.C.

DANIEL 2:1-49 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 2:1 The second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign was 603 B.C.

*Dan 2:2 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 2:4, 5, 10.

*Dan 2:4 The original text from this point through chapter 7 is in

Aramaic.

*Dan 2:34 As in Greek version (see also 2:45); Hebrew lacks *from a mountain.*

DANIEL 3:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 3:1 Aramaic *60 cubits* [27 meters] *tall and 6 cubits* [2.7 meters] *wide.*

*Dan 3:3 Aramaic *the high officers, officials, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials.*

*Dan 3:5 The identification of some of these musical instruments is uncertain.

*Dan 3:7 Aramaic *the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, and other musical instruments.*

*Dan 3:8 Aramaic *Chaldeans.*

*Dan 3:15 Aramaic *the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments.*

*Dan 3:25 Aramaic *like a son of the gods.*

DANIEL 4:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 4:1 Verses 4:1-3 are numbered 3:31-33 in Aramaic text.

*Dan 4:4 Verses 4:4-37 are numbered 4:1-34 in Aramaic text.

*Dan 4:7 Or *Chaldeans.*

*Dan 4:13 Aramaic *a watcher;* also in 4:23.

*Dan 4:17 Aramaic *the watchers.*

DANIEL 5:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 5:2 Aramaic *father;* also in 5:11, 13, 18.

*Dan 5:7 Or *Chaldeans;* also in 5:11.

*Dan 5:22 Aramaic *son.*

*Dan 5:28 Aramaic *Peres,* the singular of *Parsin.*

*Dan 5:30a Or *Chaldean.*

*Dan 5:30b The Persians and Medes conquered Babylon in October 539 B.C.

*Dan 5:31 Verse 5:31 is numbered 6:1 in Aramaic text.

DANIEL 6:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 6:1 Verses 6:1-28 are numbered 6:2-29 in Aramaic text.

*Dan 6:28 Or *of Darius, that is, the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

DANIEL 7:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 7:1 The first year of Belshazzar's reign (who was co-regent with his father, Nabonidus) was 556 B.C. (or perhaps as late as 553 B.C.).

*Dan 7:9 Aramaic *an Ancient of Days;* also in 7:13, 22.

*Dan 7:12 Aramaic *for a season and a time.*

*Dan 7:13 Or *like a Son of Man.*

DANIEL 8:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 8:1 The original text from this point through chapter 12 is in Hebrew. See note at 2:4.

*Dan 8:2 Or *the Ulai Gate;* also in 8:16.

*Dan 8:3 Or *the gate;* also in 8:6.

*Dan 8:11-12 The meaning of the Hebrew for these verses is uncertain.

*Dan 8:21 Hebrew *of Javan.*

*Dan 8:26 Hebrew *about the evenings and mornings;* compare 8:14.

DANIEL 9:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 9:1 Or *the Chaldeans.*

*Dan 9:2 See Jer 25:11-12; 29:10.

*Dan 9:24a Hebrew *seventy sevens.*

*Dan 9:24b Or *the Most Holy One.*

*Dan 9:25a Hebrew *Seven sevens plus sixty-two sevens.*

*Dan 9:25b Or *an anointed one;* similarly in 9:26. Hebrew reads *a messiah.*

*Dan 9:25c Or *and a moat,* or *and trenches.*

*Dan 9:26 Hebrew *After sixty-two sevens.*

*Dan 9:27a Hebrew *for one seven.*

*Dan 9:27b Hebrew *And on the wing;* the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Dan 9:27c Hebrew *an abomination of desolation.*

DANIEL 10:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 10:1 The third year of Cyrus's reign was 536 B.C.

*Dan 10:4 Hebrew *On the twenty-fourth day of the first month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This date in the book of Daniel can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and can be related accurately to our modern calendar. This event occurred on April 23, 536 B.C.

*Dan 10:13a Hebrew *the prince;* also in 10:13c, 20.

*Dan 10:13b Hebrew *the chief princes.*

*Dan 10:13c As in one Greek version; Hebrew reads *and I was left there with the kings of Persia.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Dan 10:16 As in most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text; one manuscript of the Masoretic Text and one Greek version read *Then something that looked like a human hand.*

*Dan 10:20 Hebrew *of Javan.*

*Dan 10:21 Hebrew *against these except Michael, your prince.*

DANIEL 11:1-45 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 11:1 Hebrew *him.*

In print editions of the NLT, this verse is run in with the final paragraph in chapter 10.*Dan 11:1 In print editions of the NLT, this verse is run in with the final paragraph in chapter 10.

*Dan 11:2 Hebrew *of Javan.*

*Dan 11:7 Hebrew *a branch from her roots.*

*Dan 11:16 Hebrew *the glorious land.*

*Dan 11:30 Hebrew *from Kittim.*

*Dan 11:31 Hebrew *the abomination of desolation.*

*Dan 11:39 Or *at a price.*

*Dan 11:41 Hebrew *the glorious land.*

*Dan 11:43 Hebrew *Cushites.*

DANIEL 12:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Dan 12:1 Hebrew *the great prince.*

*Dan 12:11 Hebrew *the abomination of desolation.*

Hosea Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

HOSEA 1:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 1:1 Hebrew *Joash,* a variant spelling of Jehoash.

*Hos 1:2 Or *a promiscuous woman.*

*Hos 1:10 Verses 1:10-11 are numbered 2:1-2 in Hebrew text.

*Hos 1:11 *Jezreel* means "God plants."

HOSEA 2:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 2:1 Verses 2:1-23 are numbered 2:3-25 in Hebrew text.

In print editions of the NLT, 2:1 is set as its own paragraph at the end of chapter one.*Hos 2:1 In print editions of the NLT, 2:1 is set as its own paragraph at the end of chapter one.

*Hos 2:15 Hebrew *valley of Achor.*

*Hos 2:16 Hebrew *'my baal.'*

*Hos 2:23a Hebrew *Lo-ruhamah;* see 1:6.

*Hos 2:23b Hebrew *Lo-ammi;* see 1:9.

HOSEA 3:1-5 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 3:1a Or *Go and love a woman who.*

*Hos 3:1b Hebrew *love their raisin cakes.*

*Hos 3:2a Hebrew *15 [shekels] of silver,* about 6 ounces or 171 grams in weight.

*Hos 3:2b As in Greek version, which reads *a homer of barley and a wineskin full of wine;* Hebrew reads *a homer* [5 bushels or 220 liters] *of barley and a lethek* [2.5 bushels or 110 liters] *of barley.*

*Hos 3:3 Or *and I will live with you.*

*Hos 3:4 Hebrew *ephod,* the vest worn by the priest.

*Hos 3:5 Hebrew *to David their king.*

HOSEA 4:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 4:4 Hebrew *Your people are like those with a complaint against the priests.*

*Hos 4:7 As in Syriac version and an ancient Hebrew tradition; Masoretic Text reads *I will turn their glory into shame.*

*Hos 4:15 *Beth-aven* means “house of wickedness”; it is being used as another name for Bethel, which means “house of God.”

*Hos 4:17 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Hos 4:18 As in Greek version; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

HOSEA 5:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 5:2 Hebrew *at Shittim.* The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain.

*Hos 5:7 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Hos 5:8 *Beth-aven* means "house of wickedness"; it is being used as another name for Bethel, which means "house of God."

*Hos 5:9 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 5:11, 12, 13, 14.

*Hos 5:10 Hebrew *like those who move a boundary marker.*

*Hos 5:11 Or *determined to follow human commands.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

HOSEA 6:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 6:4 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Hos 6:6a Greek version translates this Hebrew term as *to show mercy.* Compare Matt 9:13; 12:7.

*Hos 6:6b Hebrew *to know God.*

*Hos 6:7 Or *But at Adam.*

HOSEA 7:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 7:1 Hebrew *Ephraim's,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; similarly in 7:8, 11.

*Hos 7:6 Hebrew *Their baker sleeps.*

*Hos 7:12 Hebrew *I will punish them because of what was reported against them in the assembly.*

*Hos 7:14 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *They gather together.*

HOSEA 8:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 8:9 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 8:11.

HOSEA 9:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 9:6 Memphis was the capital of northern Egypt.

*Hos 9:8 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 9:11, 13, 16.

HOSEA 10:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 10:5a *Beth-aven* means "house of wickedness"; it is being used as another name for Bethel, which means "house of God."

*Hos 10:5b Or *will be taken away into exile.*

*Hos 10:8 *Aven* is a reference to Beth-aven; see 10:5a and the note there.

*Hos 10:11a Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

*Hos 10:11b Hebrew *Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

HOSEA 11:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 11:2 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *the more they called to him, the farther he moved from them.*

*Hos 11:3 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 11:8, 9, 12.

*Hos 11:12a Verse 11:12 is numbered 12:1 in Hebrew text.

*Hos 11:12b Or *and Judah is unruly against God, the faithful Holy One.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

HOSEA 12:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 12:1a Verses 12:1-14 are numbered 12:2-15 in Hebrew text.

*Hos 12:1b Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 12:8, 14.

*Hos 12:2 *Jacob* sounds like the Hebrew word for “deceiver.”

*Hos 12:4 As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *to us.*

*Hos 12:9 Hebrew *as in the days of your appointed feast.*

*Hos 12:12 Hebrew *Israel.* See note on 10:11b.

*Hos 12:13 Hebrew *brought Israel.* See note on 10:11b.

HOSEA 13:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 13:10 As in Greek and Syriac versions and Latin Vulgate; Hebrew reads *I will be.*

*Hos 13:14a Hebrew *Sheol;* also in 13:14b.

*Hos 13:14b Greek version reads *O death, where is your punishment? / O grave* [Hades], *where is your sting?* Compare 1 Cor 15:55.

*Hos 13:16 Verse 16 is numbered 14:1 in Hebrew text.

HOSEA 14:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hos 14:1 Verses 14:1-9 are numbered 14:2-10 in Hebrew text.

*Hos 14:2 As in Greek and Syriac versions, which read *may repay the fruit of our lips;* Hebrew reads *may repay the bulls of our lips.*

*Hos 14:8 Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel.

Joel Text Notes

1 2 3

JOEL 1:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Joel 1:4 The precise identification of the four kinds of locusts mentioned here is uncertain.

*Joel 1:6 Hebrew *A nation.*

JOEL 2:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Joel 2:1 Hebrew *Zion;* also in 2:15, 23.

*Joel 2:4 Or *like charioteers.*

*Joel 2:20 Hebrew *into the eastern sea, . . . into the western sea.*

*Joel 2:25 The precise identification of the four kinds of locusts mentioned here is uncertain.

*Joel 2:28 Verses 2:28-32 are numbered 3:1-5 in Hebrew text.

*Joel 2:31 Greek version reads *glorious.*

JOEL 3:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Joel 3:1 Verses 3:1-21 are numbered 4:1-21 in Hebrew text.

*Joel 3:2 *Jehoshaphat* means "the LORD judges."

*Joel 3:3 Hebrew *They cast lots.*

*Joel 3:6 Hebrew *to the peoples of Javan.*

*Joel 3:8 Hebrew *to the Sabeans.*

*Joel 3:13 Greek version reads *for the harvest time has come.* Compare Mark 4:29.

*Joel 3:18 Hebrew *valley of Shittim.*

*Joel 3:21 Hebrew *Zion.*

Amos Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

AMOS 1:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 1:1 Hebrew *Joash,* a variant spelling of Jehoash.

*Amos 1:3 Hebrew *have committed three sins, even four;* also in 1:6, 9, 11, 13.

*Amos 1:15 Hebrew *malcam,* possibly referring to their god Molech.

AMOS 2:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 2:1 Hebrew *have committed three sins, even four;* also in 2:4, 6.

*Amos 2:8 Or *their God.*

AMOS 3:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 3:9 Hebrew *Ashdod.*

*Amos 3:12 The meaning of the Hebrew in this sentence is uncertain.

*Amos 3:13 Hebrew *the house of Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

AMOS 4:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 4:1 Hebrew *you cows of Bashan.*

*Amos 4:3 Or *thrown out toward Harmon,* possibly a reference to Mount Hermon.

*Amos 4:10 Or *and slaughtered your captured horses.*

*Amos 4:11 Hebrew *as when God destroyed.*

AMOS 5:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 5:6 Hebrew *the house of Joseph.*

*Amos 5:15 Hebrew *the remnant of Joseph.*

*Amos 5:26-27 Greek version reads *No, you carried your pagan gods —the shrine of Molech, the star of your god Rephan, and the images you made for yourselves. So I will send you into exile, to a land east of Damascus.* Compare Acts 7:43.

AMOS 6:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 6:1 Hebrew *in Zion.*

*Amos 6:6 Hebrew *of Joseph.*

*Amos 6:8 Hebrew *Jacob.* See note on 3:13.

*Amos 6:10 Or *to burn the dead.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Amos 6:13a *Lo-debar* means “nothing.”

*Amos 6:13b *Karnaim* means “horns,” a term that symbolizes strength.

AMOS 7:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 7:2 Hebrew *Jacob;* also in 7:5. See note on 3:13.

*Amos 7:9 Hebrew *of Isaac.*

*Amos 7:14 Or *I'm not a prophet nor the son of a prophet.*

*Amos 7:16 Hebrew *against the house of Isaac.*

AMOS 8:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 8:5 Hebrew *You make the ephah* [a unit for measuring grain] *small and the shekel* [a unit of weight] *great, and you deal falsely by using deceitful balances.*

*Amos 8:7 Hebrew *the pride of Jacob.* See note on 3:13.

*Amos 8:12 Hebrew *from north to east.*

*Amos 8:14 Hebrew *the way of Beersheba.*

AMOS 9:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Amos 9:2 Hebrew *to Sheol.*

*Amos 9:7a Hebrew *the Cushites?*

*Amos 9:7b Hebrew *Caphtor.*

*Amos 9:8 Hebrew *the house of Jacob.* See note on 3:13.

*Amos 9:11a Or *kingdom;* Hebrew reads *tent.*

*Amos 9:11b-12 Greek version reads *and restore its former glory, / so that the rest of humanity, including the Gentiles— / all those I have called to be mine—might seek me.* Compare Acts 15:16-17.

Obadiah Text Notes 1

OBADIAH 1:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Obad 1:6 Hebrew *Esau;* also in 8b, 9, 18, 19, 21.

*Obad 1:10 Hebrew *your brother Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and

“Israel” are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*Obad 1:17a Hebrew *Mount Zion.*

*Obad 1:17b Hebrew *house of Jacob;* also in 18. See note on 10.

*Obad 1:19 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

*Obad 1:20 Hebrew *in Sepharad.*

*Obad 1:21a As in Greek and Syriac versions; Hebrew reads *Rescuers.*

*Obad 1:21b Or *from.*

Jonah Text Notes

1 2 3 4

JONAH 1:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jon 1:17 Verse 1:17 is numbered 2:1 in Hebrew text.

JONAH 2:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jon 2:1 Verses 2:1-10 are numbered 2:2-11 in Hebrew text.

*Jon 2:2 Hebrew *from Sheol.*

JONAH 3:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jon 3:3 Hebrew *a great city to God, of three days' journey.*

JONAH 4:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jon 4:11 Hebrew *people who don't know their right hand from their left.*

Micah Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

MICAH 1:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mic 1:5 Hebrew *Jacob;* also in 1:5b. The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament,

referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*Mic 1:10a *Gath* sounds like the Hebrew term for “tell.”

*Mic 1:10b *Beth-leaphrah* means “house of dust.”

*Mic 1:11a *Shaphir* means “pleasant.”

*Mic 1:11b *Zaanan* sounds like the Hebrew term for “come out.”

*Mic 1:11c *Beth-ezel* means “adjoining house.”

*Mic 1:12 *Maroth* sounds like the Hebrew term for “bitter.”

*Mic 1:13a *Lachish* sounds like the Hebrew term for “team of horses.”

*Mic 1:13b Hebrew *the daughter of Zion.*

*Mic 1:14a *Moresheth* sounds like the Hebrew term for “gift” or “dowry.”

*Mic 1:14b *Aczib* means “deception.”

*Mic 1:15a *Mareshah* sounds like the Hebrew term for “conqueror.”

*Mic 1:15b Hebrew *the glory.*

MICAH 2:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mic 2:4 Or *to those who took us captive.*

*Mic 2:6 Or *the prophets respond;* Hebrew reads *they prophesy.*

*Mic 2:7 Hebrew *O house of Jacob?* See note on 1:5a.

MICAH 3:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

MICAH 4:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mic 4:7 Hebrew *Mount Zion.*

*Mic 4:8 Hebrew *As for you, Migdal-eder, / the Ophel of the daughter of Zion.*

*Mic 4:10 Hebrew *O daughter of Zion.*

*Mic 4:11 Hebrew *of Zion.*

*Mic 4:13 Hebrew *"Rise up and thresh, O daughter of Zion."*

MICAH 5:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mic 5:1 Verse 5:1 is numbered 4:14 in Hebrew text.

*Mic 5:2 Verses 5:2-15 are numbered 5:1-14 in Hebrew text.

*Mic 5:7 Hebrew *in Jacob;* also in 5:8. See note on 1:5a.

MICAH 6:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mic 6:5 Hebrew *Shittim.*

*Mic 6:9 Hebrew *"Listen to the rod. / Who appointed it?"*

*Mic 6:10 Hebrew *of using the short ephah?* The ephah was a unit

for measuring grain.

MICAH 7:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mic 7:12 Hebrew *the river*.

*Mic 7:13 Or *earth*.

*Mic 7:14 Or *surrounded by a fruitful land*.

Nahum Text Notes

1 2 3

NAHUM 1:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Nah 1:8 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *sweep away her place*.

*Nah 1:15 Verse 1:15 is numbered 2:1 in Hebrew text.

NAHUM 2:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Nah 2:1 Verses 2:1-13 are numbered 2:2-14 in Hebrew text.

*Nah 2:3 Greek and Syriac versions read *into position, / the horses whipped into a frenzy*.

*Nah 2:13 Hebrew *young lions*.

NAHUM 3:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Nah 3:8 Hebrew *No-amon;* also in 3:10.

*Nah 3:9 Hebrew *Cush*.

*Nah 3:10 Hebrew *They cast lots*.

*Nah 3:17 Or *princes*.

Habakkuk Text Notes

1 2 3

HABAKKUK 1:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hab 1:5 Greek version reads *Look, you mockers; / look and be amazed and die.* Compare Acts 13:41.

*Hab 1:6 Or *Chaldeans.*

*Hab 1:8 Or *leopards.*

HABAKKUK 2:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hab 2:1 As in Syriac version; Hebrew reads *I.*

*Hab 2:3b-4 Greek version reads *If the vision is delayed, wait patiently, for it will surely come and not delay.* 4*I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away. / But the righteous person will live by my faith.* Compare Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:37-38.

*Hab 2:5a As in Dead Sea Scroll 1QpHab; other Hebrew manuscripts read *Wine.*

*Hab 2:5b Hebrew *as Sheol.*

*Hab 2:16 Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek and Syriac versions read *and stagger!*

HABAKKUK 3:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hab 3:1 Hebrew adds *according to shigionoth,* probably indicating the musical setting for the prayer.

*Hab 3:3a Hebrew *Teman.*

*Hab 3:3b Hebrew adds *selah;* also in 3:9, 13. The meaning of this Hebrew term is uncertain; it is probably a musical or literary term.

*Hab 3:6 Or *The ancient paths belong to him.*

*Hab 3:16 Hebrew *Decay entered my bones.*

*Hab 3:19 Or *He gives me the speed of a deer.*

Zephaniah Text Notes 1 2 3

ZEPHANIAH 1:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zeph 1:3 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Zeph 1:5 Hebrew *Malcam,* a variant spelling of Molech; or it could possibly mean *their king.*

*Zeph 1:7 Hebrew *has prepared a sacrifice and sanctified his guests.*

*Zeph 1:10 Or *the Second Quarter,* a newer section of Jerusalem. Hebrew reads *the Mishneh.*

*Zeph 1:11 Or *in the valley,* a lower section of Jerusalem. Hebrew reads *the Maktesh.*

*Zeph 1:18 Or *the people living in the land.*

ZEPHANIAH 2:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zeph 2:5 Hebrew *Kerethites.*

*Zeph 2:12 Hebrew *Cushites.*

ZEPHANIAH 3:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zeph 3:10 Hebrew *Cush.*

*Zeph 3:17 Or *He will be silent in his love.* Greek and Syriac versions read *He will renew you with his love.*

*Zeph 3:18 The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.

Haggai Text Notes

1 2

HAGGAI 1:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hagg 1:1a Hebrew *On the first day of the sixth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. A number of dates in Haggai can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This event occurred on August 29, 520 B.C.

*Hagg 1:1b Hebrew *Joshua,* a variant spelling of Jeshua; also in 1:12, 14.

*Hagg 1:15 Hebrew *on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on September 21, 520 B.C.; also see note on 1:1a.

HAGGAI 2:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Hagg 2:1 Hebrew *on the twenty-first day of the seventh month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event (in the second year of Darius's reign) occurred on October 17, 520 B.C.; also see note on 1:1a.

*Hagg 2:2 Hebrew *Joshua,* a variant spelling of Jeshua; also in 2:4.

*Hagg 2:10 Hebrew *On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month,* of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar (similarly in 2:18). This event occurred on December 18, 520 B.C.; also see note on 1:1a.

*Hagg 2:18 Or *On this eighteenth day of December, think about the day.*

*Hagg 2:19 Hebrew *Is the seed yet in the barn?*

*Hagg 2:20 Hebrew *On the twenty-fourth day of the [ninth] month;* see note on 2:10.

Zechariah Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

ZECHARIAH 1:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 1:1 Hebrew *In the eighth month.* A number of dates in Zechariah can be cross-checked with dates in surviving Persian records and related accurately to our modern calendar. This month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar occurred within the months of October and November 520 B.C.

*Zech 1:7 Hebrew *On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the*

month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius. This event occurred on February 15, 519 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Zech 1:16 Hebrew *and the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem.*

*Zech 1:18 Verses 1:18-21 are numbered 2:1-4 in Hebrew text.

ZECHARIAH 2:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 2:1 Verses 2:1-13 are numbered 2:5-17 in Hebrew text.

*Zech 2:8a The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Zech 2:8b Hebrew *Anyone who touches you touches the pupil of his eye.*

*Zech 2:10 Hebrew *O daughter of Zion.*

ZECHARIAH 3:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 3:1a Hebrew *Joshua,* a variant spelling of Jeshua; also in 3:3, 4, 6, 8, 9.

*Zech 3:1b Hebrew *The satan;* similarly in 3:2.

*Zech 3:9 Hebrew *seven eyes.*

ZECHARIAH 4:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 4:7 Hebrew *'Grace, grace to it.'*

*Zech 4:10 Or *The seven facets* (see 3:9); Hebrew reads *These seven.*

*Zech 4:14 Or *two heavenly beings;* Hebrew reads *two sons of fresh oil.*

ZECHARIAH 5:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 5:2 Hebrew *20 cubits* [9.2 meters] *long and 10 cubits* [4.6 meters] *wide.*

*Zech 5:6a Hebrew *an ephah* [20 quarts or 22 liters]; also in 5:7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

*Zech 5:6b As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *the appearance.*

*Zech 5:11 Hebrew *the land of Shinar.*

ZECHARIAH 6:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 6:5 Or *the four winds.*

*Zech 6:6 Hebrew *is going after them.*

*Zech 6:8 Hebrew *have given my Spirit rest.*

*Zech 6:11 Hebrew *Joshua,* a variant spelling of Jeshua.

*Zech 6:13 Or *There will be a priest by his throne.*

*Zech 6:14a As in Syriac version (compare 6:10); Hebrew reads *Helem.*

*Zech 6:14b As in Syriac version (compare 6:10); Hebrew reads *Hen.*

ZECHARIAH 7:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 7:1 Hebrew *On the fourth day of the ninth month, the month of*

Kislev, of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar. This event occurred on December 7, 518 B.C.; also see note on 1:1.

*Zech 7:2 Or *Bethel-sharezer had sent Regemmelech.*

*Zech 7:3 Hebrew *mourn and fast in the fifth month.* The Temple had been destroyed in the fifth month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar (August 586 B.C.); see 2 Kgs 25:8.

*Zech 7:5 Hebrew *fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months.* The fifth month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of July and August. The seventh month usually occurs within the months of September and October; both the Day of Atonement and the Festival of Shelters were celebrated in the seventh month.

*Zech 7:7 Hebrew *the Shephelah.*

ZECHARIAH 8:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 8:19 Hebrew *in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth months.* The fourth month of the ancient Hebrew lunar calendar usually occurs within the months of June and July. The fifth month usually occurs within the months of July and August. The seventh month usually occurs within the months of September and October. The tenth month usually occurs within the months of December and January.

ZECHARIAH 9:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 9:1a Hebrew *An Oracle: The message.*

*Zech 9:1b Hebrew *land of Hadrach.*

*Zech 9:7 Hebrew *like a leader in Judah.*

*Zech 9:9a Hebrew *O daughter of Zion!*

*Zech 9:9b Hebrew *and is being vindicated.*

*Zech 9:10a Hebrew *Ephraim,* referring to the northern kingdom of Israel; also in 9:13.

*Zech 9:10b Hebrew *the river.*

*Zech 9:10c Or *the end of the land.*

*Zech 9:13a Hebrew *Zion.*

*Zech 9:13b Hebrew *the sons of Javan.*

ZECHARIAH 10:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 10:3 Or *these male goats.*

*Zech 10:6 Hebrew *save the house of Joseph.*

*Zech 10:7 Hebrew *of Ephraim.*

*Zech 10:11 Or *the sea of Egypt,* referring to the Red Sea.

*Zech 10:12 Hebrew *In the LORD.*

ZECHARIAH 11:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 11:13 Syriac version reads *into the treasury;* also in 11:13b. Compare Matt 27:6-10.

ZECHARIAH 12:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 12:1 Hebrew *An Oracle: This.*

*Zech 12:10 Or *the Spirit.*

ZECHARIAH 13:1-9 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 13:6 Hebrew *wounds between your hands?*

ZECHARIAH 14:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Zech 14:5a The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Zech 14:5b As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *with you.*

*Zech 14:6 Hebrew *the precious ones shall diminish;* or *the precious ones and frost.* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Zech 14:8 Hebrew *half toward the eastern sea and half toward the western sea.*

*Zech 14:18 As in some Hebrew manuscripts and Greek and Syriac versions; Masoretic Text reads *will not punish.*

*Zech 14:21 Hebrew *Canaanites.*

MALACHI 1:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mal 1:1a Hebrew *An Oracle: The message.*

*Mal 1:1b *Malachi* means "my messenger."

*Mal 1:7 As in Greek version; Hebrew reads *defiled you?*

*Mal 1:11a Or *will be honored.*

*Mal 1:11b Or *will offer.*

MALACHI 2:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mal 2:12 Hebrew *from the tents of Jacob.* The names "Jacob" and "Israel" are often interchanged throughout the Old Testament, referring sometimes to the individual patriarch and sometimes to the nation.

*Mal 2:15 Or *Didn't the one LORD make us and preserve our life and breath?* or *Didn't the one LORD make her, both flesh and spirit?* The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.

*Mal 2:16a Hebrew *For he hates divorcing.*

*Mal 2:16b Hebrew *to cover one's garment with violence.*

MALACHI 3:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mal 3:11 Hebrew *from the devourer.*

MALACHI 4:1-6 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mal 4:1 Verses 4:1-6 are numbered 3:19-24 in Hebrew text.

*Mal 4:2 Or *the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.*

*Mal 4:4 Hebrew *Horeb,* another name for Sinai.

Matthew Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

MATTHEW 1:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 1:1 Greek *Jesus the Messiah, Son of David and son of Abraham.*

*Matt 1:3 Greek *Aram,* a variant spelling of Ram; also in 1:4. See 1 Chr 2:9-10.

*Matt 1:7 Greek *Asaph,* a variant spelling of Asa; also in 1:8. See 1 Chr 3:10.

*Matt 1:8a Greek *Joram,* a variant spelling of Jehoram; also in 1:8b. See 1 Kgs 22:50 and note at 1 Chr 3:11.

*Matt 1:8b Or *ancestor;* also in 1:11.

*Matt 1:10 Greek *Amos,* a variant spelling of Amon; also in 1:10b. See 1 Chr 3:14.

*Matt 1:11 Greek *Jeconiah,* a variant spelling of Jehoiachin; also in 1:12. See 2 Kgs 24:6 and note at 1 Chr 3:16.

*Matt 1:19 Greek *to divorce her.*

*Matt 1:21 *Jesus* means “The LORD saves.”

*Matt 1:23 Isa 7:14; 8:8, 10 (Greek version).

MATTHEW 2:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 2:1 Or *royal astrologers;* Greek reads *magi;* also in 2:7, 16.

*Matt 2:2 Or *star in the east.*

*Matt 2:6a Greek *the rulers.*

*Matt 2:6b Mic 5:2; 2 Sam 5:2.

*Matt 2:15 Hos 11:1.

*Matt 2:18 Jer 31:15.

MATTHEW 3:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 3:2 Or *has come,* or *is coming soon.*

*Matt 3:3 Isa 40:3 (Greek version).

*Matt 3:7 Or *coming to be baptized.*

*Matt 3:11a Or *in*.

*Matt 3:11b Or *in the Holy Spirit and in fire*.

*Matt 3:15 Or *for we must fulfill all righteousness*.

*Matt 3:16 Some manuscripts read *opened to him*.

MATTHEW 4:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 4:3 Greek *the tempter*.

*Matt 4:4 Deut 8:3.

*Matt 4:6 Ps 91:11-12.

*Matt 4:7 Deut 6:16.

*Matt 4:10 Deut 6:13.

*Matt 4:15-16 Isa 9:1-2 (Greek version).

*Matt 4:17 Or *has come,* or *is coming soon.*

*Matt 4:25 Greek *Decapolis.*

MATTHEW 5:1-48 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 5:3 Greek *poor in spirit.*

*Matt 5:6 Or *for righteousness.*

*Matt 5:21 Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17.

*Matt 5:22a Some manuscripts add *without cause.*

*Matt 5:22b Greek uses an Aramaic term of contempt: *If you say to your brother, 'Raca.'*

*Matt 5:22c Greek *if you say, 'You fool.'*

*Matt 5:22d Greek *Gehenna;* also in 5:29, 30.

*Matt 5:23 Greek *gift;* also in 5:24.

*Matt 5:26 Greek *the last kodrantes* [i.e., quadrans].

*Matt 5:27 Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18.

*Matt 5:29 Greek *your right eye.*

*Matt 5:30 Greek *your right hand.*

*Matt 5:31 Deut 24:1.

*Matt 5:33 Num 30:2.

*Matt 5:38 Greek *the law that says: 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'* Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21.

*Matt 5:41 Greek *milion* [4,854 feet or 1,478 meters].

*Matt 5:43 Lev 19:18.

*Matt 5:44 Some manuscripts add *Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you.* Compare Luke 6:27-28.

*Matt 5:47 Greek *your brothers.*

MATTHEW 6:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 6:11 Or *Give us today our food for the day;* or *Give us today our food for tomorrow.*

*Matt 6:13a Or *And keep us from being tested.*

*Matt 6:13b Or *from evil.* Some manuscripts add *For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

*Matt 6:17 Greek *anoint your head.*

*Matt 6:33 Some manuscripts do not include *of God.*

MATTHEW 7:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 7:2a Or *For God will judge you as you judge others.*

*Matt 7:2b Or *The measure you give will be the measure you get back.*

*Matt 7:3 Greek *your brother's eye;* also in 7:5.

*Matt 7:4 Greek *your brother.*

*Matt 7:6 Greek *Don't give the sacred to dogs.*

*Matt 7:13 Greek *The road that leads to destruction.*

MATTHEW 8:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 8:4 See Lev 14:2-32.

*Matt 8:5 Greek *a centurion;* similarly in 8:8, 13.

*Matt 8:6 Or *child;* also in 8:13.

*Matt 8:17 Isa 53:4.

*Matt 8:20 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 8:22 Greek *Let the dead bury their own dead.*

*Matt 8:28 Other manuscripts read *Gerasenes;* still others read

Gergesenes. Compare Mark 5:1; Luke 8:26.

MATTHEW 9:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 9:4 Some manuscripts read *saw.*

*Matt 9:6 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 9:8 Greek *for giving such authority to human beings.*

*Matt 9:11 Greek *with tax collectors and sinners?*

*Matt 9:13 Hos 6:6 (Greek version).

*Matt 9:14 Some manuscripts read *fast often.*

MATTHEW 10:1-42 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 10:1 Greek *unclean.*

*Matt 10:3 Other manuscripts read *Lebbaeus;* still others read *Lebbaeus who is called Thaddaeus.*

*Matt 10:4 Greek *the Cananean,* an Aramaic term for Jewish nationalists.

*Matt 10:7 Or *has come,* or *is coming soon.*

*Matt 10:18 Or *But this will be your testimony against the rulers and other unbelievers.*

*Matt 10:22 Greek *on account of my name.*

*Matt 10:23 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 10:24 Or *Disciples.*

*Matt 10:25 Greek *Beelzeboul;* other manuscripts read *Beezeboul;* Latin version reads *Beelzebub.*

*Matt 10:28 Greek *Gehenna.*

*Matt 10:29 Greek *one assarion* [i.e., one “as,” a Roman coin equal to 1/16 of a denarius].

*Matt 10:35-36 Mic 7:6.

*Matt 10:41 Greek *receive a prophet in the name of a prophet.*

MATTHEW 11:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 11:3 Greek *Are you the one who is coming?*

*Matt 11:6 Or *who are not offended by me.*

*Matt 11:10 Mal 3:1.

*Matt 11:12 Or *the Kingdom of Heaven has suffered from violence.*

*Matt 11:14 See Mal 4:5.

*Matt 11:19 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 11:23 Greek *to Hades.*

MATTHEW 12:1-50 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 12:7 Hos 6:6 (Greek version).

*Matt 12:8 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 12:18-21 Isa 42:1-4 (Greek version for 42:4).

*Matt 12:24 Greek *Beelzeboul;* also in 12:27. Other manuscripts read *Beezeboul;* Latin version reads *Beelzebub.*

*Matt 12:42 Greek *The queen of the south.*

*Matt 12:43 Greek *unclean.*

*Matt 12:47 Some manuscripts do not include verse 47. Compare Mark 3:32 and Luke 8:20.

MATTHEW 13:1-58 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 13:11 Greek *the mysteries.*

*Matt 13:14-15 Isa 6:9-10 (Greek version).

*Matt 13:35 Some manuscripts do not include *of the world.* Ps 78:2.

*Matt 13:37 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 13:39 Or *the age;* also in 13:40, 49.

*Matt 13:55 Other manuscripts read *Joses;* still others read *John.*

MATTHEW 14:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 14:1 Greek *Herod the tetrarch.* Herod Antipas was a son of King Herod and was ruler over Galilee.

*Matt 14:25 Greek *In the fourth watch of the night.*

*Matt 14:27 Or *The 'I AM' is here;* Greek reads *I am.* See Exod 3:14.

*Matt 14:30 Some manuscripts do not include *strong.*

MATTHEW 15:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 15:4a Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16.

*Matt 15:4b Exod 21:17 (Greek version); Lev 20:9 (Greek version).

*Matt 15:6 Greek *their father;* other manuscripts read *their father or their mother.*

*Matt 15:8-9 Isa 29:13 (Greek version).

*Matt 15:22 Greek *Canaanite.*

MATTHEW 16:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 16:2-3 Several manuscripts do not include any of the words in 16:2-3 after *He replied.*

*Matt 16:4 Greek *the sign of Jonah.*

*Matt 16:13 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 16:16 Or *the Christ. Messiah* (a Hebrew term) and *Christ* (a Greek term) both mean "anointed one."

*Matt 16:17 Greek *Simon bar-Jonah;* see John 1:42; 21:15-17.

*Matt 16:18a Greek *that you are Peter.*

*Matt 16:18b Greek *and the gates of Hades.*

*Matt 16:19a Or *bind,* or *lock.*

*Matt 16:19b Or *loose,* or *open.*

*Matt 16:21 Some manuscripts read *Jesus the Messiah.*

*Matt 16:22 Or *began to correct him.*

*Matt 16:26 Or *your self?* also in 16:26b.

MATTHEW 17:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 17:4 Greek *three tabernacles.*

*Matt 17:9 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 17:10 Greek *that Elijah must come first?*

*Matt 17:20 Some manuscripts add verse 21, *But this kind of demon won't leave except by prayer and fasting.* Compare Mark 9:29.

*Matt 17:24 Greek *the two-drachma [tax];* also in 17:24b. See Exod 30:13-16; Neh 10:32-33.

*Matt 17:25a Greek *Simon?*

*Matt 17:25b Greek *their sons or others?*

*Matt 17:27 Greek *a stater* [a Greek coin equivalent to four drachmas].

MATTHEW 18:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 18:5 Greek *in my name.*

*Matt 18:9 Greek *the Gehenna of fire.*

*Matt 18:10 Some manuscripts add verse 11, *And the Son of Man came to save those who are lost.* Compare Luke 19:10.

*Matt 18:15a Greek *If your brother.*

*Matt 18:15b Some manuscripts do not include *against you.*

*Matt 18:18a Or *bind,* or *lock.*

*Matt 18:18b Or *loose,* or *open.*

*Matt 18:20 Greek *gather together in my name.*

*Matt 18:21 Greek *my brother.*

*Matt 18:22 Or *seventy-seven times.*

*Matt 18:24 Greek *10,000 talents* [375 tons or 340 metric tons of silver].

*Matt 18:28 Greek *100 denarii.* A denarius was equivalent to a laborer's full day's wage.

*Matt 18:35 Greek *your brother.*

MATTHEW 19:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 19:4 Gen 1:27; 5:2.

*Matt 19:5 Gen 2:24.

*Matt 19:7 See Deut 24:1.

*Matt 19:9 Some manuscripts add *And anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.* Compare Matt 5:32.

*Matt 19:12 Greek *and some make themselves eunuchs.*

*Matt 19:16 Some manuscripts read *Good Teacher.*

*Matt 19:17 Some manuscripts read *continue to keep.*

*Matt 19:18-19 Exod 20:12-16; Deut 5:16-20; Lev 19:18.

*Matt 19:28a Or *in the regeneration.*

*Matt 19:28b "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 19:30 Greek *But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.*

MATTHEW 20:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 20:2 Greek *a denarius,* the payment for a full day's labor; similarly in 20:9, 10, 13.

*Matt 20:18 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 20:19 Greek *the Gentiles.*

MATTHEW 21:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 21:5a Greek *Tell the daughter of Zion.* Isa 62:11.

*Matt 21:5b Zech 9:9.

*Matt 21:7 Greek *over them, and he sat on them.*

*Matt 21:9a Greek *Hosanna,* an exclamation of praise that literally means “save now”; also in 21:9b, 15.

*Matt 21:9b Pss 118:25-26; 148:1.

*Matt 21:13 Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11.

*Matt 21:16 Ps 8:2 (Greek version).

*Matt 21:29-31 Other manuscripts read *"The second."* In still other manuscripts the first son says "Yes" but does nothing, the second son says "No" but then repents and goes, and the answer to Jesus' question is that the second son obeyed his father.

*Matt 21:42 Ps 118:22-23.

*Matt 21:44 This verse is not included in some early manuscripts. Compare Luke 20:18.

MATTHEW 22:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 22:19 Greek *a denarius.*

*Matt 22:24 Deut 25:5-6.

*Matt 22:31 Greek *read about this? God said.*

*Matt 22:32 Exod 3:6.

*Matt 22:37 Deut 6:5.

*Matt 22:39 Lev 19:18.

*Matt 22:44 Ps 110:1.

MATTHEW 23:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 23:2 Greek *and the Pharisees sit in the seat of Moses.*

*Matt 23:5 Greek *They enlarge their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels.*

*Matt 23:7 *Rabbi,* from Aramaic, means “master” or “teacher.”

*Matt 23:8 Greek *brothers.*

*Matt 23:13 Some manuscripts add verse 14, *What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! You shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. Because of this, you will be severely punished.* Compare Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47.

*Matt 23:15 Greek *of Gehenna;* also in 23:33.

*Matt 23:23 Greek *tithe the mint, the dill, and the cumin.*

*Matt 23:24 See Lev 11:4, 23, where gnats and camels are both forbidden as food.

*Matt 23:26 Some manuscripts do not include *and the dish.*

*Matt 23:38 Some manuscripts do not include *and desolate.*

*Matt 23:39 Ps 118:26.

MATTHEW 24:1-51 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 24:3 Or *the age?*

*Matt 24:9 Greek *on account of my name.*

*Matt 24:14 Or *all peoples.*

*Matt 24:15 Greek *the abomination of desolation.* See Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

*Matt 24:27 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 24:28 Greek *Wherever the carcass is, the vultures gather.*

*Matt 24:29 See Isa 13:10; 34:4; Joel 2:10.

*Matt 24:30 See Dan 7:13.

*Matt 24:31 Greek *from the four winds.*

*Matt 24:34 Or *this age,* or *this nation.*

*Matt 24:36 Some manuscripts do not include *or the Son himself.*

MATTHEW 25:1-46 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 25:1 Or *virgins;* also in 25:7, 11.

*Matt 25:15 Greek *talents;* also throughout the story. A talent is equal to 75 pounds or 34 kilograms.

*Matt 25:21 Greek *Enter into the joy of your master* [or *your Lord*]; also in 25:23.

*Matt 25:31 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 25:32 Or *peoples.*

*Matt 25:40 Greek *my brothers.*

*Matt 25:41 Greek *his angels.*

MATTHEW 26:1-75 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 26:2 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Matt 26:7 Or *reclining.*

*Matt 26:20 Or *Jesus reclined.*

*Matt 26:28 Some manuscripts read *the new covenant.*

*Matt 26:31 Greek *I will strike.* Zech 13:7.

*Matt 26:42 Greek *If this cannot pass.*

*Matt 26:53 Greek *twelve legions.*

*Matt 26:59 Greek *the Sanhedrin.*

*Matt 26:64a Greek *seated at the right hand of the power.* See Ps 110:1.

*Matt 26:64b See Dan 7:13.

*Matt 26:71 Or *Jesus the Nazarene.*

MATTHEW 27:1-66 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 27:6 Greek *since it is the price for blood.*

*Matt 27:9 Or *I took.*

*Matt 27:9-10 Greek *as the LORD directed me.* Zech 11:12-13; Jer 32:6-9.

*Matt 27:16 Some manuscripts read *Jesus Barabbas;* also in 27:17.

*Matt 27:25 Greek *"His blood be on us and on our children."*

*Matt 27:27 Or *into the Praetorium.*

*Matt 27:32 *Cyrene* was a city in northern Africa.

*Matt 27:35 Greek *by casting lots.* A few late manuscripts add *This fulfilled the word of the prophet: "They divided my garments among themselves and cast lots for my robe."* See Ps 22:18.

*Matt 27:38 Or *criminals;* also in 27:44.

*Matt 27:46a Some manuscripts read *Eloi, Eloi.*

*Matt 27:46b Ps 22:1.

*Matt 27:49 Some manuscripts add *And another took a spear and pierced his side, and out flowed water and blood.* Compare John 19:34.

*Matt 27:54 Greek *The centurion.*

*Matt 27:62 Or *On the next day, which is after the Preparation.*

MATTHEW 28:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Matt 28:1 Greek *After the Sabbath, on the first day of the week.*

*Matt 28:19 Or *all peoples.*

Mark Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

MARK 1:1-45 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 1:1 Some manuscripts do not include *the Son of God.*

*Mark 1:2 Mal 3:1.

*Mark 1:3 Isa 40:3 (Greek version).

*Mark 1:8 Or *in;* also in 1:8b.

*Mark 1:10 Or *toward him,* or *into him.*

*Mark 1:14 Some manuscripts read *the Good News of the Kingdom of God.*

*Mark 1:16 *Simon* is called “Peter” in 3:16 and thereafter.

*Mark 1:23 Greek *unclean;* also in 1:26, 27.

*Mark 1:41 Some manuscripts read *Moved with anger.*

*Mark 1:44 See Lev 14:2-32.

MARK 2:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 2:10 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Mark 2:16a Greek *the scribes of the Pharisees.*

*Mark 2:16b Greek *with tax collectors and sinners?*

MARK 3:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 3:11 Greek *unclean;* also in 3:30.

*Mark 3:14 Some manuscripts do not include *and called them his apostles.*

*Mark 3:17 Greek *whom he named Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder.*

*Mark 3:18 Greek *the Cananean,* an Aramaic term for Jewish nationalists.

*Mark 3:22 Greek *Beelzeboul;* other manuscripts read *Beezeboul;* Latin version reads *Beelzebub.*

*Mark 3:32 Some manuscripts add *and sisters.*

MARK 4:1-41 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 4:11 Greek *mystery.*

*Mark 4:12 Isa 6:9-10 (Greek version).

*Mark 4:24 Or *The measure you give will be the measure you get back.*

MARK 5:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 5:1 Other manuscripts read *Gadarenes;* still others read *Gergesenes.* See Matt 8:28; Luke 8:26.

*Mark 5:2 Greek *unclean;* also in 5:8, 13.

*Mark 5:20 Greek *Decapolis.*

*Mark 5:36 Or *ignored.*

MARK 6:1-56 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 6:3a Some manuscripts read *He's just the son of the carpenter and of Mary.*

*Mark 6:3b Most manuscripts read *Joses;* see Matt 13:55.

*Mark 6:7 Greek *unclean.*

*Mark 6:8 Greek *no copper coins in their money belts.*

*Mark 6:14 Some manuscripts read *He was saying.*

*Mark 6:22 Some manuscripts read *the daughter of Herodias herself.*

*Mark 6:37 Greek *It would take 200 denarii.* A denarius was equivalent to a laborer's full day's wage.

*Mark 6:44 Some manuscripts read *fed from the loaves.*

*Mark 6:48 Greek *About the fourth watch of the night.*

*Mark 6:50 Or *The 'I AM' is here;* Greek reads *I am.* See Exod 3:14.

MARK 7:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 7:3 Greek *have washed with the fist.*

*Mark 7:4a Some manuscripts read *sprinkle themselves.*

*Mark 7:4b Some manuscripts add *and dining couches.*

*Mark 7:7 Isa 29:13 (Greek version).

*Mark 7:10a Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16.

*Mark 7:10b Exod 21:17 (Greek version); Lev 20:9 (Greek version).

*Mark 7:11 Greek *'What I would have given to you is Corban' (that is, a gift).*

*Mark 7:15 Some manuscripts add verse 16, *Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.* Compare 4:9, 23.

*Mark 7:24 Some manuscripts add *and Sidon.*

*Mark 7:25 Greek *unclean.*

*Mark 7:27 Greek *Let the children eat first.*

*Mark 7:31 Greek *Decapolis.*

MARK 8:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 8:18 Jer 5:21.

*Mark 8:29 Or *the Christ. Messiah* (a Hebrew term) and *Christ* (a Greek term) both mean "anointed one."

*Mark 8:31 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Mark 8:32 Or *began to correct him.*

*Mark 8:36 Or *your self?* also in 8:37.

MARK 9:1-50 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 9:5 Greek *three tabernacles.*

*Mark 9:9 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Mark 9:11 Greek *that Elijah must come first?*

*Mark 9:18 Or *becomes weak.*

*Mark 9:19 Or *said to his disciples.*

*Mark 9:25 Greek *unclean.*

*Mark 9:29 Some manuscripts read *by prayer and fasting.*

*Mark 9:37 Greek *in my name.*

*Mark 9:43a Greek *Gehenna;* also in 9:45, 47.

*Mark 9:43b Some manuscripts add verse 44, *'where the maggots*

never die and the fire never goes out.' See 9:48.

*Mark 9:45 Some manuscripts add verse 46, *'where the maggots never die and the fire never goes out.'* See 9:48.

*Mark 9:48 Isa 66:24.

*Mark 9:49 Greek *salted with fire;* other manuscripts add *and every sacrifice will be salted with salt.*

MARK 10:1-52 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 10:4 See Deut 24:1.

*Mark 10:6 Gen 1:27; 5:2.

*Mark 10:7 Some manuscripts do not include *and is joined to his wife.*

*Mark 10:7-8 Gen 2:24.

*Mark 10:19 Exod 20:12-16; Deut 5:16-20.

*Mark 10:24 Some manuscripts read *very hard for those who trust in riches.*

*Mark 10:31 Greek *But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.*

*Mark 10:33a "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Mark 10:33b Greek *the Gentiles.*

*Mark 10:51 Greek uses the Hebrew term *Rabboni.*

*Mark 10:52 Or *on the way.*

MARK 11:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 11:9 Greek *Hosanna,* an exclamation of praise that literally means "save now"; also in 11:10.

*Mark 11:9-10 Pss 118:25-26; 148:1.

*Mark 11:16 Or *from carrying merchandise through the Temple.*

*Mark 11:17 Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11.

*Mark 11:19 Greek *they left;* other manuscripts read *he left.*

*Mark 11:25 Some manuscripts add verse 26, *But if you refuse to forgive, your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins.* Compare Matt 6:15.

MARK 12:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 12:10-11 Ps 118:22-23.

*Mark 12:12 Greek *They.*

*Mark 12:15 Greek *a denarius.*

*Mark 12:19 See Deut 25:5-6.

*Mark 12:26a Greek *in the story of the bush? God said to him.*

*Mark 12:26b Exod 3:6.

*Mark 12:29-30 Deut 6:4-5.

*Mark 12:31 Lev 19:18.

*Mark 12:36 Ps 110:1.

*Mark 12:42 Greek *two lepta, which is a kodrantes* [i.e., a quadrans].

MARK 13:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 13:6 Greek *claiming, 'I am.'*

*Mark 13:9 Or *But this will be your testimony against them.*

*Mark 13:10 Or *all peoples.*

*Mark 13:13 Greek *on account of my name.*

*Mark 13:14a Greek *the abomination of desolation.* See Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.

*Mark 13:14b Or *it.*

*Mark 13:24-25 See Isa 13:10; 34:4; Joel 2:10.

*Mark 13:26a "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Mark 13:26b See Dan 7:13.

*Mark 13:27 Greek *from the four winds.*

*Mark 13:30 Or *this age,* or *this nation.*

*Mark 13:33 Some manuscripts add *and pray.*

MARK 14:1-72 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 14:3 Or *reclining.*

*Mark 14:5 Greek *for 300 denarii.* A denarius was equivalent to a laborer's full day's wage.

*Mark 14:18 Or *As they reclined.*

*Mark 14:21 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Mark 14:24 Some manuscripts read *the new covenant.*

*Mark 14:27 Greek *I will strike.* Zech 13:7.

*Mark 14:36 *Abba* is an Aramaic term for "father."

*Mark 14:55 Greek *the Sanhedrin.*

*Mark 14:62a Or *The 'I AM' is here;* or *I am the LORD.* See Exod 3:14.

*Mark 14:62b Greek *at the right hand of the power.* See Ps 110:1.

*Mark 14:62c See Dan 7:13.

*Mark 14:67 Or *Jesus the Nazarene.*

*Mark 14:68 Some manuscripts do not include *Just then, a rooster crowed.*

MARK 15:1-47 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 15:1 Greek *the Sanhedrin;* also in 15:43.

*Mark 15:21 *Cyrene* was a city in northern Africa.

*Mark 15:24 Greek *cast lots.* See Ps 22:18.

*Mark 15:27a Or *Two criminals.*

*Mark 15:27b Some manuscripts add verse 28, *And the Scripture was fulfilled that said, "He was counted among those who were rebels."* See Isa 53:12; also compare Luke 22:37.

*Mark 15:34 Ps 22:1.

*Mark 15:39a Greek *the centurion;* similarly in 15:44, 45.

*Mark 15:39b Some manuscripts add *heard his cry and.*

*Mark 15:40 Greek *Joses;* also in 15:47. See Matt 27:56.

*Mark 15:42 Greek *It was the day of preparation.*

MARK 16:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Mark 16:2 Greek *on the first day of the week;* also in 16:9.

*Mark 16:6 Or *Jesus the Nazarene.*

*Mark 16:8 The most reliable early manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark end at verse 8. Other manuscripts include various endings to the Gospel. A few include both the "shorter ending" and the "longer ending." The majority of manuscripts include the "longer ending" immediately after verse 8.

*Mark 16:14 Some early manuscripts add: *And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not permit God's truth and power to conquer the evil [unclean] spirits. Therefore, reveal your justice now." This is what they said to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The period of years of Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other dreadful things will happen soon. And I was handed over to death for those who have sinned, so that they may return to the truth and sin no more, and so they may inherit the spiritual, incorruptible, and righteous glory in heaven."*

*Mark 16:17 Or *new tongues;* some manuscripts do not include *new.*

Luke Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

LUKE 1:1-80 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 1:2 Greek *from those who from the beginning were servants of the word.*

*Luke 1:15 Or *even from birth.*

*Luke 1:17 See Mal 4:5-6.

*Luke 1:28 Some manuscripts add *Blessed are you among women.*

*Luke 1:33 Greek *over the house of Jacob.*

*Luke 1:37 Some manuscripts read *For nothing is impossible with God.*

*Luke 1:69 Greek *has raised up a horn of salvation for us.*

*Luke 1:78 Or *the Morning Light from Heaven is about to visit us.*

LUKE 2:1-52 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 2:23 Exod 13:2.

*Luke 2:24 Lev 12:8.

*Luke 2:37 Or *She had been a widow for eighty-four years.*

*Luke 2:49 Or *"Didn't you realize that I should be involved with my Father's affairs?"*

LUKE 3:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 3:1a Greek *Herod was tetrarch.* Herod Antipas was a son of King Herod.

*Luke 3:1b Greek *tetrarch;* also in 3:1c.

*Luke 3:4-6 Isa 40:3-5 (Greek version).

*Luke 3:16a Or *in.*

*Luke 3:16b Or *in the Holy Spirit and in fire.*

*Luke 3:19 Greek *Herod the tetrarch.*

*Luke 3:22 Some manuscripts read *my Son, and today I have become*

your Father.

*Luke 3:32 Greek *Sala,* a variant spelling of Salmon; also in 3:32b. See Ruth 4:20-21.

*Luke 3:33 Some manuscripts read *Amminadab was the son of Aram. Arni* and *Aram* are alternate spellings of Ram. See 1 Chr 2:9-10.

*Luke 3:38 Greek *Enos,* a variant spelling of Enosh; also in 3:38b. See Gen 5:6.

LUKE 4:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 4:1 Some manuscripts read *into the wilderness.*

*Luke 4:4 Deut 8:3.

*Luke 4:8 Deut 6:13.

*Luke 4:10-11 Ps 91:11-12.

*Luke 4:12 Deut 6:16.

*Luke 4:18-19 Or *and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.* Isa 61:1-2 (Greek version); 58:6.

*Luke 4:33 Greek *unclean;* also in 4:36.

*Luke 4:44 Some manuscripts read *Galilee.*

LUKE 5:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 5:1 Greek *Lake Gennesaret,* another name for the Sea of Galilee.

*Luke 5:3 *Simon* is called "Peter" in 6:14 and thereafter.

*Luke 5:14 See Lev 14:2-32.

*Luke 5:24 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 5:30 Greek *with tax collectors and sinners?*

LUKE 6:1-49 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 6:5 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 6:18 Greek *unclean.*

*Luke 6:38 Or *The measure you give will be the measure you get back.*

*Luke 6:40 Or *Disciples.*

*Luke 6:41 Greek *your brother's eye;* also in 6:42.

*Luke 6:42 Greek *Brother.*

LUKE 7:1-50 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 7:2 Greek *a centurion;* similarly in 7:6.

*Luke 7:19 Greek *Are you the one who is coming?* Also in 7:20.

*Luke 7:23 Or *who are not offended by me.*

*Luke 7:27 Mal 3:1.

*Luke 7:29 Or *praised God for his justice.*

*Luke 7:34 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 7:35 Or *But wisdom is justified by all her children.*

*Luke 7:36 Or *and reclined.*

*Luke 7:41 Greek *500 denarii.* A denarius was equivalent to a laborer’s full day’s wage.

LUKE 8:1-56 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 8:10a Greek *mysteries.*

*Luke 8:10b Isa 6:9 (Greek version).

*Luke 8:26 Other manuscripts read *Gadarenes;* still others read *Gergesenes;* also in 8:37. See Matt 8:28; Mark 5:1.

*Luke 8:29 Greek *unclean.*

*Luke 8:31 Or *the abyss,* or *the underworld.*

*Luke 8:42 Or *His only child, a daughter.*

*Luke 8:43 Some manuscripts add *having spent everything she had on doctors.*

*Luke 8:55 Or *her spirit.*

LUKE 9:1-62 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 9:1 Greek *the Twelve;* other manuscripts read *the twelve apostles.*

*Luke 9:3 Or *silver coins.*

*Luke 9:7 Greek *Herod the tetrarch.* Herod Antipas was a son of King Herod and was ruler over Galilee.

*Luke 9:20 Or *the Christ. Messiah* (a Hebrew term) and *Christ* (a Greek term) both mean "anointed one."

*Luke 9:22 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 9:33 Greek *three tabernacles.*

*Luke 9:35 Some manuscripts read *This is my dearly loved Son.*

*Luke 9:42 Greek *unclean.*

*Luke 9:48 Greek *in my name.*

*Luke 9:54 Some manuscripts add *as Elijah did.*

*Luke 9:55 Some manuscripts add an expanded conclusion to verse 55 and an additional sentence in verse 56: *And he said, "You don't realize what your hearts are like.* 56*For the Son of Man has not come to destroy people's lives, but to save them."*

*Luke 9:60 Greek *Let the dead bury their own dead.*

LUKE 10:1-42 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 10:1 Some manuscripts read *seventy;* also in 10:17.

*Luke 10:15 Greek *to Hades.*

*Luke 10:27 Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18.

*Luke 10:32 Greek *A Levite.*

*Luke 10:35 Greek *two denarii.* A denarius was equivalent to a laborer's full day's wage.

LUKE 11:1-54 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 11:2 Some manuscripts add additional phrases from the Lord's Prayer as it reads in Matt 6:9-13.

*Luke 11:3 Or *Give us each day our food for the day;* or *Give us each day our food for tomorrow.*

*Luke 11:4 Or *And keep us from being tested.*

*Luke 11:8 Or *in order to avoid shame,* or *so his reputation won't be damaged.*

*Luke 11:11 Some manuscripts add *for bread, do you give them a stone? Or [if they ask].*

*Luke 11:15 Greek *Beelzeboul;* also in 11:18, 19. Other manuscripts read *Beezeboul;* Latin version reads *Beelzebub.*

*Luke 11:20 Greek *by the finger of God.*

*Luke 11:24 Greek *unclean.*

*Luke 11:30 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 11:31 Greek *The queen of the south.*

*Luke 11:33 Some manuscripts do not include *or puts it under a basket.*

*Luke 11:37 Or *and reclined.*

*Luke 11:42 Greek *tithe the mint, the rue, and every herb.*

*Luke 11:49 Greek *Therefore, the wisdom of God said.*

LUKE 12:1-59 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 12:5 Greek *Gehenna.*

*Luke 12:6 Greek *two assaria* [Roman coins equal to 1/16 of a denarius].

*Luke 12:8 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 12:38 Greek *in the second or third watch.*

*Luke 12:53 Mic 7:6.

*Luke 12:59 Greek *last lepton* [the smallest Jewish coin].

LUKE 13:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 13:30 Greek *Some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.*

*Luke 13:35 Ps 118:26.

LUKE 14:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 14:2 Or *who had dropsy*.

*Luke 14:5 Some manuscripts read *donkey*.

*Luke 14:15 Greek *to eat bread.*

LUKE 15:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 15:8 Greek *ten drachmas.* A drachma was the equivalent of a full day's wage.

*Luke 15:21 Some manuscripts add *Please take me on as a hired servant.*

LUKE 16:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 16:6 Greek *100 baths . . . 50 [baths].*

*Luke 16:7 Greek *100 korous . . . 80 [korous].*

*Luke 16:9 Or *you will be welcomed into eternal homes.*

*Luke 16:16 Or *everyone is urged to enter in.*

*Luke 16:22 Greek *into Abraham's bosom.*

*Luke 16:23 Greek *to Hades.*

LUKE 17:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 17:3 Greek *If your brother.*

*Luke 17:14 See Lev 14:2-32.

*Luke 17:19 Or *Your faith has saved you.*

*Luke 17:20 Or *by your speculations.*

*Luke 17:21 Or *is within you,* or *is in your grasp.*

*Luke 17:22 Or *long for even one day with the Son of Man.* "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 17:24 Some manuscripts do not include *on the day.*

*Luke 17:25 Or *suffer many things.*

*Luke 17:35 Some manuscripts add verse 36, *Two men will be working in the field; one will be taken, the other left.* Compare Matt 24:40.

*Luke 17:37a Greek *"Where, Lord?"*

*Luke 17:37b Greek *"Wherever the carcass is, the vultures gather."*

LUKE 18:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 18:8 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 18:11 Some manuscripts read *stood and prayed this prayer to himself.*

*Luke 18:20 Exod 20:12-16; Deut 5:16-20.

*Luke 18:24 Some manuscripts read *When Jesus saw how sad the man was.*

*Luke 18:32 Greek *the Gentiles.*

*Luke 18:37 Or *Jesus of Nazareth.*

LUKE 19:1-48 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 19:10 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 19:13 Greek *ten minas;* one mina was worth about three months' wages.

*Luke 19:38 Pss 118:26; 148:1.

*Luke 19:44 Greek *did not recognize the time of your visitation,* a reference to the Messiah's coming.

*Luke 19:46 Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11.

LUKE 20:1-47 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 20:17 Ps 118:22.

*Luke 20:24 Greek *a denarius.*

*Luke 20:28 See Deut 25:5-6.

*Luke 20:37a Greek *when he wrote about the bush. He referred to the Lord.*

*Luke 20:37b Exod 3:6.

*Luke 20:42-43 Ps 110:1.

LUKE 21:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 21:2 Greek *two lepta* [the smallest of Jewish coins].

*Luke 21:8 Greek *claiming, 'I am.'*

*Luke 21:13 Or *This will be your testimony against them.*

*Luke 21:17 Greek *on account of my name.*

*Luke 21:27a "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 21:27b See Dan 7:13.

LUKE 22:1-71 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 22:14 Or *reclined together.*

*Luke 22:19-20 Some manuscripts do not include 22:19b-20, *which is given for you . . . which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.*

*Luke 22:22 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 22:37 Isa 53:12.

*Luke 22:43-44 Verses 43 and 44 are not included in the most ancient manuscripts.

*Luke 22:66 Greek *before their Sanhedrin.*

*Luke 22:69 See Ps 110:1.

LUKE 23:1-56 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 23:16 Some manuscripts add verse 17, *Now it was necessary for him to release one prisoner to them during the Passover celebration.* Compare Matt 27:15; Mark 15:6; John 18:39.

*Luke 23:26 *Cyrene* was a city in northern Africa.

*Luke 23:30 Hos 10:8.

*Luke 23:31 Or *If these things are done to me, the living tree, what will happen to you, the dry tree?*

*Luke 23:33 Sometimes rendered *Calvary,* which comes from the

Latin word for “skull.”

*Luke 23:34a This sentence is not included in many ancient manuscripts.

*Luke 23:34b Greek *by casting lots.* See Ps 22:18.

*Luke 23:46 Ps 31:5.

*Luke 23:47a Greek *the centurion.*

*Luke 23:47b Or *righteous.*

*Luke 23:48 Greek *went home beating their breasts.*

*Luke 23:54 Greek *It was the day of preparation.*

LUKE 24:1-53 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Luke 24:1 Greek *But on the first day of the week, very early in the morning.*

*Luke 24:7 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Luke 24:13 Greek *60 stadia* [11.1 kilometers].

*Luke 24:30 Or *As they reclined.*

*Luke 24:34 Greek *Simon.*

*Luke 24:47 Or *all peoples.*

John Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

JOHN 1:1-51 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 1:3-4 Or *and nothing that was created was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything.*

*John 1:5 Or *and the darkness has not understood it.*

*John 1:6 Greek *a man named John.*

*John 1:14a Greek *became flesh.*

*John 1:14b Or *grace and truth;* also in 1:17.

*John 1:16 Or *received the grace of Christ rather than the grace of the law;* Greek reads *received grace upon grace.*

*John 1:18 Some manuscripts read *But the one and only Son.*

*John 1:19 Greek *and Levites.*

*John 1:21 Greek *Are you the Prophet?* See Deut 18:15, 18; Mal 4:5-6.

*John 1:23 Isa 40:3.

*John 1:26 Or *in;* also in 1:31, 33.

*John 1:34 Some manuscripts read *the Son of God.*

*John 1:41 *Messiah* (a Hebrew term) and *Christ* (a Greek term) both mean “anointed one.”

*John 1:42 The names *Cephas* (from Aramaic) and *Peter* (from Greek) both mean “rock.”

*John 1:45 Greek *Moses in the law.*

*John 1:51 Greek *going up and down on the Son of Man;* see Gen 28:10-17. "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

JOHN 2:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 2:1 Greek *On the third day;* see 1:35, 43.

*John 2:6 Greek *2 or 3 measures* [75 to 113 liters].

*John 2:17 Or *"Concern for God's house will be my undoing."* Ps 69:9.

JOHN 3:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 3:3 Or *born from above;* also in 3:7.

*John 3:5 Or *and spirit.* The Greek word for *Spirit* can also be translated *wind;* see 3:8.

*John 3:6 Greek *what is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

*John 3:7 The Greek word for *you* is plural; also in 3:12.

*John 3:13 Some manuscripts add *who lives in heaven.* "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*John 3:15 Or *everyone who believes will have eternal life in him.*

*John 3:16 Or *For God loved the world so much that he gave.*

*John 3:21 Or *can see God at work in what he is doing.*

*John 3:25 Some manuscripts read *some Jews.*

*John 3:31 Some manuscripts do not include *and is greater than anyone else.*

JOHN 4:1-54 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 4:1 Some manuscripts read *The Lord.*

*John 4:9 Some manuscripts do not include this sentence.

*John 4:20 Greek *on this mountain.*

*John 4:26 Or *"The 'I AM' is here";* or *"I am the LORD";* Greek reads *"I am, the one speaking to you."* See Exod 3:14.

*John 4:35 Greek *white.*

JOHN 5:1-47 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 5:2 Other manuscripts read *Beth-zatha;* still others read *Bethsaida.*

*John 5:3 Some manuscripts add an expanded conclusion to verse 3 and all of verse 4: *waiting for a certain movement of the water, 4for an angel of the Lord came from time to time and stirred up the water. And the first person to step in after the water was stirred was healed of whatever disease he had.*

*John 5:16 Or *persecuting.*

*John 5:27 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*John 5:44 Some manuscripts read *from the only One.*

JOHN 6:1-71 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 6:7 Greek *Two hundred denarii would not be enough.* A denarius was equivalent to a laborer's full day's wage.

*John 6:14a Some manuscripts read *Jesus.*

*John 6:14b See Deut 18:15, 18; Mal 4:5-6.

*John 6:19 Greek *25 or 30 stadia* [4.6 or 5.5 kilometers].

*John 6:20 Or *The 'I AM' is here;* Greek reads *I am.* See Exod 3:14.

*John 6:27 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*John 6:31 Exod 16:4; Ps 78:24.

*John 6:41 Greek *Jewish people;* also in 6:52.

*John 6:45 Greek *in the prophets.* Isa 54:13.

*John 6:69 Other manuscripts read *you are the Christ, the Holy One of God;* still others read *you are the Christ, the Son of God;* and still others read *you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

JOHN 7:1-53 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 7:8 Some manuscripts read *not yet going.*

*John 7:15 Greek *Jewish people.*

*John 7:30 Greek *his hour.*

*John 7:35 Or *the Jews who live among the Greeks?*

*John 7:37-38 Or *"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.*
38*For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from the heart of anyone who believes in me.'"*

*John 7:39 Several early manuscripts read *But as yet there was no Spirit.* Still others read *But as yet there was no Holy Spirit.*

*John 7:40 See Deut 18:15, 18; Mal 4:5-6.

*John 7:42 See Mic 5:2.

*John 7:52 Some manuscripts read *the prophet does not come.*

JOHN 8:1-59 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 8:16 Some manuscripts read *The One.*

*John 8:17 See Deut 19:15.

*John 8:20 Greek *his hour.*

*John 8:22 Greek *Jewish people;* also in 8:31, 48, 52, 57.

*John 8:24 Greek *unless you believe that I am.* See Exod 3:14.

*John 8:25 Or *Why do I speak to you at all?*

*John 8:28 Greek *When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am.* "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*John 8:39 Some manuscripts read *if you are really the children of Abraham, follow his example.*

*John 8:54 Some manuscripts read *You say he is your God.*

*John 8:57 Some manuscripts read *How can you say Abraham has*

seen you?

*John 8:58 Or *before Abraham was even born, I have always been alive;* Greek reads *before Abraham was, I am.* See Exod 3:14.

JOHN 9:1-41 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 9:4 Other manuscripts read *I must quickly carry out the tasks assigned me by the one who sent me;* still others read *We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent me.*

*John 9:24 Or *Give glory to God, not to Jesus;* Greek reads *Give glory to God.*

*John 9:35 Some manuscripts read *the Son of God?* "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*John 9:38-39a Some manuscripts do not include *"Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus. Then Jesus told him.*

*John 9:39b Greek *those who see.*

JOHN 10:1-42 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 10:8 Some manuscripts do not include *before me.*

*John 10:9 Or *will find safety*.

*John 10:19 Greek *Jewish people;* also in 10:24, 31.

*John 10:29 Other manuscripts read *for what my Father has given me is more powerful than anything;* still others read *for regarding that which my Father has given me, he is greater than all.*

*John 10:34a Greek *your own law.*

*John 10:34b Ps 82:6.

JOHN 11:1-57 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 11:2 This incident is recorded in chapter 12.

*John 11:8 Greek *Jewish people;* also in 11:19, 31, 33, 36, 45, 54.

*John 11:16 Greek *Thomas, who was called Didymus.*

*John 11:18 Greek *was about 15 stadia* [about 2.8 kilometers].

*John 11:25 Some manuscripts do not include *and the life.*

*John 11:33 Or *he was angry in his spirit.*

*John 11:47 Greek *the Sanhedrin.*

*John 11:48 Or *our position;* Greek reads *our place.*

*John 11:49 Greek *that year;* also in 11:51.

JOHN 12:1-50 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 12:2 Or *who reclined.*

*John 12:3 Greek *took 1 litra* [327 grams].

*John 12:5 Greek *worth 300 denarii.* A denarius was equivalent to a laborer's full day's wage.

*John 12:9 Greek *Jewish people;* also in 12:11.

*John 12:11 Or *had deserted their traditions;* Greek reads *had deserted.*

*John 12:13a Greek *Hosanna,* an exclamation of praise adapted from a Hebrew expression that means “save now.”

*John 12:13b Ps 118:25-26; Zeph 3:15.

*John 12:15a Greek *daughter of Zion.*

*John 12:15b Zech 9:9.

*John 12:17 Greek *were testifying.*

*John 12:19 Greek *the world.*

*John 12:23 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

*John 12:34 Greek *from the law.*

*John 12:38 Isa 53:1.

*John 12:40 Isa 6:10.

JOHN 13:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 13:1 Or *he showed them the full extent of his love.*

*John 13:2 Or *the devil had already intended for Judas.*

*John 13:10 Some manuscripts do not include *except for the feet.*

*John 13:18 Ps 41:9.

*John 13:19 Or *that the 'I AM' has come;* or *that I am the LORD;* Greek reads *that I am.* See Exod 3:14.

*John 13:21 Greek *was troubled in his spirit.*

*John 13:23 Greek *was reclining on Jesus' bosom.* The "disciple Jesus loved" was probably John.

*John 13:31 "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*John 13:32 Several early manuscripts do not include *And since God receives glory because of the Son.*

JOHN 14:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 14:2a Or *There are many rooms in my Father's house.*

*John 14:2b Or *If this were not so, I would have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you.* Some manuscripts read *If this were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you.*

*John 14:7 Some manuscripts read *If you have really known me, you will know who my Father is.*

*John 14:15 Other manuscripts read *you will obey;* still others read *you should obey.*

*John 14:16 Or *Comforter,* or *Encourager,* or *Counselor.* Greek reads *Paraclete;* also in 14:26.

*John 14:17 Some manuscripts read *and is in you.*

JOHN 15:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 15:25 Greek *in their law.* Pss 35:19; 69:4.

*John 15:26 Or *Comforter,* or *Encourager,* or *Counselor.* Greek reads *Paraclete.*

JOHN 16:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 16:7 Or *Comforter,* or *Encourager,* or *Counselor.* Greek reads *Paraclete.*

*John 16:27 Some manuscripts read *from the Father.*

JOHN 17:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 17:6 Greek *have revealed your name;* also in 17:26.

*John 17:11 Some manuscripts read *you have given me these [disciples].*

*John 17:12 Some manuscripts read *I protected those you gave me, by the power of your name.*

JOHN 18:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 18:5a Or *Jesus of Nazareth;* also in 18:7.

*John 18:5b Or *"The 'I AM' is here";* or *"I am the LORD";* Greek reads *I am;* also in 18:6, 8. See Exod 3:14.

*John 18:9 See John 6:39 and 17:12.

*John 18:13 Greek *that year.*

*John 18:20 Greek *Jewish people;* also in 18:38.

*John 18:28 Greek *to the Praetorium;* also in 18:33.

*John 18:32 See John 12:32-33.

JOHN 19:1-42 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 19:9 Greek *the Praetorium.*

*John 19:12 "Friend of Caesar" is a technical term that refers to an ally of the emperor.

*John 19:14 Greek *Jewish people;* also in 19:20.

*John 19:19 Or *Jesus the Nazarene.*

*John 19:24a Greek *cast lots.*

*John 19:24b Ps 22:18.

*John 19:28 See Pss 22:15; 69:21.

*John 19:35 Some manuscripts read *that you also may believe.*

*John 19:36 Exod 12:46; Num 9:12; Ps 34:20.

*John 19:37 Zech 12:10.

*John 19:39 Greek *100 litras* [32.7 kilograms].

*John 19:42 Greek *because of the Jewish day of preparation.*

JOHN 20:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 20:1 Greek *On the first day of the week.*

*John 20:19 Greek *In the evening of that day, the first day of the week.*

*John 20:24 Greek *Thomas, who was called Didymus.*

*John 20:31 Some manuscripts read *that you may believe.*

JOHN 21:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*John 21:1 Greek *Sea of Tiberias,* another name for the Sea of Galilee.

*John 21:2 Greek *Thomas, who was called Didymus.*

*John 21:5 Greek *Children.*

*John 21:8 Greek *200 cubits* [90 meters].

*John 21:15 Or *more than these others do?*

*John 21:18 Some manuscripts read *and another one.*

*John 21:23 Greek *the brothers.*

Acts Text Notes

ACTS 1:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 1:1 The reference is to the Gospel of Luke.

*Acts 1:5 Or *in;* also in 1:5b.

*Acts 1:12 Greek *a Sabbath day's journey.*

*Acts 1:15 Greek *brothers.*

*Acts 1:20 Pss 69:25; 109:8.

ACTS 2:1-47 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 2:1 The Festival of Pentecost came 50 days after Passover (when Jesus was crucified).

*Acts 2:4 Or *in other tongues.*

*Acts 2:17-21 Joel 2:28-32.

*Acts 2:22 Or *Jesus of Nazareth.*

*Acts 2:27 Greek *in Hades;* also in 2:31.

*Acts 2:25-28 Ps 16:8-11 (Greek version).

*Acts 2:34-35 Ps 110:1.

*Acts 2:39 Or *and to people far in the future,* or *and to the Gentiles.*

*Acts 2:42 Greek *the breaking of bread;* also in 2:46.

*Acts 2:46 Or *and sincere hearts.*

ACTS 3:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 3:6a Or *Jesus Christ of Nazareth.*

*Acts 3:6b Some manuscripts do not include *get up and.*

*Acts 3:17 Greek *Brothers.*

*Acts 3:22 Deut 18:15.

*Acts 3:23 Deut 18:19; Lev 23:29.

*Acts 3:25 Greek *your seed;* see Gen 12:3; 22:18.

ACTS 4:1-37 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 4:4 Greek *5,000 adult males.*

*Acts 4:10 Or *Jesus Christ of Nazareth.*

*Acts 4:11 Ps 118:22.

*Acts 4:15 Greek *the Sanhedrin.*

*Acts 4:25-26 Or *his anointed one;* or *his Christ.* Ps 2:1-2.

ACTS 5:1-42 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 5:16 Greek *unclean.*

*Acts 5:21 Greek *Sanhedrin;* also in 5:27, 41.

*Acts 5:30 Greek *on a tree.*

*Acts 5:41 Greek *for the name.*

ACTS 6:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 6:1 Greek *disciples;* also in 6:2, 7.

*Acts 6:12 Greek *Sanhedrin;* also in 6:15.

*Acts 6:14 Or *Jesus the Nazarene.*

ACTS 7:1-60 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 7:2 *Mesopotamia* was the region now called Iraq. *Haran* was a city in what is now called Syria.

*Acts 7:3 Gen 12:1.

*Acts 7:5-7 Gen 12:7; 15:13-14; Exod 3:12.

*Acts 7:13 Other manuscripts read *Joseph was recognized by his brothers.*

*Acts 7:31-34 Exod 3:5-10.

*Acts 7:37 Deut 18:15.

*Acts 7:38 Some manuscripts read *to you.*

*Acts 7:42-43 Amos 5:25-27 (Greek version).

*Acts 7:44 Greek *the tent of witness.*

*Acts 7:46 Some manuscripts read *the house of Jacob.*

*Acts 7:49-50 Isa 66:1-2.

*Acts 7:51 Greek *uncircumcised.*

*Acts 7:54 Greek *they were grinding their teeth against him.*

*Acts 7:58 *Saul* is later called Paul; see 13:9.

ACTS 8:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 8:7 Greek *unclean.*

*Acts 8:26 Or *Go at noon.*

*Acts 8:32-33 Isa 53:7-8 (Greek version).

*Acts 8:36 Some manuscripts add verse 37, *"You can," Philip answered, "if you believe with all your heart." And the eunuch replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*

ACTS 9:1-43 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 9:1 Greek *disciples.*

*Acts 9:10 Greek *disciple;* also in 9:26, 36.

*Acts 9:13 Greek *God's holy people;* also in 9:32, 41.

*Acts 9:19 Greek *disciples;* also in 9:26, 38.

*Acts 9:25 Greek *his disciples.*

*Acts 9:30 Greek *brothers.*

*Acts 9:36 The names *Tabitha* in Aramaic and *Dorcas* in Greek both mean “gazelle.”

ACTS 10:1-48 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 10:1 Greek *a centurion;* similarly in 10:22.

*Acts 10:14 Greek *anything common and unclean.*

*Acts 10:39 Greek *on a tree.*

*Acts 10:41 Greek *the people.*

*Acts 10:45 Greek *The faithful ones of the circumcision.*

*Acts 10:46 Or *in other languages.*

ACTS 11:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 11:1 Greek *brothers.*

*Acts 11:2 Greek *those of the circumcision.*

*Acts 11:3 Greek *of uncircumcised men.*

*Acts 11:8 Greek *anything common or unclean.*

*Acts 11:16 Or *in;* also in 11:16b.

*Acts 11:20 Greek *the Hellenists* (i.e., those who speak Greek); other manuscripts read *the Greeks.*

*Acts 11:26 Greek *disciples;* also in 11:29.

*Acts 11:29 Greek *the brothers.*

ACTS 12:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 12:1 Greek *Herod the king.* He was the nephew of Herod Antipas and a grandson of Herod the Great.

*Acts 12:3 Greek *the days of unleavened bread.*

*Acts 12:11 Or *the Jewish people.*

*Acts 12:25 Or *mission, they returned to Jerusalem.* Other manuscripts read *mission, they returned from Jerusalem;* still others read *mission, they returned from Jerusalem to Antioch.*

ACTS 13:1-52 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 13:1a Greek *who was called Niger.*

*Acts 13:1b Greek *Herod the tetrarch.*

*Acts 13:13-14 *Pamphylia* and *Pisidia* were districts in what is now Turkey.

*Acts 13:15 Greek *from the law.*

*Acts 13:18 Some manuscripts read *He cared for them;* compare Deut 1:31.

*Acts 13:22 1 Sam 13:14.

*Acts 13:29 Greek *from the tree.*

*Acts 13:33 Or *Today I reveal you as my Son.* Ps 2:7.

*Acts 13:34 Isa 55:3.

*Acts 13:35 Ps 16:10.

*Acts 13:38 English translations divide verses 38 and 39 in various ways.

*Acts 13:41 Hab 1:5 (Greek version).

*Acts 13:47 Isa 49:6.

*Acts 13:52 Greek *the disciples.*

ACTS 14:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 14:1 *Iconium,* as well as *Lystra* and *Derbe* (14:6), were towns in what is now Turkey.

*Acts 14:15 Greek *Men.*

*Acts 14:20 Greek *disciples;* also in 14:22, 28.

ACTS 15:1-41 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 15:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 15:3, 23, 32, 33, 36, 40.

*Acts 15:10 Greek *disciples.*

*Acts 15:14 Greek *Simeon.*

*Acts 15:16 Or *kingdom;* Greek reads *tent.*

*Acts 15:16-18 Amos 9:11-12 (Greek version); Isa 45:21.

*Acts 15:22 Greek *were leaders among the brothers.*

*Acts 15:33 Some manuscripts add verse 34, *But Silas decided to stay there.*

ACTS 16:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 16:2 Greek *brothers;* also in 16:40.

*Acts 16:6-7 *Phrygia, Galatia, Asia, Mysia,* and *Bithynia* were all districts in what is now Turkey.

*Acts 16:10 Luke, the writer of this book, here joined Paul and accompanied him on his journey.

ACTS 17:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 17:4 Some manuscripts read *quite a few of the wives of the leading men.*

*Acts 17:5 Or *the city council.*

*Acts 17:6 Greek *brothers;* also in 17:10, 14.

*Acts 17:19 Or *the most learned society of philosophers in the city.* Greek reads *the Areopagus.*

*Acts 17:22 Traditionally rendered *standing in the middle of Mars*

Hill; Greek reads *standing in the middle of the Areopagus.*

*Acts 17:26 Greek *From one;* other manuscripts read *From one blood.*

*Acts 17:28 Some manuscripts read *our.*

*Acts 17:34 Greek *an Areopagite.*

ACTS 18:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 18:1 *Athens* and *Corinth* were major cities in Achaia, the region in the southern portion of the Greek peninsula.

*Acts 18:3 Or *leatherworkers.*

*Acts 18:17 Greek *Everyone;* other manuscripts read *All the Greeks.*

*Acts 18:18 Greek *brothers;* also in 18:27.

*Acts 18:21 Some manuscripts read *"I must by all means be at Jerusalem for the upcoming festival, but I will come back later."*

*Acts 18:22 Greek *the church.*

*Acts 18:23 Greek *disciples;* also in 18:27.

*Acts 18:25 Or *with enthusiasm in the Spirit.*

ACTS 19:1-41 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 19:1 Greek *disciples;* also in 19:9, 30.

*Acts 19:6 Or *in other languages.*

*Acts 19:19 Greek *50,000 pieces of silver,* each of which was the equivalent of a day's wage.

*Acts 19:21 Or *decided in his spirit.*

*Acts 19:24 *Artemis* is otherwise known as Diana.

*Acts 19:41 Some translations include verse 41 as part of verse 40.

ACTS 20:1-38 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 20:1 Greek *disciples.*

*Acts 20:6 Greek *the days of unleavened bread.*

*Acts 20:7 Greek *to break bread.*

*Acts 20:11 Greek *broke the bread.*

*Acts 20:15 Some manuscripts read *and having stayed at Trogyllium.*

*Acts 20:22 Or *by my spirit,* or *by an inner compulsion;* Greek reads *by the spirit.*

*Acts 20:26 Greek *I am innocent of the blood of all.*

*Acts 20:28a Or *with the blood of his own [Son].*

*Acts 20:28b Greek *overseers.*

ACTS 21:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 21:4 Greek *disciples;* also in 21:16.

*Acts 21:5 Or *wives.*

*Acts 21:7 Greek *brothers;* also in 21:17.

*Acts 21:28 Greek *Greeks.*

*Acts 21:29 Greek *Trophimus, the Ephesian.*

*Acts 21:32 Greek *centurions.*

*Acts 21:40 Or *Hebrew.*

ACTS 22:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 22:2 Greek *in Aramaic,* or *in Hebrew.*

*Acts 22:8 Or *Jesus of Nazareth.*

*Acts 22:18 Greek *him.*

*Acts 22:25 Greek *the centurion;* also in 22:26.

*Acts 22:30 Greek *Sanhedrin.*

ACTS 23:1-35 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 23:1 Greek *Sanhedrin;* also in 23:6, 15, 20, 28.

*Acts 23:3 Greek *you whitewashed wall.*

*Acts 23:5 Exod 22:28.

*Acts 23:12 Greek *the Jews.*

*Acts 23:17 Greek *centurions;* also in 23:23.

*Acts 23:35 Greek *Herod's Praetorium.*

ACTS 24:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 24:1 Greek *some elders and an orator.*

*Acts 24:6 Some manuscripts add an expanded conclusion to verse 6, all of verse 7, and an additional phrase in verse 8: *We would have judged him by our law, 7but Lysias, the commander of the garrison, came and violently took him away from us, 8commanding his accusers to come before you.*

*Acts 24:20 Greek *Sanhedrin.*

*Acts 24:23 Greek *a centurion.*

ACTS 25:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 25:13 Greek *Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived.*

ACTS 26:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 26:9 Or *Jesus of Nazareth.*

*Acts 26:10 Greek *many of God's holy people.*

*Acts 26:11 Greek *to blaspheme.*

*Acts 26:14a Or *Hebrew.*

*Acts 26:14b Greek *It is hard for you to kick against the oxgoads.*

*Acts 26:28 Or *"A little more, and your arguments would make me a Christian."*

ACTS 27:1-44 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 27:1 Greek *centurion;* similarly in 27:6, 11, 31, 43.

*Acts 27:2 *Asia* was a Roman province in what is now western Turkey.

*Acts 27:9 Greek *because the fast was now already gone by.* This fast was associated with the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), which occurred in late September or early October.

*Acts 27:16 Some manuscripts read *Clauda.*

*Acts 27:27 The *Sea of Adria* includes the central portion of the Mediterranean.

*Acts 27:28 Greek *20 fathoms . . . 15 fathoms* [37 meters . . . 27 meters].

*Acts 27:44 Or *or were helped by members of the ship's crew.*

ACTS 28:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Acts 28:11 The *twin gods* were the Roman gods Castor and Pollux.

*Acts 28:12 *Syracuse* was on the island of Sicily.

*Acts 28:13 *Rhegium* was on the southern tip of Italy.

*Acts 28:14 Greek *brothers.*

*Acts 28:15a Greek *brothers.*

*Acts 28:15b *The Forum* was about 43 miles (70 kilometers) from Rome.

*Acts 28:15c *The Three Taverns* was about 35 miles (57 kilometers) from Rome.

*Acts 28:26-27 Isa 6:9-10 (Greek version).

*Acts 28:28 Some manuscripts add verse 29, *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, greatly disagreeing with each other.*

*Acts 28:30 Or *in his own rented quarters.*

Romans Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

ROMANS 1:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 1:4a Or *and was designated.*

*Rom 1:4b Or *by the Spirit of holiness;* or *in the new realm of the Spirit.*

*Rom 1:5 Or *the grace.*

*Rom 1:9 Or *in my spirit.*

*Rom 1:13 Greek *brothers.*

*Rom 1:14 Greek *to Greeks and barbarians.*

*Rom 1:16 Greek *also the Greek.*

*Rom 1:17 Or *"The righteous will live by faith."* Hab 2:4.

*Rom 1:18 Or *who, by their wickedness, prevent the truth from being known.*

ROMANS 2:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 2:9 Greek *also for the Greek;* also in 2:10.

*Rom 2:22 Greek *do you steal from temples?*

*Rom 2:24 Isa 52:5 (Greek version).

*Rom 2:29 Or *receives praise.*

ROMANS 3:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 3:2 Greek *the oracles of God.*

*Rom 3:4 Ps 51:4 (Greek version).

*Rom 3:9 Greek *or Greeks.*

*Rom 3:10-12 Pss 14:1-3; 53:1-3 (Greek version).

*Rom 3:13 Pss 5:9 (Greek version); 140:3.

*Rom 3:14 Ps 10:7 (Greek version).

*Rom 3:15-17 Isa 59:7-8.

*Rom 3:18 Ps 36:1.

*Rom 3:21 Greek *in the law.*

*Rom 3:30 Greek *whether they are circumcised or uncircumcised.*

ROMANS 4:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 4:3 Gen 15:6.

*Rom 4:7-8 Ps 32:1-2 (Greek version).

*Rom 4:9 Greek *is this blessing only for the circumcised, or is it also for the uncircumcised?*

*Rom 4:17 Gen 17:5.

*Rom 4:18 Gen 15:5.

ROMANS 5:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 5:1 Some manuscripts read *let us have peace.*

ROMANS 6:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 6:12 Or *Do not let sin reign in your body, which is subject to death.*

ROMANS 7:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 7:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 7:4.

*Rom 7:5 Greek *When we were in the flesh.*

*Rom 7:7 Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21.

*Rom 7:18 Greek *my flesh;* also in 7:25.

*Rom 7:23 Greek *law;* also in 7:23b.

ROMANS 8:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 8:2a Greek *the law;* also in 8:2b.

*Rom 8:2b Some manuscripts read *me.*

*Rom 8:3 Greek *our flesh;* similarly in 8:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12.

*Rom 8:10 Or *your spirit is alive.*

*Rom 8:12 Greek *brothers;* also in 8:29.

*Rom 8:13 Greek *deeds of the body.*

*Rom 8:14 Greek *sons;* also in 8:19.

*Rom 8:15a Greek *you received a spirit of sonship.*

*Rom 8:15b *Abba* is an Aramaic term for “father.”

*Rom 8:23 Greek *wait anxiously for sonship.*

*Rom 8:24 Some manuscripts read *wait.*

*Rom 8:27 Greek *for God’s holy people.*

*Rom 8:28 Some manuscripts read *And we know that everything works together.*

*Rom 8:29 Or *would be supreme.*

*Rom 8:36 Ps 44:22.

*Rom 8:38 Greek *nor rulers.*

ROMANS 9:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 9:3 Greek *my brothers.*

*Rom 9:4 Greek *chosen for sonship.*

*Rom 9:5 Or *May God, the one who rules over everything, be praised forever. Amen.*

*Rom 9:7 Gen 21:12.

*Rom 9:9 Gen 18:10, 14.

*Rom 9:10 Greek *she conceived children through this one man.*

*Rom 9:12 Gen 25:23.

*Rom 9:13 Mal 1:2-3.

*Rom 9:15 Exod 33:19.

*Rom 9:17 Exod 9:16 (Greek version).

*Rom 9:25 Hos 2:23.

*Rom 9:26 Greek *sons of the living God.* Hos 1:10.

*Rom 9:27-28 Isa 10:22-23 (Greek version).

*Rom 9:29 Isa 1:9 (Greek version).

*Rom 9:32 Greek *by works.*

*Rom 9:33a Greek *in Zion.*

*Rom 9:33b Isa 8:14; 28:16 (Greek version).

ROMANS 10:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 10:1 Greek *Brothers.*

*Rom 10:4 Or *For Christ is the end of the law.*

*Rom 10:5 See Lev 18:5.

*Rom 10:6-8 Deut 30:12-14.

*Rom 10:11 Isa 28:16 (Greek version).

*Rom 10:12 Greek *and Greek*.

*Rom 10:13 Joel 2:32.

*Rom 10:15 Isa 52:7.

*Rom 10:16 Isa 53:1.

*Rom 10:18 Ps 19:4.

*Rom 10:19 Deut 32:21.

*Rom 10:20 Isa 65:1 (Greek version).

*Rom 10:21 Isa 65:2 (Greek version).

ROMANS 11:1-36 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 11:3 1 Kgs 19:10, 14.

*Rom 11:4 1 Kgs 19:18.

*Rom 11:5 Greek *for a remnant.*

*Rom 11:8 Isa 29:10; Deut 29:4.

*Rom 11:9-10 Ps 69:22-23 (Greek version).

*Rom 11:21 Some manuscripts read *perhaps he won't.*

*Rom 11:25 Greek *brothers.*

*Rom 11:26a Greek *from Zion.*

*Rom 11:26b Greek *Jacob.*

*Rom 11:26-27 Isa 59:20-21; 27:9 (Greek version).

*Rom 11:31 Other manuscripts read *will now share;* still others read *will someday share.*

*Rom 11:34 Isa 40:13 (Greek version).

*Rom 11:35 See Job 41:11.

ROMANS 12:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 12:1a Greek *brothers.*

*Rom 12:1b Or *This is your spiritual worship;* or *This is your reasonable service.*

*Rom 12:3a Or *Because of the grace;* compare 1:5.

*Rom 12:3b Or *by the faith God has given you;* or *by the standard of our God-given faith.*

*Rom 12:10 Greek *with brotherly love.*

*Rom 12:11 Or *but serve the Lord with a zealous spirit;* or *but let the Spirit excite you as you serve the Lord.*

*Rom 12:19 Deut 32:35.

*Rom 12:20 Prov 25:21-22.

ROMANS 13:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 13:9a Exod 20:13-15, 17.

*Rom 13:9b Lev 19:18.

ROMANS 14:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 14:10 Greek *your brother;* also in 14:10b, 13, 15, 21.

*Rom 14:11 Or *declare praise for God.* Isa 49:18; 45:23 (Greek version).

*Rom 14:21 Some manuscripts read *to stumble or be offended or be weakened.*

*Rom 14:23 Some manuscripts place the text of 16:25-27 here.

ROMANS 15:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 15:3 Greek *who insult you have fallen on me.* Ps 69:9.

*Rom 15:8 Greek *servant of circumcision.*

*Rom 15:9 Ps 18:49.

*Rom 15:10 Deut 32:43.

*Rom 15:11 Ps 117:1.

*Rom 15:12a Greek *The root of Jesse.* David was the son of Jesse.

*Rom 15:12b Isa 11:10 (Greek version).

*Rom 15:14 Greek *brothers;* also in 15:30.

*Rom 15:19a Other manuscripts read *the Spirit;* still others read *the Holy Spirit.*

*Rom 15:19b *Illyricum* was a region northeast of Italy.

*Rom 15:21 Isa 52:15 (Greek version).

*Rom 15:25 Greek *God's holy people;* also in 15:26, 31.

*Rom 15:26 *Macedonia* and *Achaia* were the northern and southern regions of Greece.

*Rom 15:31 Greek *the ministry;* other manuscripts read *the gift.*

*Rom 15:33 Some manuscripts do not include *Amen.* One very early manuscript places 16:25-27 here.

ROMANS 16:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rom 16:7a *Junia* is a feminine name. Some late manuscripts accent the word so it reads *Junias,* a masculine name; still others read *Julia* (feminine).

*Rom 16:7b Or *compatriots;* also in 16:21.

*Rom 16:11 Or *compatriot.*

*Rom 16:14 Greek *brothers;* also in 16:17.

*Rom 16:15 Greek *all of God's holy people.*

*Rom 16:20 Some manuscripts read *Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Rom 16:23 Some manuscripts add verse 24, *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.* Still others add this sentence after verse 27.

*Rom 16:26 Greek *the prophetic writings.*

*Rom 16:25-27 Various manuscripts place the doxology (shown here as 16:25-27) after 14:23 or after 15:33 or after 16:23.

1 Corinthians Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

1 CORINTHIANS 1:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 1:2a *Corinth* was the capital city of Achaia, the southern region of the Greek peninsula.

*1 Cor 1:2b Or *because you belong to Christ Jesus.*

*1 Cor 1:10 Greek *brothers;* also in 1:11, 26.

*1 Cor 1:12 Greek *Cephas.*

*1 Cor 1:19 Isa 29:14.

*1 Cor 1:24 Greek *and Greeks.*

*1 Cor 1:26 Or *high born.*

*1 Cor 1:28 Or *God chose those who are low born.*

*1 Cor 1:31 Jer 9:24.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 2:1a Greek *brothers.*

*1 Cor 2:1b Greek *God's mystery;* other manuscripts read *God's testimony.*

*1 Cor 2:7 Greek *But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery.*

*1 Cor 2:9 Isa 64:4.

*1 Cor 2:10 Some manuscripts read *For.*

*1 Cor 2:13 Or *explaining spiritual truths in spiritual language,* or *explaining spiritual truths to spiritual people.*

*1 Cor 2:14 Or *who don't have the Spirit;* or *who have only physical life.*

*1 Cor 2:16 Isa 40:13 (Greek version).

1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 3:1a Greek *Brothers.*

*1 Cor 3:1b Or *to people who have the Spirit.*

*1 Cor 3:16 Or *among.*

*1 Cor 3:19 Job 5:13.

*1 Cor 3:20 Ps 94:11.

*1 Cor 3:22 Greek *Cephas.*

1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 4:6a Greek *Brothers.*

*1 Cor 4:6b Or *If you learn not to go beyond "what is written."*

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 5:1 Greek *his father's wife.*

*1 Cor 5:3 Or *in spirit.*

*1 Cor 5:4 Or *In the name of the Lord Jesus, you must call a meeting of the church.*

*1 Cor 5:5a Or *so that his body will be destroyed;* Greek reads *for the destruction of the flesh.*

*1 Cor 5:5b Greek *and the spirit.*

*1 Cor 5:5c Other manuscripts read *the Lord Jesus;* still others read *our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*1 Cor 5:7 Greek *has been sacrificed.*

*1 Cor 5:8a Greek *not with old leaven.*

*1 Cor 5:8b Greek *but with unleavened [bread].*

*1 Cor 5:11 Greek *a brother.*

*1 Cor 5:13 Deut 17:7.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 6:1 Greek *God's holy people;* also in 6:2.

*1 Cor 6:6 Greek *one brother.*

*1 Cor 6:8 Greek *even the brothers.*

*1 Cor 6:16 Gen 2:24.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 7:1 Or *to live a celibate life;* Greek reads *It is good for a man*

not to touch a woman.

*1 Cor 7:10 See Matt 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18.

*1 Cor 7:12 Greek *a brother.*

*1 Cor 7:14 Greek *the brother.*

*1 Cor 7:15a Greek *the brother or sister.*

*1 Cor 7:15b Some manuscripts read *us.*

*1 Cor 7:23 Greek *don't become slaves of people.*

*1 Cor 7:24 Greek *brothers;* also in 7:29.

*1 Cor 7:26 Or *the pressures of life.*

*1 Cor 7:39 Greek *but only in the Lord.*

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 8:3 Some manuscripts read *the person who loves has full knowledge.*

*1 Cor 8:11 Greek *brother;* also in 8:13.

*1 Cor 8:12 Greek *brothers.*

1 CORINTHIANS 9:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 9:3 Greek *those who examine me.*

*1 Cor 9:5a Greek *a sister a wife.*

*1 Cor 9:5b Greek *Cephas.*

*1 Cor 9:9 Deut 25:4.

*1 Cor 9:21 Greek *those without the law.*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 10:1 Greek *brothers.*

*1 Cor 10:7 Exod 32:6.

*1 Cor 10:9 Some manuscripts read *the Lord.*

*1 Cor 10:23 Greek *All things are lawful;* also in 10:23b.

*1 Cor 10:26 Ps 24:1.

*1 Cor 10:32 Greek *or Greeks.*

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1-34 NLT TEXT NOTES

In print editions of the NLT, 11:1 is set as the last sentence of the final paragraph in chapter 10.*1 Cor 11:1 In print editions of the NLT, 11:1 is set as the last sentence of the final paragraph in chapter 10.

*1 Cor 11:3 Or *to know: The source of every man is Christ, the source of woman is man, and the source of Christ is God.* Or *to know: Every man is responsible to Christ, a woman is responsible to her husband, and Christ is responsible to God.*

*1 Cor 11:4 Or *dishonors Christ.*

*1 Cor 11:5 Or *dishonors her husband.*

*1 Cor 11:6 Or *should have long hair.*

*1 Cor 11:10 Greek *should have an authority on her head.*

*1 Cor 11:24 Greek *which is for you;* other manuscripts read *which is broken for you.*

*1 Cor 11:27 Or *is responsible for.*

*1 Cor 11:29 Greek *the body;* other manuscripts read *the Lord's body.*

*1 Cor 11:33 Greek *brothers.*

1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 12:1 Greek *brothers.*

*1 Cor 12:8a Or *gives a word of wisdom.*

*1 Cor 12:8b Or *gives a word of knowledge.*

*1 Cor 12:10 Or *in various tongues;* also in 12:28, 30.

*1 Cor 12:13a Greek *some are Greeks.*

*1 Cor 12:13b Greek *we were all given one Spirit to drink.*

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 13:3 Some manuscripts read *sacrificed my body to be burned.*

*1 Cor 13:8 Or *in tongues.*

*1 Cor 13:12 Greek *see face to face.*

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 14:2a Or *in unknown languages;* also in 14:4, 5, 13, 14, 18, 22, 26, 27, 28, 39.

*1 Cor 14:2b Or *speaking in your spirit.*

*1 Cor 14:6a Greek *brothers;* also in 14:20, 26, 39.

*1 Cor 14:6b Or *in tongues;* also in 14:19, 23.

*1 Cor 14:15 Or *in the Spirit;* also in 14:15b, 16.

*1 Cor 14:21a Greek *in the law.*

*1 Cor 14:21b Isa 28:11-12.

*1 Cor 14:33 The phrase *as in all the meetings of God's holy people* could instead be joined to the beginning of 14:34.

*1 Cor 14:35 Some manuscripts place verses 34-35 after 14:40.

*1 Cor 14:38 Some manuscripts read *If you are ignorant of this, stay in your ignorance.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-58 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 15:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 15:31, 50, 58.

*1 Cor 15:2 Or *unless you never believed it in the first place.*

*1 Cor 15:5 Greek *Cephas.*

*1 Cor 15:6 Greek *the brothers.*

*1 Cor 15:27 Ps 8:6.

*1 Cor 15:32a Greek *fighting wild beasts in Ephesus.*

*1 Cor 15:32b Isa 22:13.

*1 Cor 15:45 Gen 2:7.

*1 Cor 15:49 Some manuscripts read *let us be like.*

*1 Cor 15:54a Some manuscripts add *and our mortal bodies have been transformed into immortal bodies.*

*1 Cor 15:54b Isa 25:8.

*1 Cor 15:55 Hos 13:14 (Greek version).

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Cor 16:5 *Macedonia* was in the northern region of Greece.

*1 Cor 16:11 Greek *with the brothers;* also in 16:12.

*1 Cor 16:13 Greek *Be men.*

*1 Cor 16:15a Greek *in Achaia,* the southern region of the Greek peninsula.

*1 Cor 16:15b Greek *brothers;* also in 16:20.

*1 Cor 16:19a *Asia* was a Roman province in what is now western Turkey.

*1 Cor 16:19b Greek *Prisca.*

*1 Cor 16:22 From Aramaic, *Marana tha.* Some manuscripts read *Maran atha,* "Our Lord has come."

*1 Cor 16:24 Some manuscripts add *Amen.*

2 Corinthians Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 1:1 Greek *Achaia,* the southern region of the Greek peninsula.

*2 Cor 1:8 Greek *brothers.*

*2 Cor 1:12 Some manuscripts read *honesty.*

*2 Cor 1:14 Some manuscripts read *our Lord Jesus.*

*2 Cor 1:16 *Macedonia* was in the northern region of Greece.

*2 Cor 1:19 Greek *Silvanus.*

2 CORINTHIANS 2:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 2:17 Some manuscripts read *the rest of the hucksters.*

2 CORINTHIANS 3:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 3:2 Some manuscripts read *your*.

*2 Cor 3:7 Or *ministry;* also in 3:8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 4:1 Or *ministry*.

*2 Cor 4:7 Greek *We now have this treasure in clay jars.*

*2 Cor 4:13 Ps 116:10.

*2 Cor 4:14 Some manuscripts read *who raised Jesus.*

*2 Cor 4:16 Greek *our inner being is.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 5:3 Greek *we will not be naked.*

*2 Cor 5:12 Some manuscripts read *proud of yourselves.*

*2 Cor 5:14a Or *urges us on.*

*2 Cor 5:14b Greek *Since one died for all, then all died.*

*2 Cor 5:21 Or *to become sin itself.*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 6:1 Or *As we work together.*

*2 Cor 6:2 Isa 49:8 (Greek version).

*2 Cor 6:6 Or *by our holiness of spirit.*

*2 Cor 6:15 Greek *Beliar;* various other manuscripts render this proper name of the devil as *Belian, Beliab,* or *Belial.*

*2 Cor 6:16 Lev 26:12; Ezek 37:27.

*2 Cor 6:17 Isa 52:11; Ezek 20:34 (Greek version).

*2 Cor 6:18 2 Sam 7:14.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 7:13 Greek *his spirit.*

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 8:1 Greek *brothers.*

*2 Cor 8:4 Greek *for God's holy people.*

*2 Cor 8:7 Some manuscripts read *your love for us.*

*2 Cor 8:15 Exod 16:18.

*2 Cor 8:19 See 1 Cor 16:3-4.

*2 Cor 8:23 Greek *are apostles of the churches.*

2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 9:1 Greek *about the offering for God's holy people.*

*2 Cor 9:2 Greek *in Achaia,* the southern region of the Greek peninsula. *Macedonia* was in the northern region of Greece.

*2 Cor 9:7 See footnote on Prov 22:8.

*2 Cor 9:9 Ps 112:9.

*2 Cor 9:10 Greek *righteousness.*

*2 Cor 9:12 Greek *of God's holy people.*

*2 Cor 9:15 Greek *his gift.*

2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 10:4 English translations divide verses 4 and 5 in various ways.

*2 Cor 10:7 Or *You look at things only on the basis of appearance.*

*2 Cor 10:17 Jer 9:24.

2 CORINTHIANS 11:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 11:2 Greek *a virgin.*

*2 Cor 11:10 Greek *Achaia,* the southern region of the Greek peninsula.

*2 Cor 11:26 Greek *from false brothers.*

2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 12:2 Greek *I know a man in Christ who.*

*2 Cor 12:3-4 Greek *But I know such a man,* 4*that he was caught up.*

2 CORINTHIANS 13:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Cor 13:1 Deut 19:15.

*2 Cor 13:5 Or *in you.*

*2 Cor 13:11 Greek *Brothers.*

*2 Cor 13:14 Some English translations include verse 13 as part of verse 12, and then verse 14 becomes verse 13.

Galatians Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6

GALATIANS 1:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gal 1:2 Greek *brothers;* also in 1:11.

*Gal 1:3 Some manuscripts read *God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Gal 1:6 Some manuscripts read *through loving mercy.*

*Gal 1:12 Or *by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

*Gal 1:16a Or *in me.*

*Gal 1:16b Greek *with flesh and blood.*

*Gal 1:18 Greek *Cephas.*

GALATIANS 2:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gal 2:3 Greek *a Greek.*

*Gal 2:4 Greek *some false brothers.*

*Gal 2:9 Greek *Cephas;* also in 2:11, 14.

*Gal 2:16 Some translators hold that the quotation extends through verse 14; others through verse 16; and still others through verse 21.

*Gal 2:20 Some English translations put this sentence in verse 19.

GALATIANS 3:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gal 3:4 Or *Have you suffered.*

*Gal 3:6 Gen 15:6.

*Gal 3:8 Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18.

*Gal 3:10 Deut 27:26.

*Gal 3:11 Hab 2:4.

*Gal 3:12 Lev 18:5.

*Gal 3:13 Deut 21:23 (Greek version).

*Gal 3:14 Some manuscripts read *the blessing of the.*

*Gal 3:15 Greek *Brothers.*

*Gal 3:16a Greek *seed;* also in 3:16c, 19. See notes on Gen 12:7 and 13:15.

*Gal 3:16b Greek *seeds.*

*Gal 3:21 Some manuscripts read *and the promises?*

*Gal 3:26 Greek *sons.*

*Gal 3:27 Greek *have put on Christ.*

*Gal 3:28 Greek *Jew or Greek.*

*Gal 3:29 Greek *seed.*

GALATIANS 4:1-31 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gal 4:3 Or *powers;* also in 4:9.

*Gal 4:5 Greek *sons;* also in 4:6.

*Gal 4:6a Greek *you.*

*Gal 4:6b *Abba* is an Aramaic term for "father."

*Gal 4:7 Greek *son;* also in 4:7b.

*Gal 4:12 Greek *brothers;* also in 4:28, 31.

*Gal 4:22 See Gen 16:15; 21:2-3.

*Gal 4:25 Greek *And Hagar, which is Mount Sinai in Arabia, is now like Jerusalem;* other manuscripts read *And Mount Sinai in Arabia is now like Jerusalem.*

*Gal 4:27 Isa 54:1.

*Gal 4:30 Gen 21:10.

GALATIANS 5:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gal 5:11 Greek *Brothers;* similarly in 5:13.

*Gal 5:12 Or *castrate themselves,* or *cut themselves off from you;* Greek reads *cut themselves off.*

*Gal 5:14 Lev 19:18.

GALATIANS 6:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Gal 6:1a Greek *Brothers, if a man.*

*Gal 6:1b Greek *spiritual.*

*Gal 6:14 Or *Because of him.*

*Gal 6:16 Greek *this principle, and upon the Israel of God.*

*Gal 6:18 Greek *Brothers.*

Ephesians Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6

EPHESIANS 1:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eph 1:1 The most ancient manuscripts do not include *in Ephesus.*

*Eph 1:6 Greek *to us in the beloved.*

*Eph 1:11 Or *we have become God's inheritance.*

*Eph 1:13 Or *he put his seal on you.*

*Eph 1:15 Some manuscripts read *your faithfulness to the Lord Jesus and to God's people everywhere.*

*Eph 1:17 Or *to give you the Spirit of wisdom.*

*Eph 1:18 Or *called, and the rich and glorious inheritance he has given to his holy people.*

EPHESIANS 2:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eph 2:2 Greek *obeying the commander of the power of the air.*

EPHESIANS 3:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eph 3:1 Paul resumes this thought in verse 14: "When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father."

*Eph 3:6 Or *because they are united with Christ Jesus.*

*Eph 3:9 Some manuscripts do not include *to everyone.*

*Eph 3:12 Or *Because of Christ's faithfulness.*

*Eph 3:14 Some manuscripts read *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Eph 3:15 Or *from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.*

EPHESIANS 4:1-32 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eph 4:7 Greek *a grace.*

*Eph 4:8 Ps 68:18.

*Eph 4:9 Some manuscripts read *to the lower parts of the earth.*

*Eph 4:26 Ps 4:4.

*Eph 4:30 Or *has put his seal on you.*

EPHESIANS 5:1-33 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eph 5:2 Some manuscripts read *loved you.*

*Eph 5:26 Greek *washed by water with the word.*

*Eph 5:31 Gen 2:24.

EPHESIANS 6:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Eph 6:1 Or *Children, obey your parents who belong to the Lord;* some manuscripts read simply *Children, obey your parents.*

*Eph 6:2-3 Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16.

*Eph 6:4 Or *Parents.*

*Eph 6:12 Some manuscripts read *you.*

*Eph 6:15 Or *For shoes, put on the readiness to preach the Good News of peace with God.*

*Eph 6:16 Greek *the evil one.*

*Eph 6:18 Greek *all of God's holy people.*

*Eph 6:19 Greek *explain the mystery of the Good News;* some manuscripts read simply *explain the mystery.*

*Eph 6:23 Greek *brothers.*

Philippians Text Notes 1 2 3 4

PHILIPPIANS 1:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Phil 1:1 Or *overseers;* or *bishops.*

*Phil 1:11 Greek *with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ.*

*Phil 1:12 Greek *brothers.*

*Phil 1:13 Greek *including all the Praetorium.*

*Phil 1:14a Greek *brothers in the Lord.*

*Phil 1:14b Some manuscripts read *speak the message.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-30 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Phil 2:6 Or *Being in the form of God.*

*Phil 2:7a Greek *he emptied himself.*

*Phil 2:7b Or *the form of a slave.*

*Phil 2:7c Some English translations put this phrase in verse 8.

*Phil 2:17 Greek *I will rejoice even if I am to be poured out as a liquid offering.*

*Phil 2:29 Greek *in the Lord.*

PHILIPPIANS 3:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Phil 3:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 3:13, 17.

*Phil 3:3 Some manuscripts read *worship God in spirit;* one early manuscript reads *worship in spirit.*

*Phil 3:9 Or *through the faithfulness of Christ.*

*Phil 3:13 Some manuscripts read *not yet achieved it.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Phil 4:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 4:8.

*Phil 4:3 Or *loyal Syzygus.*

*Phil 4:5 Greek *the Lord is near.*

*Phil 4:13 Greek *through the one.*

*Phil 4:23 Some manuscripts add *Amen.*

Colossians Text Notes 1 2 3 4

COLOSSIANS 1:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Col 1:2 Greek *faithful brothers.*

*Col 1:7 Or *he is ministering on your behalf;* some manuscripts read *he is ministering on our behalf.*

*Col 1:11 Or *all the patience and endurance you need with joy.*

*Col 1:14 Some manuscripts add *with his blood.*

*Col 1:15 Or *He is the firstborn of all creation.*

*Col 1:18 Or *the firstborn from the dead.*

*Col 1:28 Or *mature.*

COLOSSIANS 2:1-23 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Col 2:8 Or *the spiritual principles;* also in 2:20.

*Col 2:9 Or *in him dwells all the completeness of the Godhead bodily.*

*Col 2:11 Greek *the cutting away of the body of the flesh.*

*Col 2:15 Or *he stripped off.*

*Col 2:18 Or *or worshiping with angels.*

COLOSSIANS 3:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Col 3:4 Some manuscripts read *our.*

*Col 3:6 Some manuscripts read *is coming on all who disobey him.*

*Col 3:11a Greek *a Greek.*

*Col 3:11b Greek *Barbarian, Scythian.*

*Col 3:24 Or *and serve Christ as your Master.*

COLOSSIANS 4:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Col 4:6 Greek *and seasoned with salt.*

*Col 4:15 Greek *brothers.*

1 Thessalonians Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Thes 1:1 Greek *Silvanus,* the Greek form of the name.

*1 Thes 1:4 Greek *brothers.*

*1 Thes 1:5 Or *with the power of the Holy Spirit, so you can have full assurance.*

*1 Thes 1:7 *Macedonia* and *Achaia* were the northern and southern regions of Greece.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Thes 2:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 2:9, 14, 17.

*1 Thes 2:7 Some manuscripts read *we were gentle.*

1 THESSALONIANS 3:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Thes 3:2 Other manuscripts read *and God's servant;* still others read *and a co-worker,* or *and a servant and co-worker for God,* or *and God's servant and our co-worker.*

*1 Thes 3:7 Greek *brothers.*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Thes 4:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 4:10, 13.

*1 Thes 4:4 Or *will know how to take a wife for himself;* or *will learn to live with his own wife;* Greek reads *will know how to possess his own vessel.*

*1 Thes 4:6 Greek *Never harm or cheat a brother in this matter.*

*1 Thes 4:9 Greek *about brotherly love.*

*1 Thes 4:10 Greek *the brothers.*

*1 Thes 4:13 Greek *those who have fallen asleep;* also in 4:14.

*1 Thes 4:15 Greek *those who have fallen asleep.*

*1 Thes 4:16 Greek *the dead in Christ.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Thes 5:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 5:4, 12, 14, 25, 26, 27.

*1 Thes 5:4 Some manuscripts read *comes upon you as if you were thieves.*

2 Thessalonians Text Notes

1 2 3

2 THESSALONIANS 1:1-12 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Thes 1:1 Greek *Silvanus,* the Greek form of the name.

*2 Thes 1:2 Some manuscripts read *God the Father.*

*2 Thes 1:3 Greek *Brothers.*

*2 Thes 1:12 Or *of our God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Thes 2:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 2:13, 15.

*2 Thes 2:3a Some manuscripts read *the man of sin.*

*2 Thes 2:3b Greek *the son of destruction.*

*2 Thes 2:13 Some manuscripts read *chose you from the very beginning.*

2 THESSALONIANS 3:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Thes 3:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 3:6, 13.

*2 Thes 3:3 Or *from evil.*

*2 Thes 3:6a Greek *from every brother.*

*2 Thes 3:6b Some manuscripts read *you received.*

*2 Thes 3:15 Greek *as a brother.*

1 Timothy Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6

1 TIMOTHY 1:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Tim 1:4a Greek *in myths and endless genealogies, which cause speculation.*

*1 Tim 1:4b Greek *a stewardship of God in faith.*

*1 Tim 1:10 Or *kidnappers.*

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Tim 2:9 Or *to pray in modest apparel.*

*1 Tim 2:12 Or *teach men or usurp their authority.*

*1 Tim 2:15 Or *will be saved by accepting their role as mothers,* or *will be saved by the birth of the Child.*

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Tim 3:1 Or *an overseer,* or *a bishop;* also in 3:2, 6.

*1 Tim 3:2 Or *must have only one wife,* or *must be married only once;* Greek reads *must be the husband of one wife;* also in 3:12.

*1 Tim 3:3 Greek *must not drink too much wine;* similarly in 3:8.

*1 Tim 3:6 Or *he might fall into the same judgment as the devil.*

*1 Tim 3:11 Or *the women deacons.* The Greek word can be translated *women* or *wives.*

*1 Tim 3:16a Or *of godliness.*

*1 Tim 3:16b Greek *He who;* other manuscripts read *God.*

*1 Tim 3:16c Or *in his spirit.*

1 TIMOTHY 4:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Tim 4:2 Greek *are seared.*

*1 Tim 4:5 Or *made holy.*

*1 Tim 4:6 Greek *brothers.*

*1 Tim 4:10 Some manuscripts read *continue to suffer.*

1 TIMOTHY 5:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Tim 5:1 Or *an elder.*

*1 Tim 5:3 Or *Honor.*

*1 Tim 5:9 Greek *was the wife of one husband.*

*1 Tim 5:10 Greek *and washed the feet of God's holy people?*

*1 Tim 5:17 Greek *should be worthy of double honor.*

*1 Tim 5:18 Deut 25:4; Luke 10:7.

*1 Tim 5:22 Greek *about the laying on of hands.*

1 TIMOTHY 6:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Tim 6:2 Greek *brothers.*

2 Timothy Text Notes

1 2 3 4

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Tim 1:12 Or *what has been entrusted to me.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Tim 2:17 Greek *gangrene.*

*2 Tim 2:19a Num 16:5.

*2 Tim 2:19b See Isa 52:11.

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Tim 3:6 Greek *and take captive.*

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Tim 4:13 Greek *especially the parchments.*

*2 Tim 4:17 Greek *from the mouth of a lion.*

*2 Tim 4:21 Greek *brothers.*

Titus Text Notes

1 2 3

TITUS 1:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Titus 1:1 Or *to strengthen the faith of.*

*Titus 1:6 Or *must have only one wife,* or *must be married only once;* Greek reads *must be the husband of one wife.*

*Titus 1:7a Or *An overseer,* or *A bishop.*

*Titus 1:7b Greek *must not drink too much wine.*

*Titus 1:12 This quotation is from Epimenides of Knossos.

TITUS 2:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Titus 2:3 Greek *be enslaved to much wine.*

*Titus 2:5 Some manuscripts read *to care for their homes.*

TITUS 3:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Titus 3:5 Greek *He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*

*Titus 3:9 Or *spiritual genealogies.*

Philemon Text Notes

1

PHILEMON 1:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Phlm 1:2 Throughout this letter, *you* and *your* are singular except in verses 3, 22, and 25.

*Phlm 1:9 Or *a prisoner of Christ Jesus.*

*Phlm 1:11 *Onesimus* means "useful."

*Phlm 1:20 Greek *onaimen,* a play on the name Onesimus.

Hebrews Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

HEBREWS 1:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 1:5a Or *Today I reveal you as my Son.* Ps 2:7.

*Heb 1:5b 2 Sam 7:14.

*Heb 1:6a Or *firstborn.*

*Heb 1:6b Or *when he again brings his supreme Son* [or *firstborn Son*] *into the world, God will say.*

*Heb 1:6c Deut 32:43.

*Heb 1:7 Ps 104:4 (Greek version).

*Heb 1:8-9 Ps 45:6-7.

*Heb 1:10-12 Ps 102:25-27.

*Heb 1:13 Ps 110:1.

HEBREWS 2:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 2:6 Or *the Son of Man.*

*Heb 2:7 Some manuscripts add *You gave them charge of everything you made.*

*Heb 2:6-8 Ps 8:4-6 (Greek version).

*Heb 2:11 Greek *brothers;* also in 2:12.

*Heb 2:12 Ps 22:22.

*Heb 2:13 Isa 8:17-18.

*Heb 2:14 Or *has.*

*Heb 2:17 Greek *like the brothers.*

HEBREWS 3:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 3:1a Greek *And so, holy brothers who.*

*Heb 3:1b Greek *God's apostle.*

*Heb 3:2 Some manuscripts do not include *entire.*

*Heb 3:6 Some manuscripts add *faithful to the end.*

*Heb 3:7-11 Ps 95:7-11.

*Heb 3:12 Greek *brothers.*

*Heb 3:15 Ps 95:7-8.

HEBREWS 4:1-16 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 4:2 Some manuscripts read *they didn't combine what they heard with faith.*

*Heb 4:3 Ps 95:11.

*Heb 4:4 Gen 2:2.

*Heb 4:5 Ps 95:11.

*Heb 4:7 Ps 95:7-8.

*Heb 4:9 Or *a Sabbath rest.*

HEBREWS 5:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 5:5 Or *Today I reveal you as my Son.* Ps 2:7.

*Heb 5:6 Ps 110:4.

*Heb 5:12 Or *about the oracles of God.*

HEBREWS 6:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 6:1 Greek *from dead works.*

*Heb 6:10 Greek *for God's holy people.*

*Heb 6:14 Gen 22:17.

HEBREWS 7:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 7:5 Greek *from their brothers.*

*Heb 7:11 Greek *the order of Aaron?*

*Heb 7:17 Ps 110:4.

*Heb 7:21 Ps 110:4.

*Heb 7:25 Or *is able to save completely.*

*Heb 7:26 Or *has been exalted higher than the heavens.*

HEBREWS 8:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 8:2 Or *tent;* also in 8:5.

*Heb 8:5 Exod 25:40; 26:30.

*Heb 8:10 Greek *after those days.*

*Heb 8:11 Greek *their brother.*

*Heb 8:8-12 Jer 31:31-34.

HEBREWS 9:1-28 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 9:2 Or *tent;* also in 9:11, 21.

*Heb 9:3 Greek *second tent.*

*Heb 9:6 Greek *first tent.*

*Heb 9:8 Or *the first room;* Greek reads *the first tent.*

*Heb 9:11 Some manuscripts read *that are about to come.*

*Heb 9:14 Greek *from dead works.*

*Heb 9:16a Or *covenant;* also in 9:17.

*Heb 9:16b Or *Now when someone makes a covenant, it is necessary to ratify it with the death of a sacrifice.*

*Heb 9:19 Some manuscripts do not include *and goats.*

*Heb 9:20 Exod 24:8.

*Heb 9:26 Greek *the ages.*

HEBREWS 10:1-39 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 10:5 Greek *he;* also in 10:8.

*Heb 10:5-7 Ps 40:6-8 (Greek version).

*Heb 10:16a Greek *after those days.*

*Heb 10:16b Jer 31:33a.

*Heb 10:17 Jer 31:34b.

*Heb 10:19 Greek *brothers.*

*Heb 10:20 Greek *Through his flesh.*

*Heb 10:30a Deut 32:35.

*Heb 10:30b Deut 32:36.

*Heb 10:32 Greek *when you were first enlightened.*

*Heb 10:38 Or *my righteous ones will live by their faithfulness;* Greek reads *my righteous one will live by faith.*

*Heb 10:37-38 Hab 2:3-4.

HEBREWS 11:1-40 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 11:5 Gen 5:24.

*Heb 11:11 Or *It was by faith that he [Abraham] was able to have a child, even though Sarah was barren and he was too old. He believed.*

*Heb 11:18 Gen 21:12.

*Heb 11:37 Some manuscripts add *some were tested.*

HEBREWS 12:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 12:2a Or *Jesus, the originator and perfecter of our faith.*

*Heb 12:2b Or *Instead of the joy.*

*Heb 12:3 Some manuscripts read *Think of how people hurt themselves by opposing him.*

*Heb 12:5a Greek *sons;* also in 12:7, 8.

*Heb 12:5b Greek *son;* also in 12:6, 7.

*Heb 12:5-6 Prov 3:11-12 (Greek version).

*Heb 12:9 Or *and really live?*

*Heb 12:18 Greek *to something that can be touched.*

*Heb 12:20 Exod 19:13.

*Heb 12:21 Deut 9:19.

*Heb 12:26 Hag 2:6.

HEBREWS 13:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Heb 13:1 Greek *Continue in brotherly love.*

*Heb 13:5 Deut 31:6, 8.

*Heb 13:6 Ps 118:6.

*Heb 13:10 Or *tent.*

*Heb 13:21 Some manuscripts read *in us.*

*Heb 13:22 Greek *brothers.*

*Heb 13:24 Greek *all of God's holy people.*

James Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5

JAMES 1:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jas 1:2 Greek *brothers;* also in 1:16, 19.

*Jas 1:9 Greek *The brother who is.*

*Jas 1:13 Or *God should not be put to a test by evil people.*

*Jas 1:17a Greek *from above, from the Father of lights.*

*Jas 1:17b Some manuscripts read *He never changes, as a shifting shadow does.*

*Jas 1:18 Greek *we became a kind of firstfruit of his creatures.*

*Jas 1:20a Greek *A man's anger.*

*Jas 1:20b Or *the justice.*

JAMES 2:1-26 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jas 2:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 2:5, 14.

*Jas 2:2 Greek *your synagogue.*

*Jas 2:7 Greek *slander the noble name.*

*Jas 2:8 Lev 19:18.

*Jas 2:11 Exod 20:13-14; Deut 5:17-18.

*Jas 2:19 Some manuscripts read *that God is one;* see Deut 6:4.

*Jas 2:23a Gen 15:6.

*Jas 2:23b See Isa 41:8.

*Jas 2:26 Or *without spirit.*

JAMES 3:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jas 3:1 Greek *brothers;* also in 3:10.

*Jas 3:6 Or *for it will burn in hell* (Greek *Gehenna*).

*Jas 3:12 Greek *from salt.*

*Jas 3:18 Or *of good things,* or *of justice.*

JAMES 4:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jas 4:4 Greek *You adulteresses!*

*Jas 4:5 Or *They say that the spirit God has placed within us is filled with envy;* or *They say that the Holy Spirit, whom God has placed within us, opposes our envy.*

*Jas 4:6 Prov 3:34 (Greek version).

*Jas 4:11 Greek *brothers.*

JAMES 5:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jas 5:6a Or *killed the Righteous One.*

*Jas 5:6b Or *Don't they resist you?* or *Doesn't God oppose you?* or *Aren't they now accusing you before God?*

*Jas 5:7 Greek *brothers;* also in 5:9, 10, 12, 19.

1 Peter Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5

1 PETER 1:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Pet 1:1 *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia,* and *Bithynia* were Roman provinces in what is now Turkey.

*1 Pet 1:6 Or *So you are truly glad.*

*1 Pet 1:16 Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7.

*1 Pet 1:22a Greek *must have brotherly love.*

*1 Pet 1:22b Some manuscripts read *with a pure heart.*

*1 Pet 1:24-25 Isa 40:6-8.

1 PETER 2:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Pet 2:5 Greek *holy priesthood.*

*1 Pet 2:6a Greek *in Zion.*

*1 Pet 2:6b Isa 28:16 (Greek version).

*1 Pet 2:7a Or *Yes, for you who believe, there is honor.*

*1 Pet 2:7b Ps 118:22.

*1 Pet 2:8 Isa 8:14.

*1 Pet 2:9 Greek *a royal priesthood.*

*1 Pet 2:10 Hos 1:6, 9; 2:23.

*1 Pet 2:12 Or *on the day of visitation.*

*1 Pet 2:17 Greek *love the brotherhood.*

*1 Pet 2:18 Or *because you fear God;* Greek reads *in all fear.*

*1 Pet 2:21 Some manuscripts read *died.*

*1 Pet 2:22 Isa 53:9.

1 PETER 3:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Pet 3:8 Greek *Show brotherly love.*

*1 Pet 3:10-12 Ps 34:12-16.

*1 Pet 3:16 Some English translations put this sentence in verse 15.

*1 Pet 3:18a Some manuscripts read *died.*

*1 Pet 3:18b Or *in spirit.*

*1 Pet 3:20 Greek *saved through water.*

*1 Pet 3:21 Or *as an appeal to God for.*

1 PETER 4:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Pet 4:1 Or *For the one* [or *One*] *who has suffered physically has*

finished with sin.

*1 Pet 4:6a Greek *preached even to the dead.*

*1 Pet 4:6b Or *so although people had judged them worthy of death.*

*1 Pet 4:6c Or *in spirit.*

*1 Pet 4:14a Or *for the glory of God, which is his Spirit.*

*1 Pet 4:14b Some manuscripts add *On their part he is blasphemed, but on your part he is glorified.*

*1 Pet 4:18 Prov 11:31 (Greek version).

1 PETER 5:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Pet 5:5 Prov 3:34 (Greek version).

*1 Pet 5:9 Greek *your brotherhood.*

*1 Pet 5:12 Greek *Silvanus.*

*1 Pet 5:13 Greek *The elect one in Babylon.* Babylon was probably symbolic for Rome.

2 Peter Text Notes

1 2 3

2 PETER 1:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Pet 1:1a Greek *Simeon.*

*2 Pet 1:1b Or *to you in the righteousness.*

*2 Pet 1:10 Greek *brothers.*

*2 Pet 1:13 Greek *as long as I am in this tent* [or *tabernacle*].

*2 Pet 1:14 Greek *I must soon put off my tent* [or *tabernacle*].

*2 Pet 1:17 Matt 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35.

*2 Pet 1:19 Or *rises.*

*2 Pet 1:20 Or *is a matter of one's own interpretation.*

2 PETER 2:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Pet 2:4a Greek *Tartarus.*

*2 Pet 2:4b Some manuscripts read *in chains of gloom.*

*2 Pet 2:10 Greek *at glorious ones,* which are probably evil angels.

*2 Pet 2:11 Other manuscripts read *to the Lord;* still others do not include this phrase at all.

*2 Pet 2:13 Some manuscripts read *in fellowship meals.*

*2 Pet 2:15 Some manuscripts read *Bosor.*

*2 Pet 2:22 Prov 26:11.

2 PETER 3:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Pet 3:10 Other manuscripts read *will be burned up;* still others read *will be found destroyed.*

1 John Text Notes

1 2 3 4 5

1 JOHN 1:1-10 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Jn 1:1 Greek *What was from the beginning.*

*1 Jn 1:4 Or *so that our joy may be complete;* some manuscripts read *your joy.*

*1 Jn 1:5 Greek *from him.*

1 JOHN 2:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Jn 2:9 Greek *hates his brother;* also in 2:11.

*1 Jn 2:10 Greek *loves his brother.*

*1 Jn 2:12 Greek *through his name.*

*1 Jn 2:13 Or *to you fathers;* also in 2:14.

*1 Jn 2:20 Greek *But you have an anointing from the Holy One.*

*1 Jn 2:22a Or *not the Messiah.*

*1 Jn 2:22b Or *the antichrist.*

*1 Jn 2:27a Greek *the anointing from him.*

*1 Jn 2:27b Greek *the anointing.*

1 JOHN 3:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Jn 3:9 Greek *because his seed.*

*1 Jn 3:10 Greek *does not love his brother.*

*1 Jn 3:13 Greek *brothers.*

*1 Jn 3:14 Greek *the brothers;* similarly in 3:16.

*1 Jn 3:15 Greek *hates his brother.*

*1 Jn 3:17 Greek *sees his brother.*

1 JOHN 4:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Jn 4:2 Greek *If a spirit;* similarly in 4:3.

*1 Jn 4:19 Greek *We love.* Other manuscripts read *We love God;* still others read *We love him.*

*1 Jn 4:20 Greek *hates his brother.*

*1 Jn 4:21 Greek *The one who loves God must also love his brother.*

1 JOHN 5:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*1 Jn 5:1 Or *the Messiah.*

*1 Jn 5:6 Greek *This is he who came by water and blood.*

*1 Jn 5:7 A few very late manuscripts add *in heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And we have three witnesses on earth.*

*1 Jn 5:16 Greek *a brother.*

*1 Jn 5:20 Greek *the one who is true.*

*1 Jn 5:21 Greek *keep yourselves from idols.*

2 John Text Notes

1

2 JOHN 1:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*2 Jn 1:1a Greek *From the elder.*

*2 Jn 1:1b Or *the church God has chosen and its members.*

*2 Jn 1:5 Greek *I urge you, lady.*

*2 Jn 1:7 Or *will come.*

*2 Jn 1:8 Some manuscripts read *you.*

*2 Jn 1:13 Or *from the members of your sister church.*

3 John Text Notes

1

3 JOHN 1:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*3 Jn 1:1-15 Greek *From the elder.*

*3 Jn 1:3 Greek *the brothers;* also in verses 5 and 10.

*3 Jn 1:7a Greek *They went out on behalf of the Name.*

*3 Jn 1:7b Greek *from Gentiles.*

*3 Jn 1:11 Greek *they have not seen God.*

*3 Jn 1:15 Some English translations combine verses 14 and 15 into verse 14.

Jude Text Notes 1

JUDE 1:1-25 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Jude 1:1-25 Or *keeps you for Jesus Christ.*

*Jude 1:5 Other manuscripts read *[the] Lord,* or *God,* or *God Christ.*

*Jude 1:8 Greek *at glorious ones,* which are probably evil angels.

*Jude 1:9 Greek *Michael, the archangel.*

*Jude 1:12 Or *they are contaminants among you;* or *they are stains.*

*Jude 1:14-15 The quotation comes from intertestamental literature: Enoch 1:9.

*Jude 1:20 Greek *pray in the Holy Spirit.*

*Jude 1:22 Some manuscripts read *must reprove.*

*Jude 1:22-23a Some manuscripts have only two categories of people: (1) those whose faith is wavering and therefore need to be snatched from the flames of judgment, and (2) those who need to be shown mercy.

*Jude 1:23b Greek *with fear, hating even the clothing stained by the flesh.*

Revelation Text Notes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

REVELATION 1:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 1:1a Or *of.*

*Rev 1:1b Or *suddenly,* or *quickly.*

*Rev 1:4a *Asia* was a Roman province in what is now western Turkey.

*Rev 1:4b Greek *the seven spirits.*

*Rev 1:8 Greek *I am the Alpha and the Omega,* referring to the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

*Rev 1:10 Or *in spirit.*

*Rev 1:11 Or *on a scroll.*

*Rev 1:13 Or *like a son of man.* See Dan 7:13. “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Rev 1:18 Greek *and Hades.*

*Rev 1:19 Or *what you have seen and what they mean—the things that have already begun to happen.*

*Rev 1:20 Or *the messengers.*

REVELATION 2:1-29 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 2:1 Or *the messenger;* also in 2:8, 12, 18.

*Rev 2:4 Greek *You have lost your first love.*

*Rev 2:22 Greek *a bed.*

*Rev 2:26-27 Ps 2:8-9 (Greek version).

REVELATION 3:1-22 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 3:1a Or *the messenger;* also in 3:7, 14.

*Rev 3:1b Greek *the seven spirits.*

*Rev 3:7 Isa 22:22.

*Rev 3:11 Or *suddenly*, or *quickly.*

*Rev 3:14 Or *the ruler,* or *the source.*

REVELATION 4:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 4:2 Or *in spirit.*

*Rev 4:5 Greek *They are the seven spirits.*

REVELATION 5:1-14 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 5:1 Or *book;* also in 5:2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9.

*Rev 5:5 Greek *the root of David.* See Isa 11:10.

*Rev 5:6 Greek *which are the seven spirits.*

*Rev 5:10 Some manuscripts read *they are reigning.*

REVELATION 6:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 6:1 Or *book.*

*Rev 6:6a Greek *A choinix* [1 quart or 1 liter] *of wheat for a denarius, and 3 choinix of barley for a denarius.* A denarius was equivalent to a laborer's full day's wage.

*Rev 6:6b Or *harm.*

*Rev 6:8a Greek *was Hades.*

*Rev 6:8b Greek *death.*

*Rev 6:11 Greek *their brothers.*

REVELATION 7:1-17 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 7:14a Greek *who came out of.*

*Rev 7:14b Or *the great suffering.*

*Rev 7:17 Greek *on the center of the throne.*

REVELATION 8:1-13 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 8:1 Or *book.*

*Rev 8:11 Greek *Wormwood.*

REVELATION 9:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 9:1 Or *the abyss,* or *the underworld;* also in 9:11.

REVELATION 10:1-11 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 10:2 Or *book;* also in 10:8, 9, 10.

*Rev 10:4 Greek *Seal up.*

REVELATION 11:1-19 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 11:7 Or *the abyss,* or *the underworld.*

*Rev 11:8 Greek *the great city.*

*Rev 11:15 Or *his Messiah.*

REVELATION 12:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 12:10a Or *his Messiah.*

*Rev 12:10b Greek *brothers.*

*Rev 12:14 Greek *the serpent;* also in 12:15. See 12:9.

*Rev 12:18 Greek *Then he took his stand;* some manuscripts read *Then I took my stand*. Some translations put this entire sentence into 13:1.

REVELATION 13:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 13:6 Some manuscripts read *and his dwelling and all who dwell in heaven.*

*Rev 13:8 Or *not written in the Book of Life before the world was made—the Book that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered.*

*Rev 13:18a Or *of humanity*.

*Rev 13:18b Some manuscripts read *616*.

REVELATION 14:1-20 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 14:4a Greek *They are virgins who have not defiled themselves with women.*

*Rev 14:4b Greek *as firstfruits.*

*Rev 14:14 Or *like a son of man.* See Dan 7:13. "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

*Rev 14:20 Greek *1,600 stadia* [300 kilometers].

REVELATION 15:1-8 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 15:3 Some manuscripts read *King of the ages.*

*Rev 15:6 Other manuscripts read *white stone;* still others read *white [garments] made of linen.*

REVELATION 16:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 16:7 Greek *I heard the altar.*

*Rev 16:10 Greek *gnawed their tongues.*

*Rev 16:13 Greek *unclean.*

*Rev 16:16 Or *Harmagedon.*

*Rev 16:21 Greek *1 talent* [34 kilograms].

REVELATION 17:1-18 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 17:3 Or *in spirit.*

*Rev 17:8 Or *the abyss,* or *the underworld.*

REVELATION 18:1-24 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 18:2a Greek *unclean;* also in each of the two following phrases.

*Rev 18:2b Some manuscripts condense the last two lines to read *a hideout for every foul [unclean] and dreadful vulture.*

*Rev 18:3 Some manuscripts read *have drunk.*

*Rev 18:6a Or *Give her an equal penalty.*

*Rev 18:6b Or *brew just as much.*

*Rev 18:24 Greek *her.*

REVELATION 19:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 19:1 Greek *Hallelujah;* also in 19:3, 4, 6. *Hallelujah* is the transliteration of a Hebrew term that means "Praise the LORD."

*Rev 19:6 Some manuscripts read *the Lord God.*

*Rev 19:10a Greek *brothers.*

*Rev 19:10b Or *is the message confirmed by Jesus.*

*Rev 19:16 Or *On his robe and thigh.*

REVELATION 20:1-15 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 20:1 Or *the abyss,* or *the underworld;* also in 20:3.

*Rev 20:13 Greek *and Hades;* also in 20:14.

REVELATION 21:1-27 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 21:3 Some manuscripts read *God himself will be with them, their God.*

*Rev 21:10 Or *in spirit.*

*Rev 21:16 Greek *12,000 stadia* [2,220 kilometers].

*Rev 21:17 Greek *144 cubits* [65 meters].

*Rev 21:19 The identification of some of these gemstones is uncertain.

*Rev 21:27 Or *ceremonially unclean.*

REVELATION 22:1-21 NLT TEXT NOTES

*Rev 22:2 Or *twelve kinds of fruit.*

*Rev 22:6a Or *The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets.*

*Rev 22:6b Or *suddenly*, or *quickly;* also in 22:7, 12, 20.

*Rev 22:7 Or *scroll*; also in 22:9, 10, 18, 19.

*Rev 22:16 Greek *I am the root and offspring of David.*

*Rev 22:21 Other manuscripts read *be with all;* still others read *be with all of God's holy people.* Some manuscripts add *Amen.*

ITINERARY

THE BEGINNING

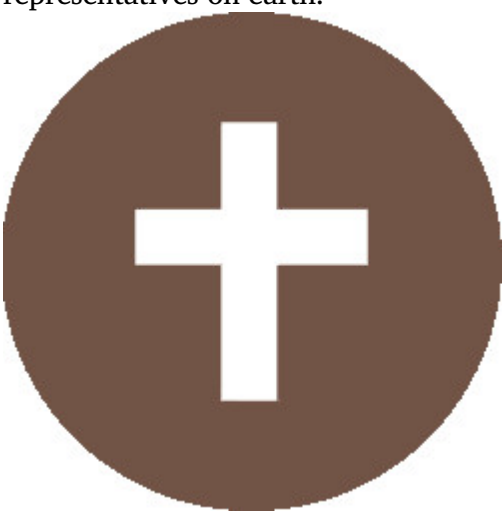
God's story has no beginning or end, but our part in it begins when he creates the heavens and the earth. God has big plans for his creation. He creates humans in his own image, giving them both dominion over all creation and also the privilege of being in intimate relationship with him. The first humans enjoy direct fellowship and conversation with God until they choose to violate God's only commandment. The communion they had with their Creator is gone, and evil permeates God's creation. Things are no longer the way they are supposed to be. God punishes humanity, but he doesn't destroy them. In fact, he already has a plan to restore the relationship he intended to have with them.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

We get glimpses of God's plan even in the earliest stories of the Bible. When creation becomes consumed with sin, God cleanses the world with a flood, sparing the righteous Noah and his family. When it is all over, God sends a rainbow as a sign of his promise to never again send such a catastrophe.

God eventually selects one man, Abraham, through whom he will restore his close relationship with humanity. God promises to bless Abraham and his family by making them his chosen people. They will represent God to the world and demonstrate his desire to reunite with all humanity.

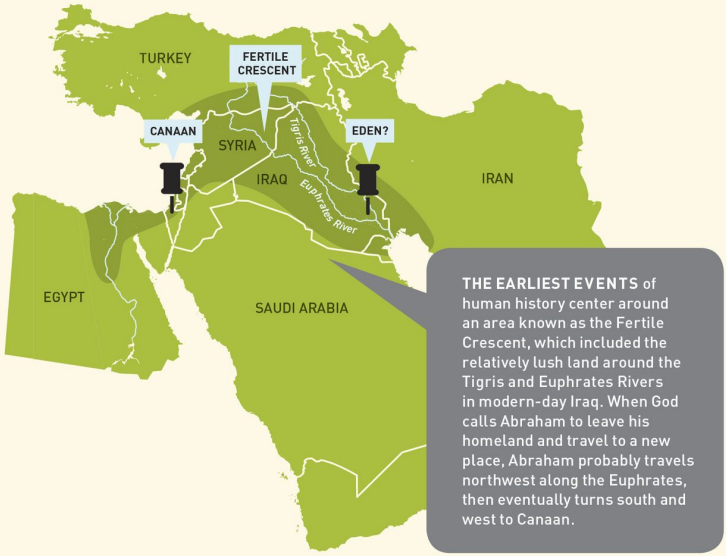
Abraham and his family are far from perfect. In fact, Genesis records the many failures of God's chosen people right alongside the stories of their faithfulness. God is at work in this family, transforming them into the kind of people he wants as his representatives on earth.

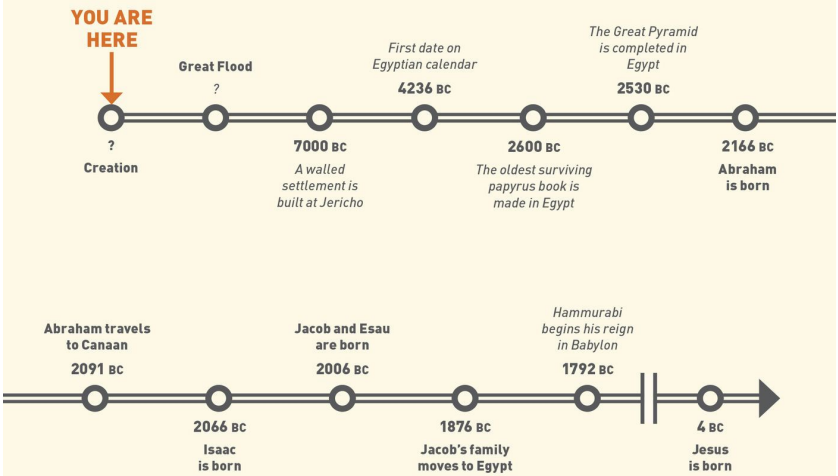


JESUS AS TRUE NORTH

Although thousands of years will pass before Jesus Christ comes to earth as a baby, he is present with God even before creation. Christ "existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth" (Colossians 1:15-16). Everything in the Old Testament points the way to Jesus. He embodies God's ultimate plan for restoring fellowship with his people and for renewing his creation.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?


TURKEY
FERTILE CRESCENT
CANAAN
SYRIA
EDEN?
IRAQ
Tigris River
Euphrates River
IRAN
EGYPT
SAUDI ARABIA
THE EARLIEST EVENTS of human history center around an area known as the Fertile Crescent, which included the relatively lush land around the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in modern-day Iraq. When God calls Abraham to leave his homeland and travel to a new place, Abraham probably travels northwest along the Euphrates, then eventually turns south and west to Canaan.


YOU ARE HERE
? Creation
Great Flood ?
7000 BC A walled settlement is built at Jericho
First date on Egyptian calendar 4236 BC
2600 BC The oldest surviving papyrus book is made in Egypt
The Great Pyramid is completed in Egypt 2530 BC
2166 BC Abraham is born
Abraham travels to Canaan 2091 BC
2066 BC Isaac is born
Jacob and Esau are born 2006 BC
1876 BC Jacob's family moves to Egypt
Hammurabi begins his reign in Babylon 1792 BC
4 BC Jesus is born

NEXT STOP

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION
THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE BEGINNING

THE BEGINNING

THE BEGINNING

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

Before the beginning there is only God. The story of Creation is a story about God, what he does and how he interacts with his creation. By God's hand, everything comes into existence out of nothing. He builds it all with grandeur, makes each creature with attention and care, and calls everything good. The Creation story shows us how much God loves all that he has made. This is the beginning of the big story—God's story told in the Bible.

GEN 1:1–2:25

OBSERVATION POINT

The first two chapters of Genesis provide the only record we have of a perfect world. This is what perfection looks like. God wanted this world for all of us. Notice the activities that existed before sin invaded. Contrary to what most people believe, work was part of the good creation: God created, blessed, and planted; man tended the garden, watched over it, and named the animals. Man and woman were to be fruitful, multiply, govern the earth, and reign over the animals. God rested, man slept. These were all perfect activities.

EXPLORATION POINT

The climax of God's creation was the formation of humans. Male and female were made in his image. You are like him. Out of all of Creation, you carry his image, breathed into you by his breath of life. No other part of Creation can claim to have his image or his breath. You are infused with his likeness through your moral conscience and spiritual awareness. When you are feeling beaten down and questioning yourself, these truths can be of great encouragement!

NEXT STOP

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

Adam and Eve are free to roam, to enjoy the garden and the animals, and to walk and talk with God. They live with only one restriction—to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But they choose to defy God and eat the tree's fruit. Then sin enters the world; it divides everything and uncertainty reigns. Adam and Eve are separated from God, but God continues to love them. Even though sin enters the world, changing everything, God's big story continues.

READ:

GEN 3:1-24

OBSERVATION POINT

God settled Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden with a wide variety of fruit-producing trees to satisfy their hunger. He also created two special trees that grew in the middle of the Garden: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. God clearly told Adam not to eat the fruit of the first tree, but he didn't restrict the second. Adam and Eve had the opportunity to eat from the tree of life, but the Bible never says that they did. The serpent pointed out God's one restriction, causing Eve to doubt God and then disobey him.

EXPLORATION POINT

The story of how sin came into the world is known as the Fall. It answers the question, “Why is there evil in the world?” Although Eve disobeyed God’s command first by eating the fruit and Adam followed her, Adam is the one who represents all humanity separated from God. Adam’s disobedience and sin separate everyone from God, but Christ’s righteousness and sacrifice reunite us with him. Humanity suffers under God’s indictment and conviction because of Adam’s actions; however, God graciously offers humanity a way of salvation through Jesus Christ (the second Adam).

NEXT STOP

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

CAIN AND ABEL

CAIN AND ABEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

CAIN AND ABEL

In the wake of the Fall, Adam and Eve's family begins. In sixteen verses we cover the events that transpire over several years—the concise history of a generation. No lovely recollection of the pregnancies and birth experiences, no talk about first steps, first smiles, or first words. It's a summary that penetrates to the heart of the story: sin's horrible consequences of anger, jealousy, murder, and death.

READ:

GEN 4:1-26

OBSERVATION POINT

Cain and Abel had occupations: One was a farmer, the other a shepherd. The brothers performed a formal religious ceremony of presenting gifts to the Lord at harvest time. Both brought appropriate gifts, but God rejected Cain's gift—not because it was grain rather than a lamb, but because Cain's attitude was all wrong. Cain didn't give generously or willingly. He brought "some" rather than "the best." He worshiped out of obligation, not with a thankful heart.

EXPLORATION POINT

Cain had a choice: to resist sin and do the right thing or to give in and let it overtake him. Like his parents, he gave in to it. God's warning to Cain is for us too: "Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you." We have a choice: to resist sin and master it, or to give in and let it master us. We don't have to do this by ourselves, by our own strength, or with our own willpower. The power of God through the Holy Spirit helps us stand firm and resist sin.

NEXT STOP

A WORLD GONE WRONG

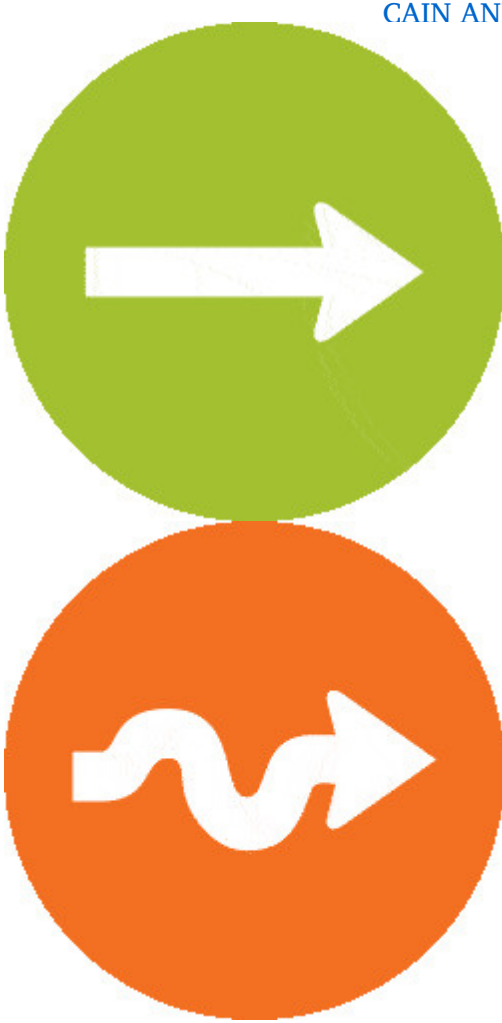
A WORLD GONE WRONG

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

CAIN AND ABEL

CAIN AND ABEL



A WORLD GONE WRONG

Over time, people multiply and fill the earth. Sinful thoughts and actions multiply with them. Everything is cursed by the first sin of Adam and Eve, and God regrets what has become of his beautiful plan for his creation. His heart aches as he looks out on the mess

the world has become, so he decides to destroy it all and start again. In the middle of sin's ugliness, a glimmer of hope remains—one righteous man named Noah.

GEN 6:1-22

5 OF 285

OBSERVATION POINT

The boat God instructed Noah to build was no beauty; it had no rudder, no sails, no means of navigation. It was built only to float and to protect its precious cargo as long as the floodwaters raged below. God provided the instructions, and Noah started building. For the next 120 years, hundreds of miles from a sea or an ocean, Noah constructed his boat on dry ground. Upon completing it, Noah filled the boat with pairs of every living creature, with food, and with his family.

EXPLORATION POINT

Noah “walked in close fellowship with God.” This explains why he silently and respectfully obeyed God’s outrageous instructions. Noah did not rail against God’s destructive plan for the world; he did not argue or reason with him. Instead, Noah listened carefully and followed God’s instructions perfectly. He remained steadfast and focused on his mission in spite of the probable doubts of his wife, skepticism of his sons, and ridicule of his neighbors. Through Noah’s trust and obedience, God saved the world from annihilation.

NEXT STOP

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE MAN AND WOMAN SIN

A WORLD GONE WRONG

A WORLD GONE WRONG

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

The sin of Adam and Eve has spread to all their offspring, and their sin has become a curse to all creation. Everywhere people dream of more and more sin. But God does not give up. God will not allow sin to have the victory in his big story. Instead, in his love he sends a flood to cleanse the world, and he begins again with Noah and his family. He waits until Noah finishes building the boat and everything is ready. Then the rain pours down and the underground waters gush up out of every crevice. Soon everything is submerged.

GEN 7:1–8:22

OBSERVATION POINT

To find out if any dry ground was available, Noah had to send something out of the ark. He first selected the raven, a large, black scavenger that could survive in the harsh post-flood conditions since it ate decaying corpses. The raven's release didn't tell Noah much about the water levels, since it could find places to rest even if the water was still high. Releasing the dove would provide more useful information since this bird refused to rest on floating debris or a corpse. On its second flight, the dove returned with an olive branch, so Noah knew that the olive trees, which grew in the lower plains, were sprouting again.

EXPLORATION POINT

We've all seen flooding; if not firsthand, we've seen it on video clips —spring floods of the Mississippi River, hurricanes on southern coastlines, and tsunamis in Japan. We've also seen post-flood devastation—bloated bodies, mucky debris, broken trees, and colorless vegetation. There's nothing pretty "after the flood." Starting over is difficult. But God's presence and his promise strengthened Noah to persevere; he will strengthen us too during difficult times.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAM
GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT WITH NOAH

GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT WITH NOAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT WITH NOAH

The rains last for forty days, but the floodwaters take much longer to recede. After being cooped up with hundreds of animals for a year, Noah opens the door of the boat and allows the animals to run free. His first priority is to give thanks to God.

READ:

GEN 9:1-17

OBSERVATION POINT

Although this is the first mention of a rainbow in the Bible, it does not necessarily mean this was the first occurrence of this weather phenomenon. After the Flood, the rainbow took on a new significance. It now symbolizes the covenant promise God made to the earth to never again destroy the world with a flood.

EXPLORATION POINT

God made a solemn promise to Noah and all of creation called a covenant. In a covenant, two parties agree to specific conditions and consequences. God initiated covenants with his people to

secure peace, harmony, and blessing for them. He made promises in each covenant he established with humans—through Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Jeremiah. Throughout the story of the Bible, he kept all his promises. God was faithful. But fulfilling some of his promises took a long time.

NEXT STOP

THE CALL OF ABRAM

THE TOWER OF BABEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT WITH NOAH

THE TOWER OF BABEL

After the Flood, Noah and his family settle on dry land to begin life again. The animals leave the ark and scatter across the plains. Shem, Ham and Japheth have large families, fulfilling God's mandate: "Be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth" (9:7). People soon populate the region where Noah's boat landed. Eventually, they migrate east and settle down. That's when the trouble begins.

READ: 11:1-9

OBSERVATION POINT

Babel sounds like a Hebrew word meaning "confused." It can also be translated as Babylon. Babel was the site of one of the earliest attempts humans made to exalt themselves and rebel against God as their divine ruler and authority. The city was probably built from mud bricks and tar because stones were scarce in Mesopotamia.

EXPLORATION POINT

Humans were growing pompous and sure of themselves. Working together, they believed that they could exceed the power of God and live sufficiently without him. In response, God scattered the people across the face of the earth, finally fulfilling Genesis 1:28. Today natural disasters remind us of our weaknesses—cities and suburbs are ripped apart by tornadoes, spring floods threaten towns, and earthquakes rattle nations. Our proud accomplishments can be wiped out in minutes.

NEXT STOP

THE CALL OF ABRAM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD CONFIRMS HIS COVENANT WITH NOAH

THE TOWER OF BABEL

THE CALL OF ABRAM

After God confuses their language at Babel, the peoples of the world scatter north, south, east, and west, establishing great nations throughout the ancient world. They migrate to Asia Minor and Europe, Africa and Arabia, Mesopotamia and as far north as the

Caucasus Mountains. Nine generations of people are born, live, and die before God once again intersects with humans. This time, he appears to one special but very old man living in Mesopotamia—a man named Abram. God makes a promise to him, and Abram accepts.

GEN 11:27–12:9

OBSERVATION POINT

Oak trees were well-known in biblical lands. The mighty Tabor oak was located in the lower valleys of Canaan. Oak forests once stood in the valleys but were cleared in ancient times; however, stands of trees or even individual oaks remain to this day. The Canaanites regarded the oak tree as a sacred symbol of strength and worshiped their pagan gods there. Abram built an altar at the oak of Moreh, turning a sacred place of the Canaanites into a place to worship the one true God of all creation.

EXPLORATION POINT

Throughout the Bible, God often chose unlikely people to do his work. In this story God selected a childless old man and his wife, promising to make them the parents of a great nation. This sounded crazy and impossible. For God, it was strategic. God wanted to make it clear that his divine power was at work in and through those he chose. Not one of us is disqualified from—or really qualified for—God's call. It is God's power that uses all kinds of people to further his Kingdom.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAM

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE CALL OF ABRAM

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

God blesses Abram, and he grows wealthy. A famine in Canaan forces Abram and his clan to go to Egypt, but they cause trouble for Pharaoh and are escorted out of the country. Returning north with their herds and flocks, Abram and Lot decide it is time to go their separate ways.

READ:

GEN 13:1-18

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OBSERVATION POINT

Lot chose a fertile plain south of the Dead Sea. This area contained four major cities: Admah, Gomorrah, Sodom, and Zeboiim. They were densely populated, walled cities, established years earlier because the fertile soil produced a good harvest and water was available nearby. The cities stood along a trade route and near shrines and sanctuaries where the people could worship their gods. Today this area is desolate.

EXPLORATION POINT

Abram was doing more than just being a good uncle by allowing his nephew Lot to claim his land first. Abram was living by faith. Abram trusted that God would provide the very best for him and his family, no matter which section of land he ended up with. We will always have choices to make in life; sometimes a good choice is obvious, sometimes not. No matter what choice we make, God can turn the good or not-so-good decisions into a blessing.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE FLOOD COVERS THE EARTH

THE CALL OF ABRAM

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

THE LORD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAM

God's flood did not wash away sin completely. Sin spreads until people once again live in open defiance of God. Still, God loves his world and wants to reconnect with it. So he finds a new man, Abram, and makes a covenant with him. He promises to bless Abram, and through him, God will bless the whole world. Abram believes and obeys God; as a result his whole life changes. But as God's big story continues, Abram grows anxious that he has no son to inherit God's blessings. Then one day Abram has a vision from the Lord.

READ: GEN 15:1-21

GEN 15:1-21

OBSERVATION POINT

Cutting animals in half was a cultural custom of this time and region. It signified a sacred agreement—or covenant—between two parties. Together, both parties divided an animal in half and then walked between the two pieces, sealing the agreement. The act symbolized that a person would die like the animal if he broke the covenant. God used that custom and ritual but expanded it to include a goat, a ram, and two birds. He elevated it to a sacred level.

EXPLORATION POINT

God made covenants with Adam and Eve, with Noah, with Abram, and with others in order to reveal himself to humans and restore the relationship he had with his creation at the beginning. This restoration is God's ongoing plan. Throughout the Old Testament, God made covenants with his people. God's son, Jesus, is the ultimate revelation of God to humans. Jesus inaugurated the New Covenant between God and his people. God connected with Adam, Noah, and Abram by using common cultural signs and rituals that they could relate to. God later connected to all humanity by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to earth as a human like us.

NEXT STOP

A SON IS PROMISED TO SARAH

THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL

THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAM

THE LORD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAM

THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL

God had promised Abram that he would have descendants, and they would inherit all his blessings. But that was years ago, and Sarai is still not pregnant. They still have no son. Disappointed and worried, Sarai decides that something must be done. She intervenes, following a common cultural practice.

GEN 16:1-16

OBSERVATION POINT

Childless for ten years after God's promise, Sarai resorted to the local custom—using a surrogate. In the ancient Near East, childless women commonly allowed their husbands to conceive a child with one of their slave girls. Sarai had the legal right to claim any child who was conceived and born in this way as her own. If the child was a male, the husband could officially adopt the boy by merely stating "You are my son" in the presence of the surrogate mother. Sarai's solution was sanctioned by standard social customs and law, but not by God.

EXPLORATION POINT

When God makes a promise, he will come through on it. Like Sarai, we too often become impatient and decide to "help God out," only to mess things up and make our lives more complicated. It's hard to be patient when God's timing does not follow our timetable. God has a place and purpose for each one of us. We are here to bring him glory and to further his Kingdom. Trust that God's plan is bigger than you can imagine.

NEXT STOP

A SON IS PROMISED TO SARAH

A SON IS PROMISED TO SARAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAM

THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL

THE BIRTH OF ISHMAEL

A SON IS PROMISED TO SARAH

When God speaks, things happen. God calls Abram to follow, and Abram's entire life changes, including his name: God calls him Abraham, "the father of many." Abraham's name change isn't a hand-wringing hope, it is a firm declaration: God is going to save the whole world, starting with a baby boy. But thirteen years after God first promised him a son, Abraham's wife Sarah still is not pregnant. So the Lord appears again to confirm his covenant with Abram and reaffirm his promise of a son. The next chapter in the big story starts with the birth of a baby.

READ: GEN 17:1–18:15

GEN 17:1–18:15; 21:1-7

OBSERVATION POINT

In Hebrew culture, names and their meanings had great significance. The name given to a child at birth often had some connection to his or her appearance or birth order (see the footnotes on Genesis 25:25, 26). People's names were sometimes changed when they had a life-changing experience. Changing Abram to Abraham signified a slight variation: Abram means "exalted father," while Abraham sounds like the Hebrew term for "father of many." The change from Sarai to Sarah was just a change in spelling, probably because of differences between the languages of Ur and Canaan; both names mean "princess."

EXPLORATION POINT

It's easy for us to ridicule Sarah's audacity to laugh at God. But aren't we guilty of this every time we doubt that God can handle *our* conundrums? Unfortunately, we think that God's solution must fit into our paradigms. But God can work outside our most outlandish expectations. Nothing is too hard for the Lord: neither having an old woman get pregnant, nor curing someone of cancer, nor solving a problem that baffles us, nor bringing peace to a war-torn nation. The next time you face something that appears impossible, hand over the situation to God, then wait—you have an opportunity to see how God will handle it. *Nothing* is too hard for him.

NEXT STOP

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

ABRAHAM'S FAITH TESTED

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A SON IS PROMISED TO SARAH

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Years before, when Abram and Lot separated, Lot chose to live in the valley of the Jordan River, near the southern end of the Dead Sea. As time passes, the citizens of this region, including the people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, become more and more wicked. God is appalled by their social injustice and vile behavior. When he sees all the evil that is going on, he decides to wipe out

both cities.

GEN 18:16–19:38

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OBSERVATION POINT

Lot chose to live in Sodom among the morally depraved Canaanites and became a prominent citizen of the city. In that culture, the leaders gathered at the city gate to conduct business, finalize legal transactions, and advise others in moral conduct. Lot continued to believe in God even while living in the corrupt city, and he tried to live differently from those around him. He much preferred the ease and safety of Sodom over living outside the city in a tent. Those conveniences made it difficult for him to leave.

EXPLORATION POINT

Abraham challenged God's intentions toward Sodom and Gomorrah. Although God did not tell Abraham exactly what he was planning to do, Abraham assumed that death would be involved. His dialogue with God, however, was full of reverence and humility, an appropriate approach. As leader of this promised great nation, Abraham knew he needed to lead with justice and mercy. His questions and persistence helped him better understand how God evaluates a situation in order to execute judgment on the wicked and the righteous.

NEXT STOP

ISAAC AND ISHMAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

ISAAC AND ISHMAEL

Abraham and Sarah had attempted to fulfill God's promises by their

own strategies, but instead it brought resentment and conflict. Now, just as God promised, Sarah becomes pregnant and bears Abraham a son. God's promise to Abraham of many descendants begins with just one—Isaac. Isaac brings laughter to their home. But Abraham and Sarah's first strategy has consequences that linger on: Now there are two boys in the family, and this leads to trouble.

GEN 21:1-34

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OBSERVATION POINT

Isaac was weaned at around age three, which was the cultural norm. A feast commemorated this rite of passage, celebrating the life of the child who had survived the most fragile years of infancy and would now probably live to adulthood. By this time, Ishmael was seventeen. If he had been younger, making fun of his little brother would have been considered typical teasing between siblings, but because of his age it was much more serious than that.

EXPLORATION POINT

The tension in this family was unusual. The boys were too far apart in age to be true rivals: Isaac was a toddler, Ishmael a seventeen-year-old and considered an adult. Each mother wanted to protect her son and secure his position in the family. Each mother loved her son. Both acted in a customary way. The tension and dilemma appeared to have no resolution, but God intervened and blessed both boys. Unfortunately, the tension that began between these two brothers thousands of years ago continues among their descendants even today.

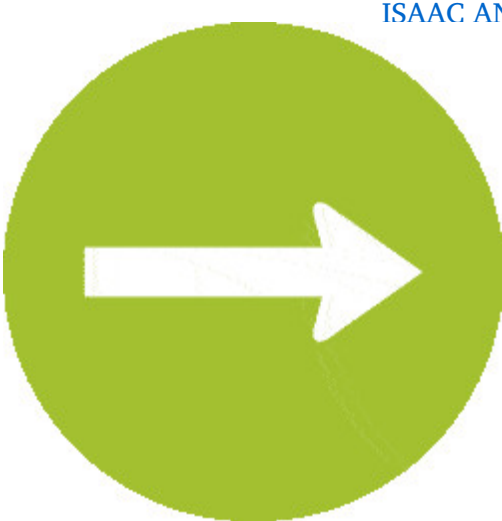
NEXT STOP

ABRAHAM'S FAITH TESTED

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A SON IS PROMISED TO SARAH



ABRAHAM'S FAITH TESTED

Isaac grows up and becomes a young man. God continues to bless Abraham just as he had promised decades earlier. Now God speaks to Abraham again and asks him to do something very unusual. This request will challenge everything Abraham believes about God's

goodness, love, and justice. And Abraham will watch as God's promise and blessing begin slipping from his grasp.

GEN 22:1-18

OBSERVATION POINT

Mount Moriah was located about 48 miles north of Abraham's home in Beersheba. Hundreds of years later, David saw the angel of the Lord near here, poised to destroy Jerusalem. God relented before it could happen. Eventually, Solomon built God's great temple on Mount Moriah inside Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1). Today the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim holy site, is located there.

EXPLORATION POINT

Abraham's response to God is incredible: no discussion or bargaining, as he had done trying to save Sodom. This time he obeyed God's command and prepared for the trip. God's command didn't make sense, but it didn't have to—God was good, just, and in control. Abraham chose to live in faith moment by moment, letting God guide and direct his path. Like Abraham, we can move forward one moment at a time, trusting that God is good and just and in control.

NEXT STOP

A WIFE FOR ISAAC

A WIFE FOR ISAAC

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ABRAHAM'S FAITH TESTED

ABRAHAM'S FAITH TESTED

A WIFE FOR ISAAC

Sarah dies before her son Isaac finds a wife. Now Abraham wants Isaac to marry a girl within his family clan, which disqualifies every woman in the region. So he assigns his most trusted servant to travel five hundred miles—a two-week journey—to find the perfect bride for Isaac.

GEN 24:1-67

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GEN 24:1-27, 61-67

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OBSERVATION POINT

Being a woman of hospitality, Rebekah offered the visitor water. But her offer to water the stranger's camels was exceptionally generous. Having traveled across the desert on a long journey, the camels were obviously thirsty, and each one could easily consume 28 to 30 gallons of water. Together, the camels probably drank almost 300 gallons of water, which Rebekah drew out of the deep well with her jug.

EXPLORATION POINT

Everyone involved needed faith in the Lord and trust in each other. Abraham's servant had to honestly believe in his master's god to truly honor Abraham's directives. Rebekah and her family had to trust Abraham's servant for Rebekah to leave her family, travel to a foreign land, and marry a stranger. It would take a tremendous amount of faith for anyone to follow a story-telling stranger to the home of a distant relative you had never met.

NEXT STOP

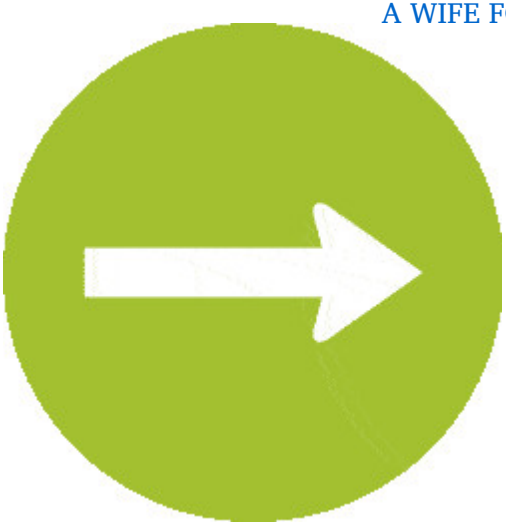
BIRTHS AND BIRTHRIGHTS
BIRTHS AND BIRTHRIGHTS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A WIFE FOR ISAAC

A WIFE FOR ISAAC



BIRTHS AND BIRTHRIGHTS

Isaac married Rebekah, but, just like his parents, they are unable to have children. His mother Sarah had waited for 25 years before she gave birth to him. Now he and his wife Rebekah wait for 20 years. Once again God intervenes by his power, and Rebekah becomes pregnant, this time with twins. But even before she gives birth, there are signs that conflict is looming.

GEN 25:19-34

OBSERVATION POINT

In biblical times, a woman's worth often centered around her womb. God commanded Adam and Eve, "be fruitful and multiply," in order that they might spread throughout the earth and take care of everything that God had created. The fact that several women of God's chosen line could not conceive without divine intervention emphasizes that God is intimately involved in fulfilling his plan through his people.

EXPLORATION POINT

Isaac was about forty years old when he married. He was sixty when his twin sons, Jacob and Esau, were born. He lived through decades without knowing how God would fulfill his promises. Isaac may have struggled during this waiting.

Today we desire meaning, purpose, and significance in our lives. If we encounter delays or setbacks, we struggle and question and wonder what God is doing. Our purpose feels precarious. Isaac was one of the most significant people in history, yet he endured long stretches of time where he just *was*.

NEXT STOP

JACOB STEALS ESAU'S BLESSING

JACOB STEALS ESAU'S BLESSING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

BIRTHS AND BIRTHRIGHTS

BIRTHS AND BIRTHRIGHTS

JACOB STEALS ESAU'S BLESSING

Isaac's twin boys are very different from one another. Esau is a hunter, but Jacob is a homebody. And while Isaac favors Esau, his wife Rebekah favors Jacob. With their parents divided like this, rivalry between the siblings is inevitable.

READ:

GEN 27:1–28:9

OBSERVATION POINT

Receiving a father's blessing was believed to bring prosperity to the recipient: health and vitality, long life, fertility, and progeny. Jacob had already gained Esau's birthright, which normally ensured that the oldest son would receive double what a younger son would. Now Isaac wanted to salvage what he could by blessing Esau to make him prosperous. With wealth on the line, both Jacob and Esau were willing to compete for their father's blessing, even resorting to deception.

EXPLORATION POINT

Rebekah might have thought she had won by fooling Isaac, but in the end she lost out: Esau was a disappointment, and his wives drove her crazy. Jacob, her favored son, had to run away to save himself from his brother's vengeance. Rebekah succeeded at manipulating her husband, but she still failed to get what she wanted. She would have been better off leaving things in God's hands.

NEXT STOP

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL

JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JACOB STEALS ESAU'S BLESSING

JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL

Jacob has fled his parents' home in fear of Esau's vengeance. Jacob's deceit has torn their family apart. He will never see his mother, Rebekah, again. Alone and far from home, Jacob lies down to sleep on the ground. In the middle of nowhere, the Lord appears to him in a dream.

GEN 28:10–29:14

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OBSERVATION POINT

For Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, altars and other memorial stones stood like historical markers, identifying places where God had revealed himself to them. Each altar reminded those who saw them that God was interested in his people and involved in his creation. In Israel, there were four or five such altars: Beersheba, Bethel, Hebron, Moriah, and Shechem. Over time, they would accumulate greater significance as God's people gathered to worship and hear stories of their history. God and history were woven together at the altars.

EXPLORATION POINT

In running from Esau, Jacob left everything behind: the rights of the firstborn that he had secured by trading some stew, and his father's blessing that he had stolen from Esau by using a false identity. Jacob had tried to control his fortunes, but he lost everything. Through the dream, God assured Jacob that everything would turn out okay, that although he had left everything behind, God would still be with him—an incomparable blessing.

NEXT STOP

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JACOB STEALS ESAU'S BLESSING

JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL

After betraying Esau, Jacob flees his homeland to escape his brother's anger. His mother, Rebekah, sends him to take refuge at her brother Laban's house in Paddan-aram. On the way, God appears to Jacob in a dream, promising to bless him. After a short time at his uncle's house, Jacob falls in love with Laban's daughter Rachel and agrees to work for Laban in order to marry her. Laban, however, is not true to the agreement.

READ:

GEN 29:14–30:43

OBSERVATION POINT

Ancient peoples believed that certain plants stimulated fertility. The root of the mandrake plant was highly valued for this purpose. A member of the potato and tomato family, the mandrake has short, fleshy roots about the size of potatoes and light-orange fruit the size of a cherry tomato. The fruit of the mandrake, also sometimes eaten, has stimulating, mood-altering qualities. The mandrake is still common around Jerusalem and throughout Israel.

EXPLORATION POINT

Each of the characters in this story had his or her own kind of suffering. Jacob was separated from his family and had two wives who competed for his attention. He worked hard to rebuild his wealth only to be cheated by his uncle. Leah constantly vied for Jacob's attention; her suffering was eased by the birth of many sons, but she knew she was not his favored wife. As for Rachel, although she was loved, she felt inferior to her sister because she could not get pregnant. Through it all God was present, listening and

responding to their prayers.

NEXT STOP

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

JACOB FLEES FROM LABAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL

JACOB FLEES FROM LABAN

As the years pass, Jacob's family and wealth increase. Despite Laban's deceit, Jacob honors his agreements with him, and his efforts meet with great success. It is God's blessing. Laban's sons, however, grow jealous of Jacob's success, accusing him of stealing from their father. Jacob begins to sense conflict brewing, and God confirms that it is time for Jacob and his family to leave.

GEN 31:1-55

OBSERVATION POINT

According to the customs and laws of the region, whoever held the household gods had rights to land and possessions. A father passed these gods on to a son as one would sign over the deed to a property. Jacob believed he was entitled to the possessions he had acquired while working for his father-in-law. Rachel, by taking the idols, felt assured that her father could not take it all back.

EXPLORATION POINT

Wouldn't it be wonderful if God spoke to us as clearly as he did to Jacob? Even so, Jacob had additional indications that things weren't going well: Laban's attitude toward him had changed, and his brothers-in-law were complaining about him and calling him a thief. These alone would be good reasons to get out of the area. God sometimes speaks directly, sometimes indirectly. When you're uncertain about your next step or a major decision, listen for God and look for other signs that God might be using to communicate with you.

NEXT STOP

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
A SON IS PROMISED TO SARAH

JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL

JACOB FLEES FROM LABAN

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

Isaac's son Jacob left his home in Canaan and traveled to Paddan-aram, where he married and became wealthy. But conflict forces him to return to Canaan. When Jacob stops at the Jabbok River, God comes to him at night and gives him a new name to remind him of God's promise: God will fight for his people, defending them and defeating their enemies. In God's big story, he will continually fight to be united with those he loves.

GEN 32:22-32

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OBSERVATION POINT

Crossing the river at night was strategic. Jacob didn't want anyone to detect his family's movements or how large the group was. He was a very wealthy man with many children, wives, servants, and herds of sheep, goats, camels, donkeys, and cattle. Such a large group would have been easily spotted during the day and open to attack from humans or wild animals.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jacob had lived up to his name: "deceiver." He had schemed against Esau to get the family blessing. This middle-of-the-night wrestling match put an end to that way of living. By morning, Jacob finally submitted to God's control and trusted God to bless him. Jacob's new name, Israel—meaning "God fights"—signified a shift as well: God would fight for Jacob and his family as they grew to be God's people—the people of Israel.

NEXT STOP

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

JOB’S TRIALS AND ANGUISH

JOB’S TRIALS AND ANGUISH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

JOB'S TRIALS AND ANGUISH

Job lives in a distant land around 2000 BC, at about the same time as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Job is a righteous man who fears God, but he is not one of God's chosen people like Abraham and his descendants. He is a wealthy, successful, devout man when the story begins. Job's tremendous trials and suffering address the universal question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

READ:

JOB 1:1–2:13

OBSERVATION POINT

The Sabeans (people of Sheba) were a powerful wandering tribe of raiders from the Arabian desert. Centuries later they became a national power in southern Arabia (modern-day Yemen). They traded gold, gems, slaves, myrrh, and frankincense. The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah mentioned the Sabeans in their writings (Isaiah 43:3; 45:14; 60:6; Jeremiah 6:20).

EXPLORATION POINT

The opening dialogue between God and Satan helps us realize that Satan is for real. Too often we think of the devil as a comical

character prancing around in red, with horns, a tail, and a pitchfork. But he is no joke; he is real. We can learn from Job to understand more deeply the meaning of the phrase from the Lord's Prayer, "Don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one."

NEXT STOP

THE LORD CHALLENGES JOB

JOB SPEAKS TO HIS FRIENDS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOB'S TRIALS AND ANGUISH

JOB SPEAKS TO HIS FRIENDS

Job suffers in silence with his friends. They all remain quiet for days. When Job finally has strength enough to speak, he angrily complains about his plight and curses the day he was born. Job simply can't understand why he is suffering so greatly. One of Job's friends, Eliphaz, attempts a reply to Job's ranting. He tries to rationalize what has happened to Job.

JOB 3:1–4:21

OBSERVATION POINT

Leviathan was a great mythological sea monster, well known throughout the ancient Near East. The Israelites adopted the myth and referenced it in their stories to explain their understanding of the world. *Leviathan* came to mean a dreaded large sea creature, dragon, or monster of the deep. Leviathan is symbolic of immense chaos, a force that cannot be controlled by humans but can easily be handled by God.

EXPLORATION POINT

The story of Job contains helpful instructions on what to do and what *not* to do when a friend is suffering. Job's friends did some good things: They came to be with him, they sat with him, and they listened. Conversation is good, but Job's friends lacked compassion. The first friend was harsh, eager to justify the catastrophe and assign blame. A suffering person needs compassion and understanding, not cold analysis of the situation. At such times, your silent presence may be all that is required.

NEXT STOP

JOB'S RESPONSE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOB SPEAKS TO HIS FRIENDS

JOB'S RESPONSE

Bildad, another of Job's friends, listens for a while to Eliphaz's response to Job and Job's reply, to Job's plea with God, and to a second round of speeches. Then Bildad yells at Job, ranting about wicked people. In his replies to Bildad and the others, Job expresses his frustration with God and his hurt that everyone has turned against him.

JOB 19:1-29

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OBSERVATION POINT

Since a monument had longevity, Job wanted his story chiseled in stone. God had written the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone so that future generations would know his instructions for living. Later, Joshua inscribed God's law on a stone altar at Mount Ebal (Joshua 8:32). Great pharaohs of Egypt often had huge monuments inscribed with their accomplishments so that an accurate record of their existence on earth would last for centuries.

EXPLORATION POINT

Job's great testimony of faith that the Lord would redeem him is recorded in 19:25. He knew that he would be found blameless even if he died before he was redeemed on earth. The concept of the redeemer was found in both criminal and civil laws of the ancient Near East. When we face trials and difficulties in life, we too should find hope in Job's statement: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and

he will stand upon the earth at last."

NEXT STOP

THE LORD CHALLENGES JOB

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOB'S TRIALS AND ANGUISH

JOB'S RESPONSE

THE LORD CHALLENGES JOB

God's words shift Job's focus away from his troubles and toward God and his greatness. Speaking with God puts everything back into perspective for Job, who initially thought he could plead his case of innocence before the Almighty. Now Job is humbled and speechless before the King of the universe.

JOB 40:1-24

OBSERVATION POINT

Ancient people considered Behemoth to be the fiercest land animal. Scholars have referred to it as a crocodile, a hippopotamus, a wild

buffalo, or a mythical creature. *Behemoth* is an Egyptian word meaning “water-ox” and, like Leviathan, symbolizes extraordinary chaos and power that are beyond the limits of humans but easily within God’s control.

EXPLORATION POINT

Like Job, we often think highly of ourselves and our position in the world. This passage forces us to reevaluate who we are in light of God’s awesome power and majesty as Creator of all things. What is even more amazing is that he loves us, redeems us, and offers us eternal life. He desires to be in a relationship with us.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD BLESSES JOB

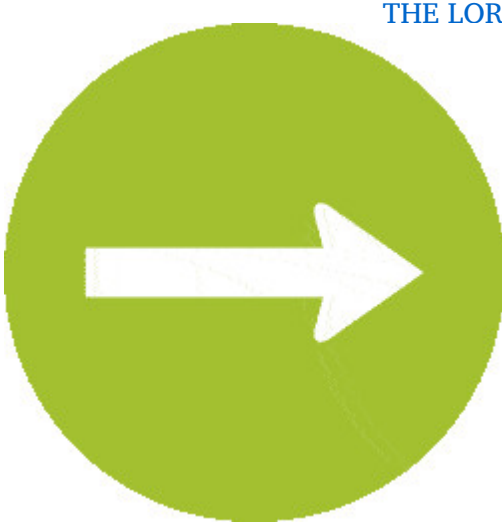
THE LORD BLESSES JOB

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD CHALLENGES JOB

THE LORD CHALLENGES JOB



THE LORD BLESSES JOB

After all the questioning, probing, and discussing, Job's view of God is far clearer than before. He is humbled before the Almighty, and he realizes how ignorant he has been of God's power. He humbly makes his simple response to God, repenting of his insistence that he was being treated unjustly.

JOB 42:1-17

OBSERVATION POINT

Job's friends and family brought him gifts to acknowledge his restored position in society and with God, not in an effort to restore his wealth. God had already given Job twice as much wealth as he had had before. The relationships that the gifts represented were far more valuable than money.

EXPLORATION POINT

Job suffered, but he never sinned during his trials. He responded to his grief in the normal human way: stunned silence, disbelief, denial, and finally acceptance. God was present in Job's suffering; he never deserted him. God brought Job through the experience. The hope in any of our suffering is this: We may suffer, but we are not alone. God will be present as we work through grief and sorrow and pain.

NEXT STOP

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

JOYS OF THE GODLY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD BLESSES JOB

JOYS OF THE GODLY

Through all his suffering, Job discovered something wonderful: Faithfully following God yields joy and delight. The writer of Psalm 1 describes the ideal godly person. That person delights in God's law and trusts God to provide all that they need. Job's life was a beautiful example of the life described here. Even though he suffered, he remained rooted in his faith in God.

PS 1:1-6

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OBSERVATION POINT

To the Jews, “the law of the LORD” referred to the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Jews call this group of books the Torah. Christians call it the Pentateuch. The second half of Exodus, all of Leviticus, and parts of Numbers and Deuteronomy contain detailed laws or instructions for living a holy life. Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 list the Ten Commandments.

EXPLORATION POINT

Those who follow God’s instructions live happy and joyful lives—exactly the way everyone wants to live. Psalm 1 gives the exact formula for such a life: following God and his instructions. Yet many of us think there are other ways to achieve happiness. We’re too shortsighted or stubborn or both. We want to do it ourselves. But following God’s way ultimately guarantees a life of joy and

happiness.

NEXT STOP

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

THE LORD BLESSES JOB

JOYS OF THE GODLY

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

When Jacob returns to Canaan, he reconciles with his brother Esau. Both men are very wealthy, with large families and herds of livestock. Eventually Esau moves away, while Jacob remains in Canaan with his twelve sons, including Joseph, his favorite. But trouble is brewing. Jacob's favoritism infects his other sons with jealousy and hatred. They retaliate and betray Joseph. Yet God has a plan. He has a big story to write. He is working through Joseph to preserve his chosen people.

GEN 37:1-36

OBSERVATION POINT

What exactly made Joseph's robe so beautiful is uncertain. Traditionally it is called "a coat of many colors," but it may have been more ornate, not just colorful. It probably had long, loose sleeves. The fabric may have been very colorful, embroidered with colored threads or adorned with jewels. Whatever it looked like, it was a very special piece of clothing that indicated Joseph was his father's favorite.

EXPLORATION POINT

Showing favoritism is never constructive, especially in a family. This story shows how bad it can get. Young and naïve, Joseph made matters worse by recounting his dreams to his brothers. Their pent-up anger and jealousy eventually led to violence and attempted murder. Only Reuben wanted to save Joseph, but he was too late. The sins of this family caused great suffering. Extreme love was tarnished by favoritism, jealousy, and resentment. But God used all these sins in his plan for their ultimate good. Joseph, the object of his brothers' hatred, would become a hero in another time and place.

NEXT STOP

WAITING FOR A DELIVERER

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

JUDAH AND TAMAR

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

JUDAH AND TAMAR

Joseph has had magnificent dreams, but nothing in them prepares him for going to Egypt or being sold into slavery. After Joseph's brothers betray him, his older brother Judah moves away and takes a Canaanite wife, even though his ancestors had consistently avoided them. Judah's decision unravels a series of events and his downward spiral continues. His story begins with a young woman named Tamar.

GEN 38:1-30

OBSERVATION POINT

In ancient times, widows were vulnerable to major injustices because they no longer had a husband to protect them. If they did not have a son, they were even more unfortunate. The practice of a brother-in-law marrying his dead brother's wife was called "levirate marriage." This marriage arrangement ensured that the inheritance would remain in the family and that the widow would have a son to protect her. The Hittites and the Assyrians also practiced this arrangement; later it became part of Israel's laws (Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

EXPLORATION POINT

Like so many people today, Judah thought he could get away with his sexual indiscretion, but Tamar was prepared with evidence to prove what had taken place. Although prostitution was a common practice in Israel and the surrounding nations at this time, Judah sinned because he had slept with his daughter-in-law, had broken his promise to her, and had ignored the levirate marriage custom to provide for his son's widow. Judah had failed to protect the helpless under his care.

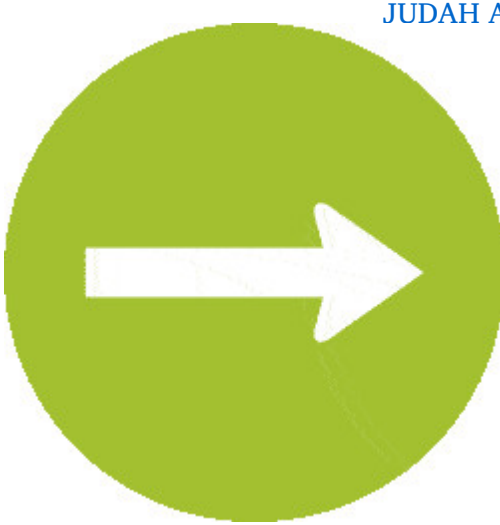
NEXT STOP

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
JOSEPH'S DREAMS

JUDAH AND TAMAR



JOSEPH IN EGYPT

Overnight, Joseph's life changes. One day he's a son, the next a slave. The Ishmaelite traders bring Joseph to Egypt and sell him to a high-ranking Egyptian officer named Potiphar. Working for him, Joseph exceeds expectations. Potiphar finds Joseph to be exceptionally dependable and assigns him to oversee the entire household. But despite Joseph's faithfulness, a new accusation will change his life again.

GEN 39:1–40:23

OBSERVATION POINT

Joseph was placed in a facility specifically used to retain prisoners of Pharaoh or of the state. The prison was either a round tower or a fortress and was possibly part of Potiphar's house. Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker were high-ranking servants who also ended up there after offending their master.

EXPLORATION POINT

Every time Joseph's life started going well, he got slammed. First, his brothers sold him to Ishmaelite traders, who in turn sold him into slavery. Then, Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of rape, and he ended up in prison. He had reason to be bitter and angry and to curse God, but he didn't. He continued trusting that the prophetic dreams he'd had as a boy would somehow come true. He remained strong in his faith, and "the LORD was with him and caused everything he did to succeed" (Genesis 39:23).

NEXT STOP

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

Two more years pass while Joseph persists in prison. Despite interpreting the dreams correctly, Joseph does not benefit from it. Pharaoh's wine steward is restored to his position, just as Joseph predicts, but then he promptly forgets about Joseph. Only when Pharaoh has a dream that needs interpreting does the wine steward remember him.

READ:

GEN 41:1-57

OBSERVATION POINT

Egypt rarely had severe famines, so the thought of a seven-year famine seemed impossible to the magicians and wise men of Egypt. The Nile River flooded annually, providing fertile soil and adequate water for the entire region. Other regions of the ancient world had frequent famines, but Egypt did not suffer as much.

EXPLORATION POINT

God had been preparing Joseph since he was a teenager. His brothers had scoffed at his dreams, but God was training him. Seeing the fates of his fellow prisoners confirmed Joseph's gift. Now

he was interpreting the dreams of a pharaoh. Joseph's wisdom saved his family as well as thousands of people living in the region. God used those experiences, those situations, and even a "detour" in Joseph's life to prepare him for his part in God's plan. God does the same in our lives.

NEXT STOP

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

Pharaoh frees Joseph from prison, and Joseph's interpretation of the dream begins to come true. At the same time, famine hits Canaan again, along with other nations. Only Egypt, with its large grain

reserves, is prepared to endure the famine. Out of desperation, Joseph's brothers travel to Egypt to buy grain for their starving families.

GEN 42:1–38

OBSERVATION POINT

Jacob and his family probably heard about Egypt's adequate grain supplies from traders who passed through Canaan on the trade routes connecting Egypt and the regions to the north and east. Egypt's northern city of Zoan, where Joseph probably ruled, was one of Egypt's cities of administration at this time. By taking the route along the Mediterranean Sea, his brothers' journey to the northern region of Egypt would take only a few days.

EXPLORATION POINT

The people of ancient times faced the threat of starvation all the time. After two years of drought and famine, Jacob's family was desperate, probably in despair. When we read the biblical account, we see years of concern resolved quickly. We see how all things worked together for the good of a whole nation. But Jacob's family didn't know the outcome. Starvation was a real possibility. They probably prayed every day for rain, but no rain came. They had to trust that God was in control and had a plan.

NEXT STOP

JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY

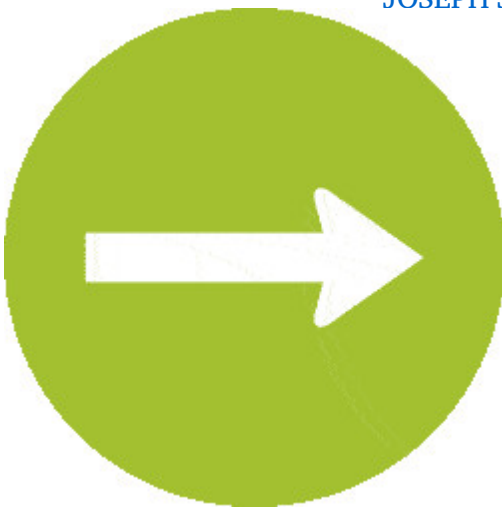
JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT



JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY

Jacob's sons make several trips to Egypt searching for food. Each trip grows more difficult because the official they have to deal with seems intent on hassling them. They have long forgotten their brother and what might have become of him. Egypt is a large place. Joseph could be anywhere, or dead for all they know. It never crosses their minds that they could encounter him again.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Joseph's brothers would not have recognized him for several reasons. First, Joseph had been seventeen years old when he was sold into slavery. He was now a 39-year-old man. Second, he had acclimated to Egyptian culture. He was clean shaven and wore royal clothing, a gold chain around his neck, and a signet ring. Although he could understand the language of his birth, he used an interpreter to converse with his brothers, convincing them that he was a native Egyptian. Finally, his brothers probably thought he was dead—not the second-highest ruler of all of Egypt.

EXPLORATION POINT

Why did Joseph play all these games? Why didn't he just reveal his identity from the beginning? Seeing his brothers again must have brought a rush of emotions and nightmarish memories: hurt, anger, wonder, fear. He needed time to sort through his confusion, to evaluate the situation, and to resolve his anger.

In today's world Joseph would have spent years in therapy, or he would have chosen revenge. But he gave himself time. He manipulated the situation to test his brothers' integrity and faithfulness, but he still helped them. His compassion eventually led him to forgive all of them and save his family.

NEXT STOP

WAITING FOR A DELIVERER

JACOB'S JOURNEY TO EGYPT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY

JACOB'S JOURNEY TO EGYPT

Jacob's sons return home from Egypt with unbelievable news. Joseph is alive and second-in-command in Egypt. They are ready to pack up, leave Canaan, and move to Egypt. But Jacob has settled in Canaan, the land God has promised to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. He is eager to reunite with Joseph but is uncertain about leaving God's Promised Land. Then God speaks, reassuring Jacob that moving is the right thing to do.

READ:

GEN 46:1–47:31

36 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

In ancient times putting a hand under another man's thigh was a gesture of swearing an oath to fulfill what one promised. The intimacy of this gesture demonstrated the high level of trust required between the parties to seal the agreement. The Bible only mentions this unusual gesture twice: here, and when Abraham's servant promised to find a bride for Isaac (Genesis 24:2-9).

EXPLORATION POINT

Eager to see his son Joseph again before he died, Jacob packed up his extended family and headed south toward Egypt. At 130 years

old, Jacob had a new lease on life. His life had not always been easy, and he suffered greatly because of Joseph's disappearance. Renewed hope filled him. At Beersheba, God spoke to Jacob once again to reassure him and renew his covenant promises. Everything was being made right again: The lost son was found, the family was restored, and food was supplied. God's covenant remained intact even in a far-off country.

NEXT STOP

THE DEATHS OF JACOB AND JOSEPH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JACOB'S JOURNEY TO EGYPT

THE DEATHS OF JACOB AND JOSEPH

Jacob's family settles in Egypt. Joseph is restored to his family, but he never lives in his homeland again. He has come to Egypt as a foreigner and slave, but over the years he assimilates himself into the culture. The one thing that sets him apart from other Egyptians is his faith in God. Eventually Jacob dies, then Joseph and his brothers do too; but the generations after them remain in Egypt.

GEN 49:29–50:26

OBSERVATION POINT

Jacob's funeral illustrates the Egyptians' reverence for the dead. Egyptians embalmed their dead. This preserved the body so that the soul, they believed, had a place to reside after death. Jacob and Joseph are the only two Israelites who underwent this lengthy process. Pharaoh had such a high regard for Joseph and his father that he sent Egypt's highest officials to accompany Joseph back to Canaan for Jacob's burial. Later, when the Israelites left Egypt after their slavery, they took Joseph's mummy with them.

EXPLORATION POINT

Some two hundred years earlier, God had promised Abraham that his descendants would bless the nations. Joseph's own life was not what he had expected, but it had turned out to be a great adventure, a rewarding gift, and a blessing to the nations of the world. God used Joseph not only to save his own family during the famine but also to save the population of Egypt and many thousands more who came to Egypt for food. If we follow God's leading, we may be surprised by how he can use us to be a blessing to others.

NEXT STOP

WAITING FOR A DELIVERER

ITINERARY
PREVIOUS STOP

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY

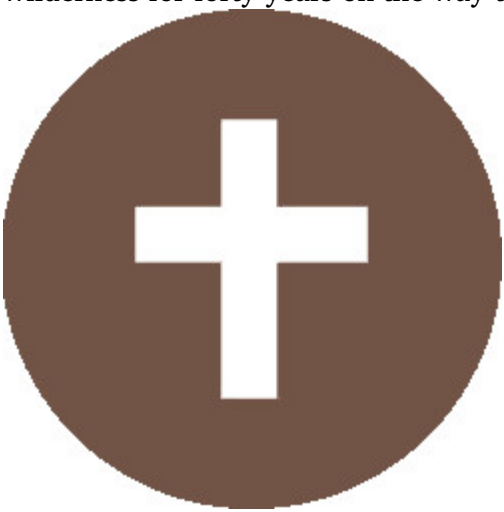
THE DEATHS OF JACOB AND JOSEPH

YEAR:
1800 BC
CURRENT WORLD POWER:
Egypt
STATUS OF GOD'S PEOPLE:
Suffering Slaves
WAITING FOR A DELIVERER
God's nation has grown ever so slowly from Abraham and his one son to a third generation consisting of seventy family members. God has faithfully kept his covenant, blessing each generation with more children. He has revealed himself in angelic encounters and even in a wrestling match. His chosen family is not perfect, but they

continue to believe and trust in the one true God. Famine forces them to immigrate to Egypt, where God, through Joseph, has prepared a safe place for his people to grow and thrive. God's people, the Hebrews, are safe and at rest for hundreds of years. During this 400-year gap between Genesis and Exodus, God's people become a large and "extremely powerful" group. The Egyptians see this as a threat, so they enslave and oppress God's people. The Hebrews' lives are uncomfortable and full of suffering, but it is all part of God's plan—to ready them for change, to move them from slavery to freedom, and to claim them as his own. The process will be difficult and God's reward is a distant promise, but the Hebrews will not journey alone. God will be with them every step of the way.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

As Exodus opens, the Hebrews are slaves in Egypt, living under harsh working conditions. They cry out to God to save them from Pharaoh. God hears them and has a plan, but it will be eighty years before the man whom he has in mind will be ready to lead God's people out of Egypt. When the time is right, God frees his people from human oppression and claims them for himself, promising them a land that overflows with plenty. God's presence surrounds the new nation, providing for the people as they wander in the wilderness for forty years on the way to their new home in Canaan.



JESUS AS TRUE NORTH

Since the beginning of time and the fall of humanity, God has had a plan to reconnect with his people. In Genesis, he revealed more of himself over time to a chosen group of people. Each generation who

obeyed and loved him was blessed by his presence and love. It will be a very long time until Jesus comes—almost two thousand years—but with each interaction, each promise, and each leader, God reveals himself a little more and brings his people a step closer to Jesus.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?

NEXT STOP

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

WAITING FOR A DELIVERER

WAITING FOR A DELIVERER

WAITING FOR A DELIVERER

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

God's chosen family that started with Abraham grows into a powerful minority living in Goshen, Egypt. Four hundred years after Abraham's great-grandson Joseph was forced into slavery in Egypt, God has fulfilled his promise. Abraham has indeed become the father of many, but the many are suffering terrible treatment. The pharaoh of Egypt, threatened by their population, works them hard as his slaves and even resorts to infanticide. But God doesn't let an earthly ruler control his big story. God works through one brave Hebrew mother who dares to defy the royal decree.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

The Hebrews did not become slaves immediately after Joseph died. They were probably a free people living in Goshen for a hundred years. Then a tribe from Mesopotamia, whom the Egyptians called Hyksos (meaning “shepherd kings”), invaded Egypt and took over. When Egypt finally regained its freedom from this invading dynasty, the people were wary of all Semitic tribes, including the Hebrews.

EXPLORATION POINT

Why would a loving God let his chosen people suffer for hundreds

of years? We cannot understand it completely. God has a plan that is being fulfilled every day; how suffering fits into his plan is often a mystery to us. Amazingly, the Hebrews remained faithful to the God of their ancestors through all these years of hardship. They remained steadfast in their faith, praying to God, the source of deliverance and salvation. And God proved faithful, too. God often asks us to remain faithful through pain and heartache. When we are faithful, we will see God's own faithfulness in return.

NEXT STOP

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

MOSES IN MIDIAN

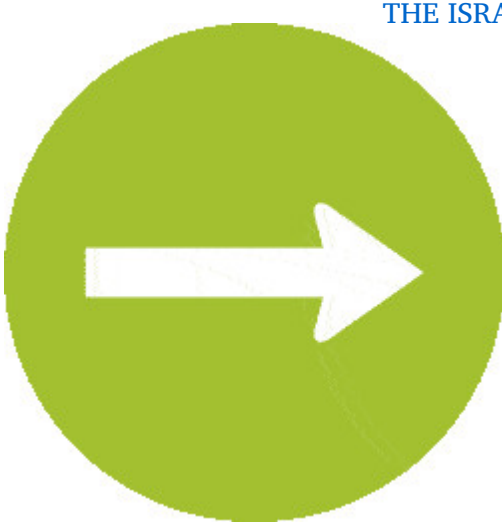
MOSES IN MIDIAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT



MOSES IN MIDIAN

Moses escapes Pharaoh's death decree and is adopted into the royal household. There he grows up, all the while knowing that he is a Hebrew. At thirty years old, embroiled in a murder scandal, Moses flees Egypt and settles in far-off Midian. He spends fifty years there herding sheep before God takes action, lights a fire, and calls Moses to be the leader of the Hebrews. It will require Moses to return to Egypt and face a new pharaoh.

EXOD 3:1–4:17

OBSERVATION POINT

The bush that Moses saw burning was possibly the acacia plant that

grows in the desert. Its wood is harder than oak and insect resistant. The fire was certainly from God because it did not need the bush as fuel; even though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. Moses encountered God on Mount Sinai, the same place where God later gave him the law for Israel to live by—including the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19–20).

EXPLORATION POINT

Without his realizing it, Moses' whole life had him trained for leading God's people. He was educated as a royal prince in the palace of Egypt. He showed compassion for his own people and tried to help, but he failed. He intimately knew the desert land of Midian, where he would later lead the Israelites. At eighty years old he was well equipped to be a leader, but he protested again and again that he was not the right person. Sometimes God calls people who don't think they are ready for the task. He sees potential that we can't see, then strengthens us with his power.

NEXT STOP

GOD PROMISES DELIVERANCE

MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

MOSES IN MIDIAN

MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT

Moses had left Egypt, humiliated. Now, after arguing with God, Moses relents and obeys God's call to go back. He returns to face his past and to fight for the future of his people. Bolstered by God's reassurance and equipped with miraculous signs, Moses returns to Egypt with his brother Aaron at his side. Together, they face Pharaoh and make a grand request.

READ:

EXOD 4:18–5:23

OBSERVATION POINT

In northern Egypt, most buildings were constructed of bricks made from clay and mud. Only the most prestigious buildings were built with stones hauled from the quarries of southern Egypt. For bricks, the mud came mostly from the Nile River. Straw helped to hold together and strengthen the brittle clay of the bricks, much as steel wire strengthens concrete in modern construction. Straw would ensure the stability of the bricks and of the buildings the slaves constructed.

EXPLORATION POINT

We all go through situations that go wrong and leave us perplexed. Moses' return to Egypt didn't go as planned. Moses had the support of God, his brother Aaron, and the leaders of the Hebrews. He was equipped with marvelous wonders to prove God's power. But plan A didn't work. In fact, it created worse conditions for the slaves, who had to do more work with less material. A great plan and a bold request ended in disaster. Moses pleaded with God, asking, "Why?" But he didn't lose faith. Instead, he chose to trust and try again.

NEXT STOP

GOD PROMISES DELIVERANCE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

MOSES IN MIDIAN

MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT

GOD PROMISES

DELIVERANCE

Moses' first audience with Pharaoh fails to free the Hebrews. The Hebrews and other slaves have made Egypt's building program possible, and Pharaoh will be hard-pressed to see his country suffer losing them. But God speaks to Moses again and declares his great plan to rescue his people from Egypt. Determined to carry out this plan, God commands Moses to confront Pharaoh a second time, but Moses still has his doubts.

READ:

EXOD 6:1-30

OBSERVATION POINT

The interlude of this genealogy in the middle of the exciting narrative reminds us that Moses and Aaron were integral to God's big plan and chosen family. The genealogy is not complete. It leaves out numerous generations from the 430 years that the Israelites were in Egypt. The connection from Jacob's son Levi to Moses and Aaron is what is most important. Future Israelites would know the Levites as the tribe charged with serving in God's sanctuary. The Levitical family of Aaron would become the priests of Israel.

EXPLORATION POINT

God spoke to Moses with words of assurance and authority, but Moses focused on himself instead of God. He recounted the insecurities and objections he voiced at the burning bush. Opposition from Pharaoh and the discouragement of the Israelites shattered his confidence, but God pushed him to approach Pharaoh again. This scenario is an excellent example for all of us when we stumble or fail after our first try. Instead of obsessing about our mistakes and inabilities, we need to listen for God's promises and look for his power.

NEXT STOP

PHARAOH AND THE PLAGUES

PHARAOH AND THE PLAGUES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD PROMISES DELIVERANCE

GOD PROMISES DELIVERANCE

PHARAOH AND THE PLAGUES

Despite feeling insecure in his speaking ability, Moses obeys God's directive to approach Pharaoh and again demand the release of God's people. God explains to Moses exactly how the confrontation

will unfold and how Pharaoh will respond. Nothing will catch Moses by surprise. God instructs Moses and Aaron to use one of the signs he gave Moses in Midian. Pharaoh, however, remains unmoved by the miracle. Then, just as God planned, the plagues begin.

EXOD 7:1–25:19

OBSERVATION POINT

Magicians in Egypt were very skilled in their arts. They were able to turn their staffs into serpents, change water to blood, and bring frogs onto the land. But they failed to turn dust into gnats and were awed by “the finger of God” (8:19). After this, the magicians vanish from the story. They aren’t mentioned again until the plague of boils, when they suffer like everyone else (9:11).

EXPLORATION POINT

Pharaoh was the most powerful king of the ancient world. He was not about to let this Moses, from a Semitic tribe in Goshen, tell him anything. This clash of power shows us how God works in the world and remains sovereign over all. He could harden Pharaoh's heart, make him stubborn, and change his mind. No human power—neither the strongest ruler, the most ruthless dictator, nor the most charismatic leader—can match the finger of God. Everyone and everything lives under his command.

NEXT STOP

DARKNESS AND DEATH
THE PLAGUES CONTINUE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PHARAOH AND THE PLAGUES

THE PLAGUES CONTINUE

Pharaoh and all of Egypt witness God's power, but Pharaoh stubbornly refuses to release the Hebrew slaves. Each plague intensifies the suffering, destroying their crops and livestock and even invading the homes of the Egyptians. But the Hebrews living in Goshen are spared from the ravages of nature while the Egyptians are devastated. God's hand of favor and protection over his people is undeniable.

EXOD 8:20–9:35

OBSERVATION POINT

Plagues were not unknown in Egypt. Throughout the ancient world, different types of pestilence occurred regularly. However, the intensity and timing of these plagues indicated that they were divinely controlled. Pharaoh realized this and appealed to Moses, "Plead with the LORD to take the frogs away" (8:8), and later said, "This time I have sinned. The LORD is the righteous one" (9:27). But his acknowledgment of God's power was shallow, for he quickly returned to his stubborn state as soon as God lifted each plague.

EXPLORATION POINT

In times of great distress, many people suddenly turn to God or "get religion," desperate to understand what is going on and why it is happening. Under normal circumstances, we often rationalize our way through life, content with scientific or psychological explanations. When we confront something we can't explain, though, we think about God. Pharaoh and his officials were no different. Desperation may turn us to God, but faith and trust deepen when we seek him consistently—during the ordinary as well as the extraordinary moments of life.

NEXT STOP

DARKNESS AND DEATH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PHARAOH AND THE PLAGUES

THE PLAGUES CONTINUE

DARKNESS AND DEATH

God uses the plagues to challenge the numerous gods worshiped by the Egyptians. God increases the severity of each plague, proving that no nature deity can thwart his power. With the final plagues, Egypt comes to a standstill. The tenth and final plague is a specific attack on every household throughout the kingdom, except the homes in Goshen where the Israelites live.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

The Egyptians had gods and goddesses for every detail of life. Each plague directly challenged the power attributed to one of these gods. For example, the plague of darkness confronted the sun god, Amon-Re, whom the Egyptians worshiped as the source of life, supreme over all other gods. In each plague, God clearly displayed that he alone was master over all things, even life and death.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Lord Almighty, creator of all things, has control over the natural order of the universe. He often works within the natural

order but uses it for his purposes. With the plagues in Egypt, he worked within the natural phenomena of winds, water, and pestilence to show his power and control. The highly selective nature of the final plague, the death of the firstborn within families and among animals, remains beyond any scientific explanation.

NEXT STOP

THE PASSOVER AND THE EXODUS

THE PASSOVER AND THE EXODUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DARKNESS AND DEATH

DARKNESS AND DEATH

THE PASSOVER AND THE EXODUS

Pharaoh and the Egyptian people are exhausted and trembling. The plagues have devastated their land and invaded their homes. Egypt wants only relief, whatever the cost—even if it means losing their

slave labor force. The sooner God leaves them alone, the better. But Israel has reason to celebrate. Their deliverance is near. God gives his people detailed instructions for celebrating a new festival called Passover, which will commemorate the day they were freed from slavery.

EXOD 12:1-51

OBSERVATION POINT

The Hebrews left Egypt with their fists raised in defiance (14:8). They were thrilled to be free from hard labor and eager to move toward a new future. The new nation consisted of 600,000 men on foot (12:37); if each of the men had one wife and two children, the total of Israel's population would have been more than double that number. Scholars think that the population might have exceeded two million.

EXPLORATION POINT

Among so many people, emotions must have varied about what lay ahead: excitement about a new future, uncertainty about what was to come, fear of the unknown, exuberance in freedom. For those whose faith in God was strong, the experience was probably exciting. For those who were just going along with the crowd, the experience may have been filled with apprehension. Change in life is inevitable. These changes can fill us with a variety of emotions. How we face change, whether with faith and trust or with skepticism and doubt, begins with what we believe about God.

NEXT STOP

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT

THE PASSOVER AND THE EXODUS

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

God chooses Moses to rescue his people from the clutches of Egypt's Pharaoh, and Moses reluctantly agrees. Then God turns his own Creation into weapons of war to convince Pharaoh to free the Hebrews. Now, with Egypt behind them, the people encounter their first major obstacle—a body of water too wide to cross and too deep to wade through. They have begun to taste the freedom of living in God's big story, but God is determined to see them also live by faith in him. Their first faith-test is trusting God to safely move two million people through the Red Sea.

READ:

EXOD 13:17–14:31

OBSERVATION POINT

Strong hot winds, called sirocco winds, are well known in the Arabian Desert. They are strong enough to move large quantities of water aside and expose river beds. Some have wondered if this sort of wind was involved here. However, God's intervention still would have been needed to maintain the walls of water long enough for the people to cross. And the gale-force wind, impossible to walk in, would have had to stop before the Israelites could move forward. God's miraculous timing was also needed to allow the Egyptian army to enter the sea before it closed over them. No natural explanation can fully account for the amazing events that took place that day.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's intent was to display his power to the Egyptians and destroy their entire army. Through this final destruction, God showed Pharaoh that the Lord Almighty was in control—not a powerful pharaoh with his army of horses and warrior-driven chariots. This wall of water awed the people of Israel and inspired them to trust in Moses and God. Unfortunately, they needed constant miraculous signs and wonders to keep on trusting.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD REVEALS HIMSELF AT SINAI

MANNA AND QUAIL FROM HEAVEN

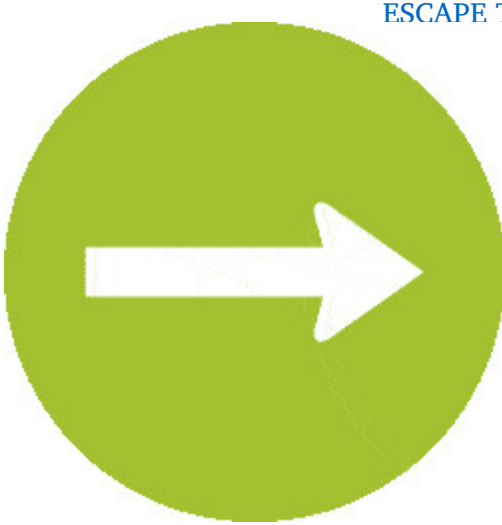
MANNA AND QUAIL FROM HEAVEN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA



MANNA AND QUAIL FROM HEAVEN

God delivers his people from the pursuit of Pharaoh's army. They see the Red Sea split wide, and they cross the seabed on dry ground. Once on the other side, they know freedom. But the Hebrews' enthusiastic shouts of freedom soon turn into groans of discontent. Three days after crossing the sea, the Israelites start complaining. Drinkable water and sufficient food quickly turn scarce. God's people begin to wonder if this desert will become their graveyard.

EXOD 16:1-36

OBSERVATION POINT

Manna was a mystery. The people called it manna, which means, "What is it?" This special "bread from heaven" was yellow, crunchy, and sweet tasting. The people baked it, boiled it, and ground it into flour to make small cakes out of it. At first manna was a blessing and satisfied their hunger. After a while, though, the "horrible" food became a source of complaint. God provided manna on every day except the Sabbath for the entire time Israel wandered in the wilderness. On the day the Israelites set foot in the Promised Land, the manna stopped appearing.

EXPLORATION POINT

Although the people complained, God loved them so much that he listened to their cry and responded by giving them food. He did not send a lavish feast, or even some of the familiar foods of Egypt; rather, he provided the basics: bread, meat, water. These were life-sustaining essentials, and they give us insight into the simple request in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us today the food we need." The Lord hears us and provides for our needs.

NEXT STOP

A PRAYER OF MOSES

A PRAYER OF MOSES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

MANNA AND QUAIL FROM HEAVEN

MANNA AND QUAIL FROM HEAVEN

A PRAYER OF MOSES

Moses, the great leader of the Israelites, wrote this psalm. He advocated for the Israelites before God as they journeyed through the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. Moses' prayer acknowledges God's faithfulness to his people throughout all generations. Moses requests that God have compassion on them.

PS 90:1-17

OBSERVATION POINT

The word “home” here is a very interesting metaphor as a description of God. The Hebrew word literally means “refuge or dwelling place.” The translators’ selection of the English word “home” suggests that they wanted the reader to understand the warmth, intimacy, and care that God provides in this refuge. It is a place of safety, a shelter, where God meets his people and cares for their needs.

EXPLORATION POINT

With God’s guidance and blessing, our plans will succeed. That leads some of us to ask, “If that’s true, how can people who want nothing to do with God succeed?” We all know that they often do, so how can that be explained? Our God is a gracious God: “He sends rain on the just and the unjust alike” (Matthew 5:45). His common grace is for all his creation. But the greatest reward comes in eternity.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD REVEALS HIMSELF AT SINAI

WATER FROM THE ROCK

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A PRAYER OF MOSES

WATER FROM THE ROCK

For weeks the Hebrews pack up and move from place to place. The journey through the desert is slow. Soon their water supply runs out again. The people begin testing God and arguing with Moses. They're filled with doubt and fear. Their thirst overwhelms their faith in Moses and God.

EXOD 17:1-16

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OBSERVATION POINT

The deserts of the Sinai Peninsula contain porous limestone that collects water during the rainy season. It is possible that a reservoir in an underground cave could break open, producing a gushing spring of water. Some have supposed that God guided Moses to this kind of reservoir. But the amount of water that came from this rock supplied enough water for an entire nation of two million people and all their livestock. That was truly miraculous.

EXPLORATION POINT

God was testing his people—and the Hebrews were testing God. They would complain; he would provide. God was building his people's trust by meeting their needs: freeing them from Egypt; parting the Red Sea; destroying the Egyptian army; and providing manna, quail, and water. Their faith was shallow and their trust was inconsistent, but they were dependent on God for their very lives. He was proving that they could trust him.

NEXT STOP

JETHRO'S VISIT TO MOSES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

WATER FROM THE ROCK

JETHRO'S VISIT TO MOSES

The people of Israel are close to the land of Midian, where Moses sought refuge when he fled Egypt fifty years earlier. This time he has two million people in tow. The stress of leading that many people begins to overwhelm Moses. When his father-in-law sees this, he offers Moses some wise counsel.

EXOD 18:1-27

OBSERVATION POINT

Jethro was a priest of Midian who honored God. He was also referred to as Reuel. Perhaps these two names distinguished his role as priest from his daily occupation of shepherd. Moses' wife Zipporah, Jethro's daughter, stayed behind in Midian with their two sons while Moses was busy with the events of the Exodus. Now their family was reunited.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jethro's administrative advice to Moses is both priceless and timeless. No leader can oversee that many people by doing everything personally. Delegation is a key to leadership. Moses appreciated Jethro's wisdom and followed his advice by selecting leaders he trusted to help with his administrative duties.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD REVEALS HIMSELF AT SINAI

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

A PRAYER OF MOSES

JETHRO'S VISIT TO MOSES

THE LORD REVEALS HIMSELF AT SINAI

Two months after crossing the Red Sea, the Hebrews set up camp at the foot of Mount Sinai. They are ready to encounter God. God is ready to reveal himself to them and provide them with rules for living as holy people in his presence. The law God wrote down wasn't a set of arbitrary rules or some useful legal code, it described how to live life in harmony with God himself, with his people, and with his Creation. In the big story, God's law provided the details not just for holy living but for thriving in his world.

READ: Exodus 19:16–20:21

EXOD 19:16–20:21

OBSERVATION POINT

Moses prepared the people to meet God, instructing them in how to set themselves apart as his people. The people washed their clothes and abstained from sexual relations. They needed time to get into the right frame of mind, to have a proper sense of awe and reverence for God. By following the Ten Commandments and other laws given at Sinai, God's people would learn to live in a vital relationship with their holy God and to establish a just and healthy community.

EXPLORATION POINT

The people gradually learned to know and trust God through the steps they took in leaving Egypt—the Passover and Exodus; their crossing the Red Sea; the supply of water, manna, and quail; and their victory in battle. Those events taught the Hebrews to trust God and know him as their reliable, loving Provider. Now God wanted to reveal more of himself by coming down to Mount Sinai and displaying his presence, glory, and power to the people.

NEXT STOP

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

THE GOLD CALF
A PROMISE OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD REVEALS HIMSELF AT SINAI

A PROMISE OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE

After outlining the Ten Commandments for living holy lives, and expanding on the principles with specific examples, God invites four key leaders and seventy elders of Israel to ascend Mount Sinai. Together they sit down for a meal. Then Moses climbs farther up the mountain to receive the complete law and confirm God's covenant.

READ:

EXOD 23:20–24:18

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OBSERVATION POINT

Moses, Aaron, Aaron's two sons, and seventy leaders of Israel had the great privilege of being in God's presence and sharing a covenant meal with him. They witnessed God's glory, which was described only by the color of the area where God stood. The shared meal affirmed peace and good will between God and Israel.

EXPLORATION POINT

Spending time with God himself did not have a lasting effect on all the individuals involved. While Moses stayed on the mountain, these leaders returned to camp and within a month were allowing

the people to worship idols. Mountaintop experiences and spectacular miracles won't create faithfulness without a lifestyle that supports it.

NEXT STOP

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TABERNACLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A PROMISE OF THE LORD'S PRESENCE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE

TABERNACLE

Moses spends forty days and nights with God on Mount Sinai. During that time, Moses receives the Ten Commandments and detailed instructions for building a dwelling place for God—the Tabernacle. God is preparing his people to live holy lives so they can live in the presence of a holy God. He desires them to be set apart for himself and to have a place where they can know he is living among them.

EXOD 26:1-37

54 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

The Ark of the Covenant was an ornate box made of acacia wood and covered with gold inside and out. God's presence dwelled between the wings of the cherubim that adorned the top. Inside were the tablets of the law that Moses brought down from Mount Sinai, a jar of manna, and the staff that budded to confirm Aaron as a priest. These objects reminded the people of God's laws for a

healthy community, his constant provision of food, and the authority of the leaders he had chosen.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Tabernacle was a portable structure that housed God's presence. It was not a gathering place for the people to worship, as a church is today. It was a way of connecting the people to God to keep them mindful that the Lord was with them wherever they went. Thus they enjoyed God's presence without being destroyed by his holiness. The Tabernacle was placed at the center of the encampment to symbolize that God was central to the lives of the Hebrews.

NEXT STOP

CLOTHING FOR THE PRIESTS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TABERNACLE

CLOTHING FOR THE PRIESTS

God's instructions for his people include what garments the priests would wear. God carefully and purposefully details what their clothing will look like, down to the last precious stone and the final engraved letter. These special garments set the priests apart from the rest of the people, making it clear that they are holy and belong especially to God and his work. The priesthood would bring the people into God's presence.

EXOD 28:1-43

OBSERVATION POINT

The chestpiece of the high priest was set with twelve precious and semiprecious gems, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Two additional stones, the Urim and Thummim, were carried inside the chestpiece. When the people sought special guidance from God, the high priest used these two stones much as we would draw straws or throw dice. Casting lots was practiced among many ancient cultures. For Israel, using these special stones was one of the ways God revealed his will to his people.

EXPLORATION POINT

Even the Hebrews wanted to know, "What's God's will for my life?" Throughout the centuries, humans have continued to seek God's will in discerning what choices to make. In biblical times consulting the high priest and casting lots was the agreed-on method; today we look for guidance from our pastors, from wise individuals, and directly from God's Spirit.

NEXT STOP

THE GOLD CALF

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD REVEALS HIMSELF AT SINAI

CLOTHING FOR THE PRIESTS

THE GOLD CALF

Moses remains with God on Mount Sinai longer than the people expect, making them wonder if he's abandoned them. Filled with distrust, they take matters into their own hands, fashioning a god that's more accessible and less mysterious. The Israelites forget about what God has done for them and about their promise to obey everything the Lord commanded.

EXOD 32:1–35:6

OBSERVATION POINT

Although the Hebrews had been slaves in Egypt, they had received lavish gifts from their neighbors before they departed. Moses had instructed the people to ask the locals for clothing and pieces of silver and gold. God inclined the Egyptians to be generous to the point that the Egyptians were "stripped . . . of their wealth" (12:36). Here the people gathered that fine jewelry to create something deeply offensive to God—a gold statue for the people to worship.

EXPLORATION POINT

Only a short time earlier, the people had unanimously agreed to do all that the Lord commanded. However, their impatience and demand for immediate gratification drove them into their old habits and Egyptian mindset. They reverted to a god that they could see, not one who appeared in smoke, fire, and thunder on a mountain. Their actions might appear ridiculous to us, but we too often put our trust in gold rather than depending on God.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S GLORY FILLS THE TABERNACLE

MOSES SEES THE LORD'S GLORY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE GOLD CALF

MOSES SEES THE LORD'S GLORY

God's righteous anger against the people for their idolatry culminates in a plague and then subsides. Moses ascends Mount Sinai once more and asks God to favor the people and provide the security of his continued presence with them. Then he listens as God responds.

EXOD 33:7–34:11; 34:27-35

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OBSERVATION POINT

Moses met with God face to face in the Tent of Meeting before the Tabernacle was completed. Inside, God told Moses what he wanted the people to do next, and when and where to travel. The Tent of Meeting served also as the meeting place for the leaders of Israel and for anyone who wanted to ask God for something. After the Tabernacle was completed, the Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle were one and the same.

EXPLORATION POINT

After talking with God, Moses' face was radiant. However, his appearance was not necessarily pleasant since it frightened the people to such an extent that Moses wore a veil. The outward sign was unmistakable: Moses had been with God. Today we have an even greater privilege than Moses had. We are in God's presence all the time. He does not stay in one specific place or location; he is with us wherever we go. Does your face—or your life—reflect God's presence with you?

NEXT STOP

GOD'S SKILLED CRAFTSMEN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

MOSES SEES THE LORD'S GLORY

GOD'S SKILLED CRAFTSMEN

Moses returns to the people with instructions for the Sabbath and for the Tabernacle. Both are set apart—a special time and a special space—for the Lord. God not only provides complete instructions for constructing the Tabernacle, he also gives his people the skills to complete the project.

EXOD 35:30–36:7

OBSERVATION POINT

The supplies for constructing the Tabernacle, its furnishings, and the priests' clothing came from people who were eager to share the precious metals, gems, and cloth they had hauled out of Egypt. These people had an adequate supply for the craftsmen and seamstresses to use. The acacia tree, common in the deserts around Sinai, supplied the wood needed for the construction. Acacia wood, a very hard, durable, and rot-resistant wood, is still used for furniture today.

EXPLORATION POINT

God doesn't simply give us instructions and then leave us to our own efforts. This passage makes it clear that God empowers people to fulfill his plans. Here it says that "the LORD has gifted . . . skilled craftsmen with wisdom and ability" (36:1). Too often we take the credit for our accomplishments. This story reminds us that all our talents and abilities come from God.

NEXT STOP

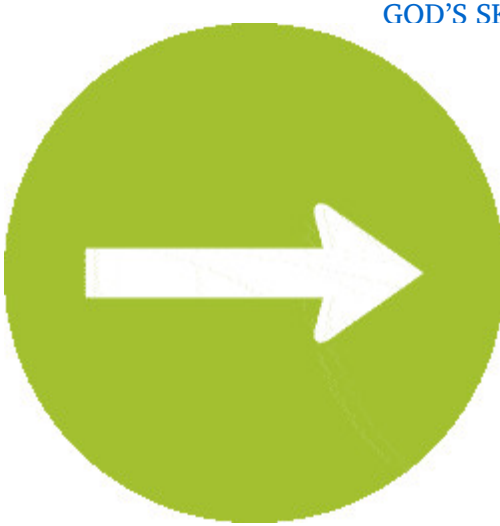
THE LORD'S GLORY FILLS THE TABERNACLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE GOLD CALF

GOD'S SKILLED CRAFTSMEN



THE LORD'S GLORY FILLS THE TABERNACLE

This is the moment that God has been preparing Israel for. All his instructions were given for this purpose. The people have God's laws to live by. The priests are arrayed in their garments. The Tabernacle is richly ornamented, and its furniture is handcrafted. God has made a people and a place for himself. Now they are ready to receive his presence.

EXOD 40:1-38

OBSERVATION POINT

Moses had the great privilege of talking to God on Mount Sinai for

forty days and nights. But while Moses would occasionally speak with God after his glory settled in the Tabernacle, this ongoing privilege was generally reserved for Aaron and his sons. Only ordained priests from the lineage of Aaron were allowed this great privilege throughout the history of the Tabernacle and the Temple.

EXPLORATION POINT

Aaron, the leader whom the people had coerced to create a gold calf, was anointed as a priest of the Tabernacle. Although he had sinned gravely against God, God forgave him and placed him in a position of great importance within the Israelite community. Our sin does not make us useless, no matter how great it is. God is willing to forgive us, to use us, and to allow us to know his presence.

NEXT STOP

HOLINESS IN PERSONAL CONDUCT
PROCEDURES FOR THE BURNT OFFERING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S GLORY FILLS THE TABERNACLE

PROCEDURES FOR THE BURNT OFFERING

God continues to put together a system that will help his people live with him. Once the Tabernacle is complete and God's presence is with his people, he gives Moses detailed instructions for sacrifices that will put the people in right standing with God. He also instructs them in how to make offerings for worship and thanksgiving.

READ:

LEV 1:1-17

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OBSERVATION POINT

God accepted several different animals as sacrifices for the burnt offering: cattle, sheep or goats, and birds. A bull without defect was worth much more than a sheep, goat, or bird because raising cattle was difficult in the dry lands of Sinai and Canaan. Sheep and goats were more common. Birds were permitted so that even the poorest individuals could offer a burnt offering to the Lord. Some pieces of the sacrificial animals were given to the priests as payment for their services.

EXPLORATION POINT

The complex rituals of sacrifice were performed throughout Israel's history. The burnt offering, sin offering, and guilt offering were atonement sacrifices. The grain and peace offerings were worship sacrifices. Even Jesus' parents, after his birth, brought birds to the temple as an offering to the Lord. Christ's death on the cross alleviated the need for the various sacrifices described in Leviticus. Instead, people were and still are made right with God through Christ.

NEXT STOP

ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PROCEDURES FOR THE BURNT OFFERING

ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS

After carefully instructing Moses on how to perform the sacrifices,

God selects the tribe of Levi to serve him as priests and as caretakers of the Tabernacle. Moses anoints Aaron and dresses him and his sons in the priestly garments, following God's commands. By presenting the sacrifices and wearing the holy garments, the priests are set apart from the people to serve God.

LEV 8:1-36

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OBSERVATION POINT

Aaron and his sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar were the focus of this ordination ceremony, in which they were set apart as priests. Since they were sinful, the ceremony needed to include the process of sanctifying them, making them holy in the sight of God. The unusual gesture of applying blood to the right ear, the right-hand thumb, and the big toe of the right foot symbolized the purification of every part of the body.

EXPLORATION POINT

Priests had a high calling from God but not a profitable one. Men from the tribe of Levi—called Levites—fulfilled the role of priests, but they did not own land. Instead, they were given some towns to live in. The offerings of the people supported the priests and their families, and they were allowed to eat certain parts of the animal sacrifices. Being a priest was prestigious and important in Israelite society, but it was not the career path to wealth.

NEXT STOP

THE SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ORDINATION OF THE PRIESTS

THE SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU

God clearly described how priests should conduct every ritual in the Tabernacle. The rules and regulations were clearly written out. Aaron's two sons, who have recently been appointed to serve God as priests, disregard God's instructions. God responds with swift judgment against the two men, clearly making a point that his rules must be obeyed.

LEV 10:1-20

OBSERVATION POINT

Nadab and Abihu were two of the men who experienced God's presence on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:9). They were anointed as priests when the Tabernacle was completed. Now, however, they ignored God's explicit instructions for presenting sacrifices and used fire from an unauthorized source. Their carelessness showed that they took God's holiness and authority lightly. They chose to do things their own way rather than God's way.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's reaction to Nadab and Abihu may seem extreme to us. But God had given his instructions for specific reasons, corresponding to his character. This event assured the people that when he said "you will die" for disobeying his commands, he meant it.

We can become careless about God's commands, too, relegating God's Word to the status of advice. But he provided those commandments to help us live life to the fullest, the way he meant us to.

NEXT STOP

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

God gives Moses further instructions for the high priest. Once a year, through a series of rituals, the high priest must purify the Most Holy Place, where God's presence resides. From there, the purification will spread throughout the whole Tabernacle—to the altar, to the priests, and to the people of God. But before those things can happen, the high priest must first purify himself.

LEV 16:1-34

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OBSERVATION POINT

The wilderness of Azazel is not a distinct geographic location. The meaning of the Hebrew word *azazel* is uncertain. It could refer to "the goat that goes away," possibly being a form of the verb "to leave." It might be a term for a rocky cliff. Or it could be the name of a demon dwelling in the wilderness. Though we are uncertain of this term's meaning, the point associated with it is clear: One goat is sent far away, carrying with it the sins of the people.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jewish people still celebrate the Day of Atonement but without the sacrifices and the goat. Today it is called Yom Kippur. The service is a way for the people to confess the sins of the past year and seek God's forgiveness. Christians, however, do not observe this particular event since Christ once and for all paid for our sins on the cross. He was the ultimate "scapegoat" who took away all our sins. Now, Christians can regularly confess their sins and ask for God's forgiveness.

NEXT STOP

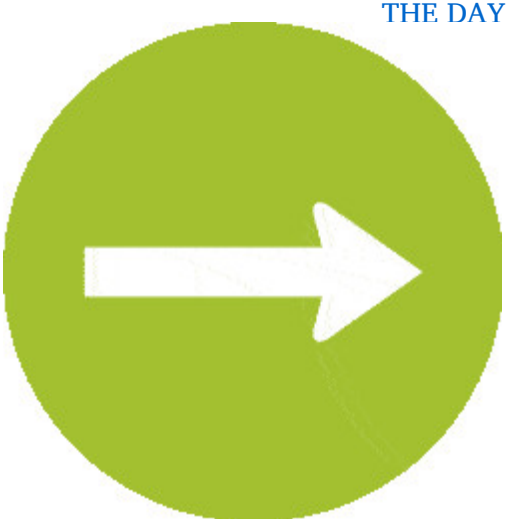
HOLINESS IN PERSONAL CONDUCT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S GLORY FILLS THE TABERNACLE

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT



HOLINESS IN PERSONAL CONDUCT

Even after God institutes the priesthood and fills the Tabernacle with his presence, the priests and people drift into sinful choices that distance them from him. So God gives Moses detailed

instructions for how his people should behave in their everyday lives. His commands include how to handle interpersonal conflict as well as public legal issues. Justice, integrity, and trusting God permeate the requirements that God gives his people.

LEV 19:1-37

OBSERVATION POINT

The concept of gleaning is established here (19:9-10), showing God's deep concern for the poor and powerless and establishing the Hebrews' responsibility to care for such people. By not harvesting the edges of the fields and leaving behind some of the produce in the fields and vineyards, the landowners helped provide for foreigners, widows, orphans, and the poor so that they would not go hungry. In this way, provision was made for everyone in the society.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's righteousness is what sets him apart and makes him holy. As broken people, we can never match God's righteousness, yet we are called to live holy lives. God's people must set themselves apart from the sins of the world—not because we're perfect but because we know how sin ruins our lives. Some of the rules God established for his people have become the norm in Western society, but there are still many ways in which Christians must strive to set themselves apart from others.

NEXT STOP

THE LOVE OF GOD'S LAW

THE LOVE OF GOD'S LAW

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HOLINESS IN PERSONAL CONDUCT

HOLINESS IN PERSONAL CONDUCT

THE LOVE OF GOD'S LAW

The people of Israel loved God's law. They respected all of the instructions that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai and during their journey in the wilderness. This psalm, written much later in history, sings of that appreciation and acknowledges that God's wise instructions far exceed any human wisdom.

PS 119:97-120

OBSERVATION POINT

The elders were those who had earned the respect of the community by sharing their wisdom. As the heads of local families, clans, or tribes, elders held an official position in Hebrew culture and other ancient cultures. Duties of the elders included arbitration, judging, sentencing, and leadership in military affairs.

EXPLORATION POINT

Many of the Old Testament laws seem strange, but they all are important for us, even today. Christ, who came to fulfill the law, renewed God's instructions such as the Ten Commandments. He fulfilled some parts of the law (e.g., the offerings and sacrifices) and gave even more radical standards for others (Matthew 5:17-48). Don't make the mistake of thinking we can ignore the law now that Christ has come.

NEXT STOP

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

THE SABBATH YEAR

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LOVE OF GOD'S LAW

THE SABBATH YEAR

God first gave Adam the responsibility of caring for his creation in the Garden of Eden. Now God gives Moses instructions for land use, property rights, and restoring the land. He outlines a plan to allow the land to rest. Once every seven years and again every fiftieth year, each field will go unplanted for an entire year.

LEV 25:1-22

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OBSERVATION POINT

Observing the Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee would have established excellent methods for conserving the land, keeping equality in land ownership, and securing justice and freedom for everyone. The book of Joshua records the division and distribution of the Promised Land. After Joshua died, the various tribes split apart. Some tribes moved out of their territories and forgot all about the land regulations. No existing records indicate that the Sabbath and Jubilee years were ever observed during the 1,100 years of Israel's history.

EXPLORATION POINT

Being a holy people included seeking justice. The Sabbath and Jubilee Year practices gave everyone equal rights, freedom, and second chances. Slaves would be freed, and land would be restored to the family that originally owned it. Unfortunately, rich landowners eventually claimed the land, and this plan for equality was forgotten. This injustice is one reason that the nation of Israel did not last. Even today God calls his people to seek justice and mercy for everyone.

NEXT STOP

REGISTRATION OF ISRAEL'S TROOPS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE SABBATH YEAR

REGISTRATION OF ISRAEL'S TROOPS

After instructing Moses in how his holy people should live, God tells Moses how to organize the people by their tribal divisions. Under God's direction, Moses appoints leaders in each tribe and gives them the task of counting the people. This is Israel's first census since Jacob's family of seventy moved to Egypt four hundred years earlier. Then, they were a family; now, they are a nation.

NUM 1:1-54

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OBSERVATION POINT

Organizing the Hebrews by family and tribe established meaningful

relationships for the people and helped to keep track of everyone as they traveled through the wilderness. Knowing how many men were available for battle was important for protection and for the eventual conquest of Canaan. The twelve tribes were named for ten of Jacob's sons and for the two sons of Joseph. Jacob's son Levi was not included since the Levites were set apart to serve God and did not fight or possess land. Organizing the families, clans, and tribes was critical in structuring the nation socially and politically.

EXPLORATION POINT

"Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" The Hebrews asked these questions too. They identified themselves as God's people by identifying which tribe they belonged to. Tracing their ancestry back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob allowed them to claim the blessings and promises God had made to their forefathers so many years before.

Throughout the Old Testament and into the early life of Christ, genealogies carried great significance for the Jews. Christ's coming eliminated the need to claim God's promises through a genealogy. As Christians we are part of the body of Christ and are heirs to God's Kingdom, promises, and blessings.

NEXT STOP

LEVITES APPOINTED FOR SERVICE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

REGISTRATION OF ISRAEL'S TROOPS

LEVITES APPOINTED FOR SERVICE

The firstborn son of each family would usually be the representative for his family, but here the Levites take over this task. God sets apart the tribe of Levi to assist the priests—Aaron's descendants—in fulfilling the sacred duties of the Tabernacle. The Levites will serve as representatives for all the people of Israel before God.

READ:

NUM 3:1-13, 40-51

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OBSERVATION POINT

The “firsts” of all things were considered sacred—firstborn sons, firstfruits of harvest, and the firstborn animals from the Hebrews’ flocks and herds. These firsts were set apart for God. All males of the tribe of Levi, however, were substituted for the firstborn sons of the entire nation. Because the numbers didn’t match up exactly, money was paid to make up the difference. Who actually put up the money is unclear.

EXPLORATION POINT

Caring for the Tabernacle was a family business. A boy born into

the tribe of Levi knew exactly what he was going to be when he grew up. Still, different clans handled different responsibilities. The descendants of Gershon attended to the tent fabric and the ropes. The descendants of Kohath cared for the Tabernacle's interior and the furniture. The descendants of Merari monitored the frames that supported the tent. These groups served for over five hundred years until King Solomon in 960 BC built a permanent structure, the Temple.

NEXT STOP

NAZIRITE LAWS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LEVITES APPOINTED FOR SERVICE

NAZIRITE LAWS

Some Israelites choose to devote themselves wholly to God for a period of time. God outlines instructions for people to dedicate themselves to him. The obligations of the vow are strict but voluntary.

NUM 6:1-27

OBSERVATION POINT

We don't know how common it was for someone to take this Nazirite vow. The vow provided a way for Israelites who were not of the tribe of Levi to dedicate themselves to God. Although Israelite men wore beards and let their hair grow long, they did cut it occasionally, but a Nazirite would not. The Bible mentions only three people who took the vow of a Nazirite: Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Nazirite vow is no longer followed, but when Christians are baptized we similarly show that we are separating ourselves from the world and choosing to follow Christ. The teachings of Jesus often disregard what society deems normal and acceptable. If we follow Christ's ways and live by his Spirit, our choices will be different from those of the world around us.

NEXT STOP

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD REVEALS HIMSELF AT SINAI

THE LOVE OF GOD'S LAW

NAZIRITE LAWS

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

A year after God's people crossed the Red Sea, God calls them to remember their deliverance from Egypt by celebrating the Passover. God provides detailed instructions for observing the Passover, but he graciously allows flexibility in the observance and welcomes foreigners to participate. God is fulfilling his promise to Abraham: His blessings are spreading out through Abraham's descendants and beyond. He reminds them all of his presence through the cloud and fire hovering over the Tabernacle. In God's big story, his people find freedom and blessing by living in his presence.

NUM 9:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

God used familiar sights to show his presence: a cloud during the day that glowed like fire at night. Since leaving Egypt, the people had been protected by God's presence. The cloud had protected them from Pharaoh's army that charged after them, and it had led them through the Red Sea. As the Tabernacle stood in the center of Israel's camp, the cloud hovered over it, signifying God's presence with his people. When the cloud moved, the nation followed; when it stopped, they settled down.

EXPLORATION POINT

Many of us would love to have a sign as visible and obvious as a cloud or a pillar of fire to show us where God was leading. This was an effective way of providing guidance when God's people were all in one place at one time and numbered about two million. Today, we have something better: God's holy Word—the Bible—and God's Holy Spirit, present within us, to guide us.

NEXT STOP

THE FALL OF JERICHO

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN TO MOSES

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN TO MOSES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN TO MOSES

The Hebrews continue their journey to the Promised Land, following the cloud of the Lord's presence. They move from the wilderness of Sinai to the wilderness of Paran. The people quickly become bored with the food supply. The manna they miraculously receive each day becomes a meal they despise. Their ungrateful hearts arouse God's anger. Yet even in the midst of his discipline, he pours out his Spirit upon their leaders.

NUM 11:1-35, 31-35

OBSERVATION POINT

The appearance of quail can partly be explained by their natural migration through this area. Every year, quail migrate from northern Europe and Asia, across the Sinai Peninsula to Africa, and back again. Millions of birds fly close to the ground due to the strong downdrafts of wind. Yet even though these birds fly through the area naturally, having enough birds to feed two million people would have required God's intervention.

EXPLORATION POINT

It's easy for us to recognize Israel's whining and complaining as sinful and displeasing to God. But wouldn't we do the same if all there was to eat in the house was a loaf of bread and a chicken—day after day? When we pray "give us today the food we need," God will answer. It may not be a month's worth of groceries but just enough until our next meal—when we will have to trust God again. Whatever God gives us, we can receive it with gratitude and thanksgiving.

NEXT STOP

TWELVE SCOUTS EXPLORE CANAAN

TWELVE SCOUTS EXPLORE CANAAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN TO MOSES

THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN TO MOSES

TWELVE SCOUTS EXPLORE CANAAN

The Hebrews set up camp in the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh-barnea, about fifty miles south of the Promised Land. From there, Moses dispatches twelve men into the Promised Land on a reconnaissance mission. They spend forty days exploring the land and gathering samples of the local crops. When they return, the twelve report good news and bad news. The news divides them over what to do next.

READ:

NUM 13:1–33; 14:9

OBSERVATION POINT

Spying was a typical military tactic of this time period. The spies traveled 275 miles north into the new territory west of the Jordan River. The first section of land, the Negev, was dry, bordering the wilderness. Farther north, they entered the hill country of Canaan, which was far more fertile. The grass-covered hills were ideal for milk-producing goats and sheep; the fertile land yielded flower-producing plants and trees, the pollen of which bees turned into honey. It was exactly what God had promised.

EXPLORATION POINT

After living in the wilderness for two years, the Hebrews found the land exactly as God had promised—a land flowing with milk and honey. God had brought them out of Egypt, protected them from Pharaoh's army, miraculously led them through the Red Sea, and provided bread, water, and meat in the middle of nowhere. But now his people were afraid to trust him to fulfill his promises. God's gift was waiting for them, but it required faith.

NEXT STOP

MOSES STRIKES THE ROCK

THE PEOPLE REBEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

TWELVE SCOUTS EXPLORE CANAAN

THE PEOPLE REBEL

The Promised Land is everything that God has promised it would be. But the fears and doubts of ten men cause over a million people to rebel against God's promise and plan. Exasperated by their lack of faith, God threatens to wipe out everyone and start over with the descendants of Moses. Moses pleads with God to consider what that would mean.

NUM 14:1-45

OBSERVATION POINT

Most of the people were dissatisfied with the decision of their leaders, but they lived not in a democracy but in a theocracy. The majority didn't rule—God did. God had clearly told them that if they followed and obeyed, things would go well and he would bless them. If they disobeyed, things would go poorly and he would punish them. God was consistent with what he promised.

EXPLORATION POINT

When Moses pleaded for God's mercy, he was acting a lot like Christ. Christ advocates for us before God in heaven, just as Moses advocated for the people of Israel. However, Christ did something Moses couldn't: He overcame sin and death for us. By contrast, the people of Israel wandered for forty years in the desert and died there, yet God's mercy continued even then. A new generation would enter the land.

NEXT STOP

KORAH'S REBELLION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE PEOPLE REBEL

KORAH'S REBELLION

After the people of Israel refuse to enter the Promised Land, a new rebellion flares up when a few men incite 250 leaders to challenge Moses and Aaron. Moses calls upon God to judge between them and vindicate whichever side is right. This time God's response is visible and decisive.

READ:

NUM 16:1-50

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OBSERVATION POINT

God had clearly appointed the Levites to care for the Tabernacle, but not all were permitted to be priests. Moses and Aaron were Levites, but only Aaron and his descendants were allowed to be priests. Korah, from the tribe of Levi, along with Dathan and Abiram, from the tribe of Reuben, challenged God's selection of priests and also Moses' right to lead. This rebellion was the most serious thus far, and God responded accordingly.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's calling to the priesthood was a great privilege. God had

appointed Aaron and his relatives to this position. No one else could serve God in this capacity without being born into it. The role of high priest was passed down from one generation to the next. This arrangement, however, ended when Christ became our High Priest for all time.

NEXT STOP

THE BUDDING OF AARON'S STAFF

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

KORAH'S REBELLION

THE BUDDING OF AARON'S STAFF

God has chosen Aaron to serve Israel as high priest, but the Israelites don't trust the appointment that was communicated through Moses. They challenge Aaron's claim to the priesthood. God decides to put to rest, once and for all, any lingering doubts they might have. So he chooses a unique sign to identify Aaron as

his chosen high priest.

NUM 17:1-13

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OBSERVATION POINT

In Canaan, almond trees would blossom toward the end of January, reminding people of the rebirth of spring and the hope it brings. Almond blossoms were used symbolically in the Tabernacle. The lampstand was reminiscent of an almond tree in spring, with its seven branches decorated with almond blossoms. Living almond wood is very soft; it hardens and becomes strong enough for a staff only after it has completely dried out. Therefore, for Aaron's staff to sprout buds, blossom, and produce nuts overnight was clearly God's doing.

EXPLORATION POINT

When we select our leaders we normally don't have as clear an indication from God as the Israelites had in confirming Aaron as high priest. Choosing a good leader in business, church, education, or politics is a process that requires our careful judgment and discernment. It also requires trusting God and paying attention to his guidance. God will guide our decisions if we seek his will, pray for his help, and listen for his leading.

NEXT STOP

MOSES STRIKES THE ROCK

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

TWELVE SCOUTS EXPLORE CANAAN

THE BUDDING OF AARON'S STAFF

MOSES STRIKES THE ROCK

When the people, in fear, refused to enter the Promised Land and conquer it, God promised that they would wander in the desert for forty years. After years of wandering, once again the people find themselves thirsty and without water. Once again they complain to Moses about the situation. Once again God instructs Moses in how to provide for the needs of his people. But this time, something is different. And it will change Moses' life.

READ:

NUM 20:1-13

OBSERVATION POINT

Aaron's staff was an ordinary object that God had transformed into a sacred one by miraculously causing it to blossom, produce nuts, and thus identify Aaron as the true high priest. Because of the staff's new character, it was kept in the Tabernacle in front of the Ark of the Covenant. It now represented God's authority. Whoever held the staff was speaking for God.

EXPLORATION POINT

The last time the Hebrews needed water, Moses struck a rock and water gushed out. This time, God told Moses just to speak to the

rock to produce water. But Moses ignored the details and made the same dramatic display as the first time, raising the staff and hitting the rock twice. His action had severe consequences: God prohibited him from entering the Promised Land. Moses did more than fail to follow instructions—he failed to trust God and reflect his holiness.

NEXT STOP

THE BRONZE SNAKE

THE BRONZE SNAKE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

MOSES STRIKES THE ROCK

MOSES STRIKES THE ROCK

THE BRONZE SNAKE

After forty years, a generation of Hebrews has grown up in the wilderness, knowing only the taste of manna. They, like their parents, grow sick of it, and like their parents, they complain to Moses, longing for the “good old days” in Egypt that they’d heard about. Their complaining, however, angers God, and he sends snakes to punish them. But he also sends them a way to be saved.

NUM 21:1-95

OBSERVATION POINT

The image of a snake wrapped around a pole is used today to symbolize healing. It dates back to Greek mythology from the sixteenth century BC. Moses' use of the bronze snake on a pole occurred about two hundred years after that time. The bronze snake remained with the Israelites for hundreds of years, and the people eventually worshiped it, calling it Nehushtan. King Hezekiah finally destroyed the symbol during the religious reforms of his reign.

EXPLORATION POINT

The snake raised up on a pole foreshadowed Christ's being raised up on the cross to bring the world salvation. The snake embodied God's grace to the people of Israel, but their salvation lasted only a short time whereas Christ's sacrifice on the cross lasts forever. In both cases, salvation comes through faith. The Hebrews had to believe that by looking at the bronze snake, they would be healed. We too must believe and have faith that Christ's death and resurrection will bring us life.

NEXT STOP

A CALL TO REMEMBER AND OBEY

BALAAM AND HIS DONKEY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE BRONZE SNAKE

BALAAM AND HIS DONKEY

After their experience with the bronze snake, the people of Israel continue on their way to the Promised Land. As they go, their conquering reputation precedes them. The local kings in the land of Moab are terrified by this mass of people whose victories against other nations are well known. Balak, king of Moab, knows he cannot overpower Israel's warriors, so he decides to attack them spiritually. He hires a man named Balaam for the task.

READ: Num. 22:1-41

OBSERVATION POINT

Balaam was a diviner, a person believed to tell the future and perform spells that affected it. He was well known, and his services were pricey, but when King Balak of Moab saw the mighty nation of Israel entering his country, he called on Balaam to put a curse on the Israelites so he could conquer them. Although Balaam seemed to know the Lord and desired to obey him, he really wanted to get

paid. When he realized that it was impossible for him to curse God's nation, he blessed them through four great prophecies (Numbers 23–24).

EXPLORATION POINT

God mocked Balaam and his profession by making the donkey, an animal known for its stubbornness and stupidity, talk. Balaam was supposed to be able to see the future, but it was the donkey that could actually see the angel of the Lord. Balaam saw the angel only after the Lord opened his eyes. Once he was aware of God's presence, Balaam knew that he could only do what God commanded him to do. God made it very clear that he is in control of everything at all times—including diviners and donkeys.

NEXT STOP

THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

BALAAM AND HIS DONKEY

THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

At the Lord's direction, Moses initiates a second census. It has been forty years since the previous census, and the preceding generation has died in the wilderness. Now that the people of Israel have been numbered, they prepare themselves to receive the portion of the land that God has promised them.

NUM 27:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

The Hebrews knew that officially the land was God's and that they were allowed to live there as tenants. Strict laws required that the land allotted to each tribe stay within the family, clan, and tribe. In a patriarchal society, only sons were recognized as rightful heirs, but Zelophehad's five daughters had good reasons for keeping the land within the family. Similar provisions appeared in Sumerian laws and Hammurabi's Code from around the same time.

EXPLORATION POINT

What may appear to us as a logical claim was actually quite unusual at the time. As is still true in many societies today, women in biblical times had few rights of their own. Women were sheltered, protected, and provided for by husbands, fathers, and brothers. These five women were very bold and courageous to approach Moses, Eleazar, and the national leaders to plead their case for securing their father's inheritance. They showed great conviction in coming forward and speaking up.

NEXT STOP

CONQUEST OF THE MIDIANITES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD

CONQUEST OF THE MIDIANITES

God's people are approaching the Promised Land from the eastern side of the Jordan River. They camp in the region of Moab. Meanwhile, the Midianites from the south have traveled north and joined their Moabite allies. While the Midianites are there, the Hebrew men have sexual relations with the local women and

worship their pagan god, Baal of Peor. After punishing the guilty people, God commands Moses and the Hebrews to take revenge on the Midianites.

NUM 31:1-54

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OBSERVATION POINT

This battle exemplified God's intent to provide land and possessions for his people, as he had promised Abraham long ago. The Lord commanded Israel to undertake this holy war and provided the miraculous victory. While every Midianite male was killed, not one Hebrew soldier died in battle. The Hebrews handled the treasures, cattle, and captives—the plunder—according to God's law: Some were dedicated to the Lord, some given to the Levites, and the rest divided among the soldiers. The Hebrews followed the Lord's command to purge Canaan of idol worshipers and showed that the God of Israel was the one true God of all.

EXPLORATION POINT

God never gave Israel permission to wage war indiscriminately; he only allowed them to claim one specific area at one specific time in history. God's goal was for Israel to seize the land, annihilate the pagan cultures, and settle in the land to be a witness—and a blessing—to other nations. The accomplishments of war were not for Israel's sole benefit. Everything, including the land, was dedicated to God. Wars today are completely different than the wars fought for the Promised Land. They are motivated by human sin, greed, and desire for power, not by a desire to fulfill God's promise.

NEXT STOP

MOSES URGES ISRAEL TO OBEY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

CONQUEST OF THE MIDIANITES

MOSES URGES ISRAEL TO OBEY

The people of Israel are finally ready to enter and secure the Promised Land—the land God promised to them forty years earlier, the land he had promised to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob more than four-hundred years before that. The Israelites have already encountered foreign kings and people east of the Jordan River, but now they are preparing to cross west over the river to invade the heart of Canaan. Before they do, Moses has words of encouragement and warnings for them.

DEUT 4:1-43

OBSERVATION POINT

Forty years earlier, the Israelites had camped at Mount Sinai for a year. From Mount Sinai their journey to the Promised Land should have taken about eleven days. But because they did not believe God and were terrified at the reports of giants in the land, God disciplined them by leading them in the wilderness for an additional thirty-eight years. They had looked like aimless nomads the entire time, but they were actually learning to follow God.

EXPLORATION POINT

God always has a plan. He had a great plan for his people, but he frequently had to adjust it to allow for their lack of faith, doubting, and complaining. If they had followed his instructions completely, they would have been "home" in little more than a year. God has a plan for our lives too. Sometimes things don't go exactly as planned: We take a detour or go in circles because we doubt God's goodness or ignore his instructions. The journey might take longer than it had to, but God is faithful. He will keep working in you. Keep trusting—the "promised land" is in sight!

NEXT STOP

A CALL TO REMEMBER AND OBEY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE BRONZE SNAKE

MOSES URGES ISRAEL TO OBEY

A CALL TO REMEMBER AND OBEY

On the border of the Promised Land, Moses reminds the people of everything that God said and did for the last forty years. This is his last opportunity to ensure that everyone knows the story before they scatter into their tribes' allotted regions. He offers them words of encouragement for the struggles they will face as they enter the land of Canaan.

READ:

DEUT 8:1–20

OBSERVATION POINT

Moses emphasized how God provided manna for the people to keep them alive but, more than that, to remind them that they depended on God for everything: bread, water, protection. Manna was more than food. It represented the word of God. The phrase “people do not live by bread alone; rather, we live by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” was quoted by Jesus more than a thousand years later when he confronted Satan in the desert. Jesus himself was aware of his need to constantly depend on his Father in heaven.

EXPLORATION POINT

We often think that we can achieve great things on our own. We easily overlook how everything we have or accomplish comes from God. We are proud of the advancements we’ve made and the knowledge we’ve gained since the days of the wandering Israelites. We may even think that we far surpass the people of the Bible. But we need to remember that God gives us the power to succeed, so

that we don't say, "I have achieved this with my own strength and energy." All that we are and have comes from God.

NEXT STOP

JOSHUA BECOMES ISRAEL'S LEADER

RELEASE FOR DEBTORS AND SLAVES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CALL TO REMEMBER AND OBEY

RELEASE FOR DEBTORS AND SLAVES

Moses' words of encouragement and instruction continue. Among other things, he reviews the covenant agreement that God made with Israel. This agreement includes commands for the people to present offerings to the Lord, maintain a healthy diet, and depend on God by giving him one-tenth of their crops and herds. Finally, Moses reminds them to look out for the poor.

DEUT 15:1-18

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OBSERVATION POINT

God's instructions included careful regulations to provide for the

poor, the widows and orphans, and others in need. If the Israelites had followed the rules God gave them at Mount Sinai, poor people would not have existed in their nation. Unfortunately, this state of perfection was never realized. God knew the frailty of his people and thus made additional provision for the poor (Leviticus 23:22). Poverty became a major issue in the nation later on because Israel did not even follow the basic rule of giving generously.

EXPLORATION POINT

Caring for the poor was central to God's laws for his people. This compassion made the Israelite nation different from the surrounding nations. But as the nation grew strong, powerful, and wealthy, the poor were overlooked. Today, Christians should continue to fulfill this law of compassion. Christ often cared for the poor and the downtrodden and taught others to do the same. As bearers of Christ's name, we must strive for justice that will further God's Kingdom here on earth.

NEXT STOP

REGULATIONS CONCERNING WAR

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

RELEASE FOR DEBTORS AND SLAVES

REGULATIONS CONCERNING WAR

After calling for fair treatment of the poor, Moses continues to review the rules and regulations of the covenant. He prescribes three festivals to celebrate God's care for his people. Then he outlines the limits of power for four types of leaders. Next, he establishes cities of refuge to provide fair trials and prevent vengeance killings. Now, before the people invade the Promised Land, Moses instructs the people on the rules of war.

READ:

DEUT 20:1-20

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OBSERVATION POINT

Conserving the trees in Canaan was wise advice because the Israelites would be resettling the land after the enemy was annihilated. They would need mature trees for food and shade. Canaan was rich in trees that produced nuts, such as almonds and pistachios, and typical Middle Eastern fruits, especially olives, figs, dates, and pomegranates. To destroy the trees would be destroying part of God's promise of "a land flowing with milk and honey."

EXPLORATION POINT

The existing nations in Canaan worshiped idols and observed

wicked religious rituals, including prostitution and child sacrifice. These practices debased humanity. God wanted these people annihilated so that they would not contaminate his holy people. God had destroyed evil people before, first with the Great Flood and later with fire and burning sulfur. Now he planned to work through Israel to wipe out the nations living in Canaan. Israel wasn't larger, more powerful, or less sinful than these other nations, but God chose them to fulfill his plan. Israel, however, did not follow this plan as completely as God desired.

NEXT STOP

JOSHUA BECOMES ISRAEL'S LEADER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CALL TO REMEMBER AND OBEY

REGULATIONS CONCERNING WAR

JOSHUA BECOMES ISRAEL'S LEADER

Moses finishes giving God's instructions to his people. Moses knows his time as the leader of God's people is coming to an end. It is time to hand over responsibility to a new leader. But amid the anticipation of a new leader and the excitement over a new chapter in Israel's history, the Lord has words of warning for his people.

READ: Deuteronomy 31:1-13

DEUT 31:1-29

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OBSERVATION POINT

Joshua was well qualified to take over for Moses. He had assisted Moses even before God gave the Ten Commandments, learning military strategy and leading the Hebrew troops into battle. He had scouted out the Promised Land and returned confident that God would help them occupy the land. He understood the people, and they respected him. Above all, he had a strong faith in God. Because of this, he was one of only two Hebrews not to die in the wilderness. He was tasked with leading Israel in its conquest of the Promised Land.

EXPLORATION POINT

Change in leadership can be difficult—for a former leader, for a new one, and for the people who have to adjust to a new personality. Joshua was very different from Moses. God chose him for a different leadership task: to conquer Canaan. He was a proven warrior and confident from the start, accepting his new role with no objection. This transition to a new leader who is approved and blessed by the former leader is an excellent example for us to follow.

NEXT STOP

RAHAB PROTECTS THE SPIES

THE DEATH OF MOSES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE DEATH OF MOSES

After his final address to the people, Moses climbs Pisgah Peak to see the land that Israel will soon enter. He is 120 years old. Although he is still strong, he knows that his life is almost over. Behind him, he has left a legacy of leadership and an example of humble service. He has lived a life of faithfulness, and the Lord has used him powerfully.

READ: Deuteronomy 34:1-12

OBSERVATION POINT

Moses had a relationship with God unlike anyone else's in Scripture, allowing him to approach God's holiness without the protection of an intercessor. Only Moses had the privilege of talking to God face-to-face as a friend. Ordinary prophets and leaders received instructions from God through dreams and visions. Moses received God's words clearly, simply, and directly.

EXPLORATION POINT

Throughout the Old Testament, people could not approach God directly. They always needed someone to stand between them and God's holy presence. The high priest or a great leader like Moses acted as their mediator with God. No one was pure and holy enough to approach God on their own. All that changed with Christ's coming to earth. We can now experience the presence of God in prayer and have his Spirit continually with us in our daily lives.

NEXT STOP

RAHAB PROTECTS THE SPIES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOSHUA BECOMES ISRAEL'S LEADER

THE DEATH OF MOSES

RAHAB PROTECTS THE SPIES

After Moses dies, Joshua begins to lead God's people. Moses led the people through the desert as nomads, but Joshua leads the people as invading warriors. He readies the people to enter the Promised Land and conquer the first key city—Jericho. In preparation, he sends spies to gather intelligence about the city. Inside the city, one woman becomes an unexpected ally.

JOSH 2:1–24

OBSERVATION POINT

Flax, used to make linen cloth, was harvested in March or April in Canaan. The entire plant was harvested, bundled, and left to dry either in the fields or on rooftops. To make linen, the stalk was split open, and the fiber threads were separated out with a comb. Then the threads were spun together and woven into linen. It made sense to hide someone under the piles of flax plants drying on the flat rooftop.

EXPLORATION POINT

Many people think they have to be less sinful to be part of God's family. Rahab's story proves otherwise. God chooses people just as they are to further his plan. If God can use Rahab, a foreigner and a prostitute, to do great things for him, he can use us too, no matter how sinful we are. Rahab was such an important addition to God's plan that she is named in Jesus' genealogy (Matthew 1:5). No sin—no matter how vile, hidden, or shameful—is outside the reach of God's forgiveness.

NEXT STOP

THE FALL OF JERICHO

THE ISRAELITES CROSS THE JORDAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

RAHAB PROTECTS THE SPIES

THE ISRAELITES CROSS THE JORDAN

After forty years of quail, manna, tents, and wilderness, God's people are ready to cross the border and officially enter the Promised Land. But first the people have to cross another body of water, the Jordan River—at flood stage—without a bridge or a boat. They need faith and a miracle.

JOSH 3:1–4:14

OBSERVATION POINT

The Jordan River was in its spring flood stage. This stretch of river, which normally flows gently, was raging with the spring run-off from the mountain snows and the regional rainfall. It was probably 90 to 100 feet wide and 10 to 12 feet deep. The priests faithfully stepped into a river that would normally have swept them off their feet and carried them downstream. Instead, God stopped the flow of the river, forming a wall of water as he had in the Red Sea, so the people could walk across on dry ground.

EXPLORATION POINT

A new generation of Hebrews entered the Promised Land. Their parents and grandparents—the ones who had seen the miracles in Egypt and crossed the Red Sea on dry ground—had died in the wilderness. God repeated the miracle—crossing on dry ground—to show this new group that he was the Lord Almighty, who would be with them wherever they went. Even today, each generation that is nurtured in the church's stories of other Christians' faith and experiences eventually must experience God for themselves, come to know him, and trust in his love and promises to make their faith grow stronger.

NEXT STOP

THE FALL OF JERICHO

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE

RAHAB PROTECTS THE SPIES

THE ISRAELITES CROSS THE JORDAN

THE FALL OF JERICHO

After their long journey, God's people cross the flooded Jordan River and set foot in the Promised Land. But some of their biggest trials still await them. God has commanded them to drive out the people currently living in the land, but he doesn't send them out to battle alone. The "commander of the LORD's army"—God himself—will lead them. Throughout the big story, God continually makes contact with his people. He appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and now Joshua. His presence inspires fear, awe, and courage. He gives instructions that require trust and perseverance, and he stays with his people through it all.

READ:

JOSH 5:13–6:27

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OBSERVATION POINT

Capturing Jericho involved both religious rituals and military strategy. Military tactics of this time period included besieging the city, circling around it, and blowing the ram's horn as a signal of battle. Religious practices included following behind the Ark, a symbol of God's presence; using the sacred number seven and its multiples; and shouting to celebrate God's victory. This was a new kind of warfare, led by God.

EXPLORATION POINT

Psychological warfare is nothing new. At Jericho, the Hebrews' shouting would have terrified the people of the city. They were the feared warriors of that time and place. Yet their conflict was won not with weapons but through trust and obedience to God, allowing *him* to win the battle for his people. This type of warfare was acceptable only in the Old Testament under God's direct command. Christ preached that we should take an entirely new approach to our enemies: love, not hate. We should promote peace as Christ did,

not conflict.

NEXT STOP

POSSESSING THE PROMISED LAND
ISRAEL DEFEATS CANAAN'S SOUTHERN ARMIES

ISRAEL DEFEATS CANAAN'S SOUTHERN ARMIES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE FALL OF JERICHO

THE FALL OF JERICHO

ISRAEL DEFEATS CANAAN'S SOUTHERN ARMIES

News of Joshua's victories over the cities of Jericho and Ai makes the kings in Canaan tremble. Men from the city of Gibeon lie to Joshua and trick the Israelites into making peace with them. Even though it violates God's instructions, Joshua honors this agreement. Before they know it, the Gibeonites have drawn them into a new conflict, and Israel comes to their defense.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Hailstones of any size can be painful and damaging, but the ones God pelted down on the Amorites were lethal. Sometimes hailstones can freeze together into large chunks of ice before reaching the ground. The hailstones mentioned in this story could have been eleven or twelve inches in circumference, weighing more than a pound. Hail that large and heavy would certainly be deadly.

EXPLORATION POINT

Warfare was going on in more than one way. Not only was Joshua battling the Amorites, but God was symbolically battling two of the

most powerful gods of the Canaanites—the sun and the moon. When the sun stayed high in the sky and the moon did not rise, God was declaring that he was more powerful than any other god. Only God, the creator of the sun and the moon, has the power to control every part of his creation.

NEXT STOP

POSSESSING THE PROMISED LAND
ISRAEL DEFEATS CANAAN'S NORTHERN KINGS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ISRAEL DEFEATS CANAAN'S SOUTHERN ARMIES

ISRAEL DEFEATS CANAAN'S NORTHERN KINGS

News of Israel's devastating victories continues to spread. Led by Joshua, God's people continue to conquer the land. Fearing the power of the invaders, the city-kings in the northern territory of Canaan know they must unite to stand any chance of defeating Israel. Together they amass a huge army. Even though God's people are outnumbered, God assures Joshua that he is fighting for them, so they will be victorious.

JOSH 11:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

This battle was the first time that the Hebrews encountered horses and chariots in their conquest of Canaan. The enemy warriors rode in chariots pulled by the horses rather than riding into battle on horseback. Although Joshua was greatly outnumbered and had no chariots, his surprise attack and God's support allowed his foot soldiers to annihilate this massive army.

EXPLORATION POINT

Before the battle, God instructed Joshua to destroy all the chariots and horses that he captured from the enemy. God wanted the nation of Israel to rely on him for their power and strength, not on horses, chariots, or other advanced implements of war. Too often we trust things we can see or control: the latest technology, our bank accounts, a major contract, or an insurance policy. We believe that we can protect ourselves and secure our future. But nothing we do or prepare for can ensure safety or a bright future; only God can do that. He is the source of our security and the one we must trust for everything we need.

NEXT STOP

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ISRAEL DEFEATS CANAAN'S NORTHERN KINGS

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

Israel conquers the people of Canaan in two major campaigns, one in the south and one in the north. By this time Joshua is growing old, and even though more land remains to be taken, God does not ask him to lead the conquest. Instead, God promises to bring that about himself. For Joshua's part, God asks him to give each of the

tribes its own territory. He also sets up a few cities as safe places for people seeking to avoid wrongful vengeance: cities of refuge.

JOSH 20:1-9

OBSERVATION POINT

In a time when people routinely sought vengeance for a person's murder, the cities of refuge provided some degree of justice. A person who accidentally killed someone could live safely in one of these cities. If they left the city, however, they risked death by a relative of the person killed. These six cities, established in different regions according to the law (Numbers 35:6-34), were unprecedented in the ancient Near East.

EXPLORATION POINT

Revenge for murder was the law accepted in Israel: “a life for a life” (Exodus 21:23). We don’t follow that law any longer because Jesus taught us something different. He acknowledged the Old Testament law, but in the Sermon on the Mount he altered it by teaching forgiveness and even generosity in response to injustice (Matthew 5:38-42). Jesus taught his followers to willingly give up their personal rights and forgive others as God forgave them.

NEXT STOP

JOSHUA’S FINAL WORDS TO ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

JOSHUA’S FINAL WORDS TO ISRAEL

Joshua took over leadership from Moses before God’s people entered the Promised Land. He led them to conquer many of the local kings and settle much of the region. Joshua spent his lifetime

serving and leading God's people, and he saw God faithfully guide and protect them. Now as he nears death, Joshua gives the people some final instructions, charging them to love and obey the Lord.

JOSH 23:1-16; 24:25-33

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OBSERVATION POINT

Joshua set up a huge stone at Shechem to help the people remember that they had renewed God's covenant there. It was probably a large flat stone set upright, perhaps with writing chiseled into it. Numerous stone monuments stood throughout the Promised Land, reminding the people of God's covenant and their need to obey his law. Each one visibly reminded them of all God had done for his people.

EXPLORATION POINT

As long as there was someone alive who could remember all the great things God had done during Joshua's lifetime, the people had a witness to God's miraculous deeds. However, telling the next generation the stories of the past did not always instill belief in the Lord Almighty. Moses and Joshua both emphasized the need to remember all that God had done for the people, but memories alone didn't make faith come alive. Each generation needed to trust God for themselves; many had to learn to trust God the hard way.

NEXT STOP

POSSESSING THE PROMISED LAND

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE FALL OF JERICHO

ISRAEL DEFEATS CANAAN'S SOUTHERN ARMIES

JOSHUA'S FINAL WORDS TO ISRAEL

YEAR:
1375 BC
CURRENT WORLD POWER:
Egypt
STATUS OF GOD'S PEOPLE:
Emerging Nation

POSSESSING THE PROMISED LAND

During Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness, God prepared his people to become a nation and taught them to rely on him. Now, at last, Israel is ready to take up residence in the Promised Land. God leads the people into battle, providing victory after victory. After about thirty years, Israel's army has conquered

every city-state in Canaan, but they have left many of the local people living alongside them.

Finally, the Hebrews settle down in the areas designated for each of the twelve tribes. The first part of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has been fulfilled: they were living in the land. God is with his people in every region as they enjoy peace and rest. But God's plan is not yet complete—he desires for the people to, in turn, bless all nations. Years pass. Before Joshua dies at age 110, he challenges the Hebrews to serve the Lord, and they unanimously promise to do so. Unfortunately, their oath lasts only as long as the elders who served under Joshua's leadership. In a short time, the people forget about their vow to serve the Lord and obey him alone. They blend their worship of God with the local people's worship of pagan gods. Some desert God completely.

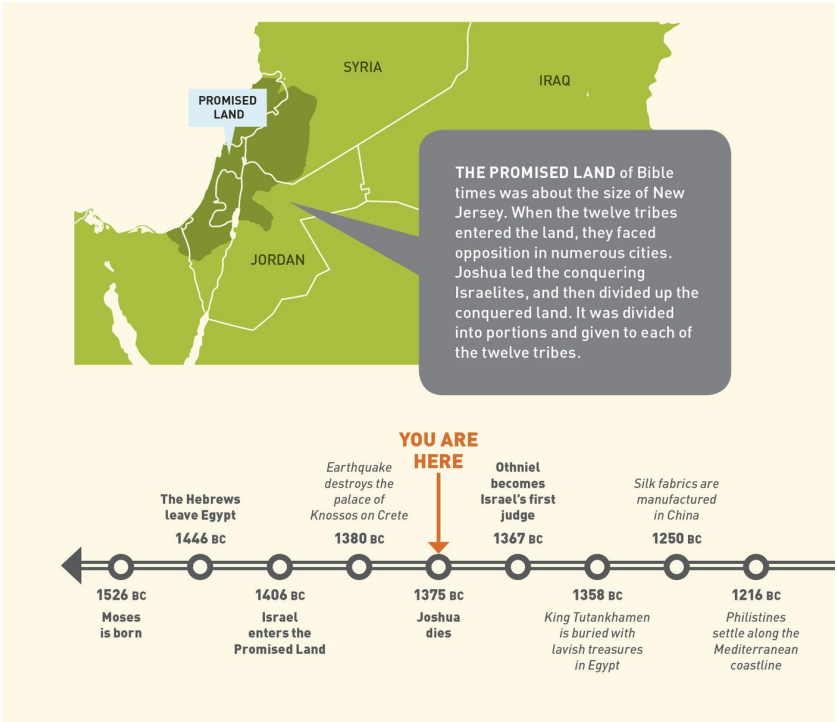
WHERE ARE WE GOING?

For the next 325 years, God's people will experience cycles of disobedience, punishment, confession, and restoration: They forget God and worship idols; God allows an enemy to punish them; the people cry to God for deliverance; God sends a judge to save them; they return to obeying and loving God. Then the pattern repeats. Oppressive enemies arise from the areas surrounding the Promised Land, and at different times they attack various Israelite tribes, but not all of Israel at once. Some judges have great influence in one area and not in another. Some judges overlap as Israel's leaders but rule in different regions. Occasionally peace reigns; at other times violence and discord erupts. Twelve judges guide Israel until the people demand a king. Although God is with his people, the people are not with God. They ignore him and his law and instead do "whatever seem[s] right in their own eyes." This moral apathy leaves God's people living in chaos.

JESUS AS TRUE NORTH

God chooses leaders to free his people. Each one foreshadows the ultimate leader, Savior, and Redeemer—Jesus. Like the judges, Jesus will free his people from the bonds of oppressive forces. However, Jesus will not be fighting merely against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against the pervasive powers of sin and death. God raises up the judges to free his people and restore their relationship with him. The judges' work points to Jesus by giving the people a glimpse of what Jesus will accomplish as the ultimate Redeemer and Savior of all.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?



NEXT STOP

THE LORD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

DEBORAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

THE LORD RAISES UP JUDGES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

POSSESSING THE PROMISED LAND

THE LORD RAISES UP JUDGES

The tribes of Israel occupy Canaan, the land God promised to them and to their ancestor Abraham. They have a highly structured religious society but lack a unified national identity. By the time the third generation since the Exodus grows to adulthood, many of the people have forgotten the Lord. The “judges” usher in a few

centuries of regional leadership using a loose governing system. These leaders help ward off enemies and bring the people back to God.

JUDG 2:6–3:31

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OBSERVATION POINT

Baal was the Canaanites' primary deity, a god of rain and fertility. The Canaanites honored Baal for their success in agriculture, animal breeding, and procreation. Ashtoreth, Baal's female counterpart, was a goddess of fertility associated with sacred trees or poles (i.e., Asherah poles). Worshiping these deities involved prostitution and bloodletting, practices that God condemned. In time, the Israelites joined in worshiping these local deities, forgetting that the Lord Almighty was the source of their success. Strife and unrest routinely followed their idol worship, often as a direct result of God's judgment.

EXPLORATION POINT

After the struggle for land was over, the Hebrews settled down. Life got comfortable. By the time a new generation grew up, no one remembered the great things God had done for his people. Parents and grandparents forgot a basic instruction from God: *Tell your children* (Deuteronomy 6:7). Christians who have followed church traditions for generations often grow lax, forgetting that faith in God isn't inherited. Each individual of each generation must cultivate it personally.

NEXT STOP

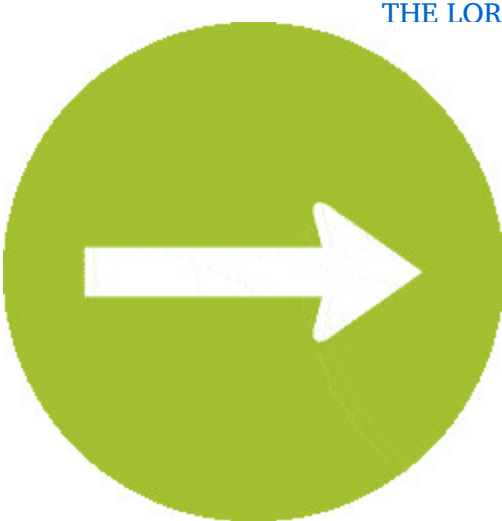
DEBORAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

POSSESSING THE PROMISED LAND

THE LORD RAISES UP JUDGES



DEBORAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

After Joshua's death, the tribes continue battling for the land God promised them, but they never completely destroy the other peoples. A new generation grows up who never knew Joshua, but

judges rise up among them to lead Israel. They save the people from their enemies who invade their land and remind them to follow the Lord. But when each judge dies, the people go back to ignoring God. Their sins mire them until a new judge steps forward.

JUDG 4:1–5:31

OBSERVATION POINT

The milk that Jael offered Sisera was probably goat's milk, curdled or thick like yogurt. Milk is known to have sleep-inducing qualities. For Jael to offer hospitality and then murder the one she sheltered was considered a horrendous crime in this culture. The names of the two heroines in this story are also of interest. Jael means "mountain goat," and Deborah means "bee." Thus Israel, a land flowing with milk and honey, was saved by Mountain Goat and Bee.

EXPLORATION POINT

A woman as a leader in Israel was rare, but not unheard of. Deborah's role and authority grew with each wise ruling and piece of advice, culminating in her leadership of a war led by God. Deborah's strong faith made her fearless against Israel's enemy. Jael was sympathetic to the Hebrews' cause. She bravely and cleverly used her skills—driving tent pegs into the ground to set up a tent was a woman's work—to crush the enemy. Even today God uses an individual's skills and abilities to further his plan for his Kingdom.

NEXT STOP

GIDEON ASKS FOR A SIGN

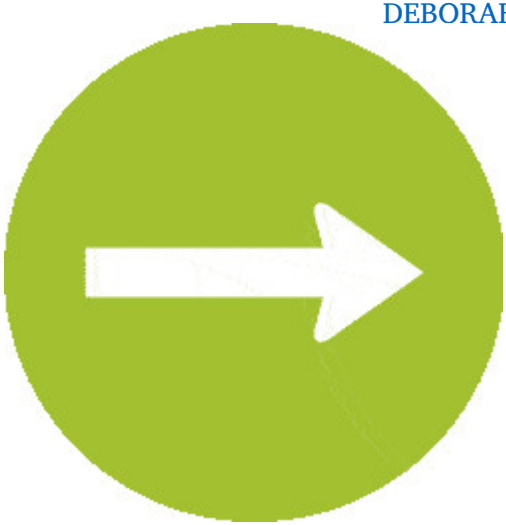
GIDEON ASKS FOR A SIGN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DEBORAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

DEBORAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE



GIDEON ASKS FOR A SIGN

After defeating the Canaanites under Deborah's leadership, the people of God enjoy forty years of peace. But in the ease of life, they forget about God and begin blending religions, so God sends another enemy to punish them. Led by the Midianites, these raiders destroy the livelihoods of the Israelites and leave them starving. Finally, Israel turns back to God and cries for help. In response, God calls Gideon.

JUDG 6:1-24, 33-40

OBSERVATION POINT

This is one of the earliest references to using camels in warfare. They were common in the desert of the Arabian Peninsula, where the Midianites lived. Although they were a long way from home, nomadic people like the Midianites migrated into the settled areas of Canaan each spring with their livestock herds. Conflict between the wandering herdsmen and the Hebrew farmers was inevitable and ongoing, but this time the Hebrews suffered extreme oppression.

EXPLORATION POINT

Gideon asked a question that we still ask today: “If the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us?” The Lord did not give Gideon a direct answer to that question. Instead he told Gideon to go do something about it. He promised to go with Gideon. God will also go with us, but he won’t do the work for us. We must trust and believe that God is with us and that he will provide what is necessary to accomplish his plans.

NEXT STOP

GIDEON DEFEATS THE MIDIANITES

GIDEON DEFEATS THE MIDIANITES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GIDEON ASKS FOR A SIGN

GIDEON ASKS FOR A SIGN

GIDEON DEFEATS THE MIDIANITES

The Midianites invade and inhabit Israel's territory, destroying their crops and herds. Gideon rallies 32,000 troops from the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali to rebuff them. With that many men, victory seems assured. But God commands Gideon to do something unprecedented—drastically cut the number of troops. Eventually Gideon will face Israel's enemies with only a fraction of the number he started with.

JUDG 7:1-25

OBSERVATION POINT

The invading army was actually a coalition of forces from Midian, Amalek, and other nations east of the Jordan River. Usually, camels helped to overtake the infantry in battle, but this time the camels became a liability. Gideon's surprise attack, compounded by the noise of the trumpets, the shattering jars, and the light of the torches, panicked the troops and frightened the camels. The combination created bedlam.

EXPLORATION POINT

God frequently selects weak, insignificant, or unlikely people to serve him, and he uses them for great purposes. Moses felt ill-equipped to lead the people, Barak was timid, and Gideon felt insignificant. At other times, God gifts people with great courage, confidence, or leadership abilities and then calls them to harness those natural talents. God can use anyone, no matter what weaknesses other people see in them.

NEXT STOP

NAOMI AND RUTH
JEPHTHAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GIDEON DEFEATS THE MIDIANITES

JEPHTHAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

Gideon leads Israel as judge until his death, but his leadership is not flawless. When he dies, Israel again begins to worship the local Canaanite deity, Baal. Meanwhile, Gideon's son Abimelech attempts to secure his kingship by ordering the deaths of his sixty-nine half brothers, but his reign still collapses. After several additional judges

guide Israel, God selects Jephthah, a man from a questionable family, to be the next judge.

JUDG 11:1-40

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OBSERVATION POINT

A vow was a very serious matter, but Jephthah's pledge was extreme. Jephthah thought his vow would ensure victory, but that was Canaanite thinking. According to Hebrew law, vows were not mandatory, and a wise Hebrew would have known that God vehemently disapproved of human sacrifice. A monetary substitute would have been acceptable (Leviticus 27:1-8). But Jephthah didn't know better, having lived outside Hebrew society. True to his vow, Jephthah sacrificed his only child, thus extinguishing his family name.

EXPLORATION POINT

Prostitution was detestable to God, but he still used people associated with this sin. He used Rahab, a prostitute in Jericho, to save the Hebrew spies, and in turn they saved her. And he used Jephthah, the son of a prostitute, to save his people from the oppression of the Ammonites. God can use anyone for his good purpose, no matter what sins they've committed. Nothing is beyond his power and grace.

NEXT STOP

NAOMI AND RUTH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GIDEON DEFEATS THE MIDIANITES

JEPHTHAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S JUDGE

NAOMI AND RUTH

During the time when Israel is governed by judges, a famine forces some of the Israelites to emigrate to other nations in search of food. Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons leave Israel and move

to neighboring Moab to avoid starvation. When her husband and sons die, Naomi finds herself distressed and far from home. Her only chance to start over is to leave her daughters-in-law and return to her people in Israel. But even there, her hopes are uncertain.

RUTH 1:1–22

OBSERVATION POINT

Naomi and her daughters-in-law had few options. In the patriarchal society of that time, men provided for and protected their female relatives. A woman without a husband or sons was in a dire predicament. Naomi decided to return to her husband's clan in Israel, where some male relative might possibly look out for her. Ruth had no desire to return to her mother's house. She would be an added burden as another mouth to feed. At best she would serve her brother's wives until she remarried, but the prospects of that were slim since she was no longer a virgin.

EXPLORATION POINT

Ruth devoted herself to Naomi so completely that she was ready to move to a land where she would be despised as a foreigner. She clung to Naomi and vowed in the name of the Lord to stay with her until death. Swearing that oath was her confession of faith in Naomi's God, the God of Israel. God rewarded Ruth for her loyalty and commitment. God is faithful to those who love him even through difficult circumstances. He was faithful to Ruth and Naomi, and he provided for their immediate needs.

NEXT STOP

HANNAH'S PRAYER FOR A SON

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NAOMI AND RUTH

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH

After the deaths of their husbands, Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth travel to Bethlehem, Naomi's hometown in Israel. When they arrive, they seek out every resource available to protect themselves and ensure that they don't starve. They find gracious provision from a local landowner, Boaz. Following Naomi's wise advice, Ruth pursues Boaz and asks him to buy Naomi's land so that both she and Naomi will be taken care of. But before Boaz can agree, another man stands in the way.

RUTH 3:1–4:22

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OBSERVATION POINT

The term *family redeemer* had a specific legal meaning in Israel. According to Jewish law, family redeemers had three major responsibilities: to buy land for a poor relative, to pay the debt for a relative who had become a slave, and to pursue justice for a murdered family member. The family redeemer was obligated to care for any poor family members, to ensure that the family name did not die out, and to keep land in the family because land was a gift from God.

EXPLORATION POINT

This story emphasizes the importance of long-term loyalty—the loyalty of Naomi and Ruth to one another, and the loyalty of God to those who love him. The story beautifully depicts God's providence: He provides for basic needs, and he turns devastation and despair into joy. God is working through the lives of these individuals, guiding their actions and weaving them all into his plan for redemption. His providence is not restricted to Bible stories, though; it extends through all generations, even ours.

NEXT STOP

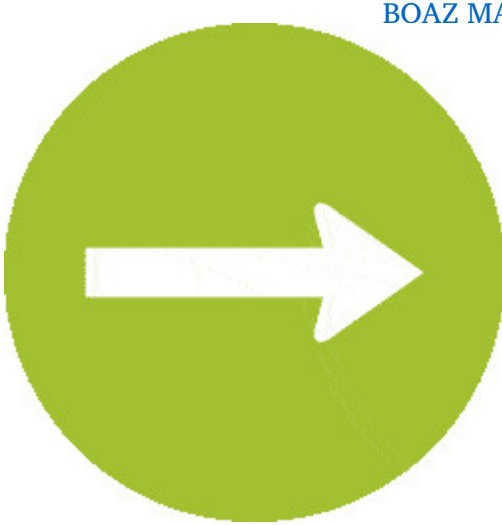
HANNAH'S PRAYER FOR A SON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NAOMI AND RUTH

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH



HANNAH'S PRAYER FOR A SON

God's people settled in the Promised Land more than a century ago, but their tribal loyalties and land allotments did not create unity, harmony, or peace among them. Now the sporadic rule by judges like Gideon has left Israel in chaos—morally, socially, and religiously. The loose political structure means that the people must fend for themselves. They need a strong leader to unite them. Responding to the prayer of a barren woman, God raises up Samuel, the son of a Levite, to lead his people.

1SAM 1:1–28

OBSERVATION POINT

Children were normally weaned after their third birthday, so Samuel was probably around three or four years old when Hannah brought him to the Tabernacle in Shiloh. Hannah's entrusting her son to Eli was an extraordinary gesture. Giving a child away was unusual in Israel because children were God's gifts, and sons secured the family's future. For Hannah, who had spent years longing for a child, the significance was even greater.

EXPLORATION POINT

Some of the people of Israel stayed true to their traditions, believing that God cared about them, that prayer and petition were ways to bring their needs before God, and that God dwelled in the Tabernacle where they could be near him. They believed God was actively involved in every aspect of life, that he opened or closed the womb and allowed pregnancy to occur. These Israelites were right; God was and is actively present in human affairs. He is not distant; he is here among us, hearing the cries of those who suffer and the laughter of those who rejoice, and caring about them both.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

THE LORD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

POSSESSING THE PROMISED LAND

HANNAH’S PRAYER FOR A SON

HANNAH'S PRAYER FOR A SON

THE LORD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

Samuel is born as the answer to his mother's prayer. In gratitude, Hannah fulfills her vow and dedicates her son to God. She brings him to the Tabernacle in Shiloh to be trained for God's work under the guidance of Eli, the high priest. God will use Samuel to display his active presence with his people, a rare thing in those days. God has a role for him to play in his big story. He calls Samuel as a young boy to lead his people and make them a nation that will be a blessing to others.

1SAM 3:1–4:11

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OBSERVATION POINT

"The lamp of God" refers to the oil lamp that signified God's presence in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle. Every evening at sunset, the Levites filled the lamp's seven branches with the best and purest olive oil so the flame would burn cleanly without producing smoke. The lamp contained only enough olive oil to burn until dawn. Therefore, God called to Samuel sometime before dawn, while the lamp was still giving off light.

EXPLORATION POINT

Hearing a voice calling in the middle of the night can be startling. Anyone who has heard their name called out while they are sleeping knows how unsettling it is. Samuel, who was twelve or thirteen, remained calm through the situation, not cowering in fear nor running to Eli in alarm. Instead, Samuel went to Eli, asking him if he had called. God still speaks to his people today, but usually in more subtle ways. He may communicate through wise counselors, friends, pastors, or even our dreams. Whatever his method, his peace reassures us that all will be well.

NEXT STOP

SAMSON AND DELILAH

SAMSON AND DELILAH

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
THE LORD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON

During Jephthah's time as judge, civil war breaks out between his men and the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, but Jephthah's men soundly defeat them. After Jephthah, several more judges guide Israel. Eventually the people return to worshiping idols. God sends a new enemy, the Philistines, who oppress Israel. The Philistines harass them for more than forty years. God then provides another judge, Samson, to guide his people.

JUDG 13:1-25

OBSERVATION POINT

The Nazirite vow and its restrictions were clearly stated in the Book of Instruction that God gave Moses (Numbers 6:1-21). The angel, however, didn't assume Manoah's wife would know all the aspects of the law or have access to it. His instructions are in keeping with the Nazirite vow. A Nazirite could not consume anything made from grapes, eat any forbidden foods, touch a dead body, or cut his hair. Samson, however, would violate most, if not all, of these regulations.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Spirit of the Lord was with several judges: Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. But God's presence didn't reduce their humanness—they still made mistakes and foolish choices. Gideon required reassurance; Jephthah made a vow for the wrong reasons and suffered terribly because of it; and Samson was callous and self-centered. The character flaws of these men clearly testify that God uses people for his good purposes even if they are indifferent to him and blatantly sinful.

NEXT STOP

SAMSON'S VENGEANCE ON THE PHILISTINES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON

SAMSON'S VENGEANCE ON THE PHILISTINES

The Philistines are oppressing God's people, but Israel's strong judge, Samson, seems unconcerned. Far from being the Philistines' enemy, Samson marries a Philistine woman against his parents' wishes. During the wedding celebration, he makes a deal with some Philistine men, giving them a riddle. Baffled by it, the men ask

Samson's bride to betray him so they can have the answer. In anger Samson retaliates, but behind it all, God is working.

JUDG 15:1-20

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OBSERVATION POINT

The foxes mentioned here were probably jackals. The fox lives alone, but jackals live in packs and are not as cautious of humans as foxes are. Foxes are difficult to catch. Jackals, by comparison, would have been a bit more cooperative so that Samson could corral them. Samson's antics with the "foxes" destroyed the wheat and barley harvest, the grape harvest for raisins and wine, and the olive harvest for olives and cooking oil. This economically devastated the local community.

EXPLORATION POINT

If Samson's story hit the front page of a tabloid, we might label him a mass murderer, a madman, a terrorist, or a traitor. Our desire would be to medicate him or lock him up so he wouldn't harm himself or others. But God chose Samson to be a judge and hero of Israel, and this should make us think differently about whom God can use. Samson certainly wasn't a model leader, but he did accomplish God's purpose. God can still do the same today.

NEXT STOP

SAMSON AND DELILAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

THE LORD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

SAMSON'S VENGEANCE ON THE PHILISTINES

SAMSON AND DELILAH

Samson is one of Israel's great judges, helping save God's people from their enemy, the Philistines. But Samson, like the other judges, is far from perfect. Samson has a personal vendetta against the Philistines. He wants vengeance for himself more than he wants liberation for his people. Nearly every motive Samson has is self-centered, and he makes foolish choices that cause his downfall. But God will not let the judge derail his big story. In spite of Samson's selfishness, God uses him for a greater purpose, filling Samson with his Spirit to rescue his people so that they might be a blessing.

JUDG 16:4-31

OBSERVATION POINT

Samson was not merely attracted to the Philistine Delilah—he fell in love with her. But she was more loyal to her people than to her lover. She cleverly entrapped Samson, manipulating him to tell her the source of his strength. Delilah was also attracted to the fortune she would receive for revealing his secret. The payment of 1,100 pieces of silver was extraordinarily high, considering that ten pieces of silver was acceptable as a year's wage (17:10).

EXPLORATION POINT

God is patient with people who misuse his gifts and fail to follow his will. God uses even eccentric, egotistical individuals like Samson. Samson's last prayer to God was selfishly motivated—he wanted to avenge the loss of his eyes, not deliver Israel from the Philistines. God fulfilled Samson's request, restoring his strength. In the end, Samson successfully ruled Israel for twenty years and did indeed begin subduing the Philistines. God loves us as we are. He is working in each of our lives, using our strengths and our flaws for his good purposes.

NEXT STOP

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

SAUL BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL
THE PHILISTINES CAPTURE THE ARK

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SAMSON AND DELILAH

THE PHILISTINES CAPTURE THE ARK

During the time of the judges, the Philistines frequently raided various territories of Israel. Throughout the judgeship of Samson, they continued harassing the Israelites, attempting to seize some of their territory. By the time of Eli, they are still waging war in the area. Their superstition abounds regarding the Ark of the Covenant. So the Philistines go after the box that they believe contains Israel's god.

1SAM 4:1-11; 5:1–7:2

OBSERVATION POINT

In the past the Israelites followed the Ark as a symbol of God's leading them through the wilderness, across the Jordan, and into battle. But the Ark had become more of a good-luck charm to them than a blessing. Treating the Ark of the Covenant like a good-luck charm was probably an idea the Israelites got from neighboring nations. Other cultures of this time carried their idols into battle, symbolizing the presence of their gods. The Israelites mistakenly trusted a symbol rather than God.

EXPLORATION POINT

What do we put our trust in? Trusting in a sacred box may seem foolish to us, but don't we sometimes trust other strategies or rituals rather than God? We trust leaders or important people to protect our rights. We trust our bank accounts and portfolios to secure our futures and our happiness. We trust our judicial system to administer justice and equality. But all of these things are human systems prone to imperfection and failure. Our ultimate trust must be in God above all.

NEXT STOP

SAUL BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SAMSON AND DELILAH

THE PHILISTINES CAPTURE THE ARK

SAUL BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL

Having grown up in God's presence in the Tabernacle, Samuel becomes God's prophet and Israel's judge. But the people begin demanding a more powerful leader and a political system that will give them prestige and security. They want a human king like the neighboring nations. Samuel tries to convince the people their choice is unwise, but they insist. Although God allows the people to have their way, he selects the king and gives Saul "a new heart" to lead his people to be part of his big story. As God was with Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and the judges, so he will be with the new king too.

1SAM 9:1-10:25

OBSERVATION POINT

As with Moses and Gideon, God equipped Saul to lead his chosen people. The kings of surrounding nations were poor examples of what God envisioned a leader to be. In fact, most of them oppressed their subjects. God, on the other hand, expected Israel's king to serve the people: doing what was best for them, not necessarily for himself. God desired a leader who was gracious, obedient, just, and compassionate. God didn't expect a human king to handle this challenge alone—he provided a training manual for the king's reference (Deuteronomy 17:14-20), and he filled Saul with his Spirit.

EXPLORATION POINT

Saul had everything a great leader needs: the support of the people, stature and good looks, the holy anointing of the priest, a heart transformed by God, and the presence and power of God's Spirit. Saul even had written instructions. Unfortunately, Saul was still human, still impatient, still able to disobey. God can equip us with talents and use us for his service, but that doesn't make us perfect. We can sabotage it all by resisting, or we can cooperate with him by obeying his direction. Our success in anything is not our own doing, but God's.

NEXT STOP

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID AS KING

THE LORD REJECTS SAUL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SAUL BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL

THE LORD REJECTS SAUL

God selected Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul is an effective king, but while preparing for a major battle against the Philistines, he grows impatient. Instead of waiting for Samuel to present the sacrifice and ask for God's help in battle, Saul does it himself. God is angry with Saul for disobeying his command, but Saul remains king and continues to fight Israel's enemies throughout his reign.

1SAM 15:10-23

OBSERVATION POINT

God had once promised he would wipe out the Amalekites. Now that time had come. Earlier, during the time of Moses, the Amalekites occupied southern Canaan and the Negev area. As the Israelites approached the Promised Land, the Amalekites attacked the stragglers. They were the first enemies to attack God's people after the people had fled Egypt. So Moses commanded Joshua to fight back against the Amalekites. Moses stood on a hilltop with the staff of God raised above his head. With the help of Aaron and Hur, Moses remained that way until sunset, and Israel was victorious (Exodus 17:8-16).

EXPLORATION POINT

In most of their battles, God commanded his people to destroy the enemy and dedicate part of the plunder to the Lord's service. This time, God commanded Saul to completely destroy the Amalekites and everything they owned because they were godless and had defied God years earlier. Saul, however, chose partial destruction instead of complete annihilation. He obeyed God partially, not completely. Too often that's what we do. We "kind of" obey God and think it's good enough. But God calls us to full obedience even when we have to wait longer than we expected.

NEXT STOP

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID AS KING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SAUL BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL

THE LORD REJECTS SAUL

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID AS KING

King Saul's reign suffers from his ongoing indifference to God's commands. First, Saul grows impatient and worried, so he performs a sacrifice himself rather than waiting for Samuel to do it according to God's law. Then he makes an impulsive vow during wartime that puts his soldiers and his own son in danger. Finally, Saul allows his men to keep the spoils of war even though God explicitly instructed him to destroy everything. Displeased with him, God removes his Spirit from Saul and sends Samuel to anoint a new king. Even Samuel is surprised by God's choice.

1SAM 16:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

The practice of anointing people and objects began early in Israel's history. A person of authority poured olive oil over a thing or a person's head to set them apart with a sacred status. Priests, kings, prophets, and objects were anointed for God's service. Jacob anointed a pillar at Bethel (Genesis 28:18), the Tabernacle and its contents were anointed (Exodus 30:26-29), Aaron and his sons were anointed as the first priests (Leviticus 8:12, 30), and Elisha was anointed as a prophet (1 Kings 19:16). The title "Messiah" means "Anointed One" and refers to this ancient tradition.

EXPLORATION POINT

Saul and David, the first two kings of Israel, had several things in common. Neither of them pursued the role. Both were unlikely prospects—Saul was from the least of the tribes, and David was the youngest son. Both were good looking. Both received God's Spirit when Samuel anointed them. Their main difference was what was deep inside: David was a man after God's own heart, but Saul wasn't. The Lord's words to Samuel are timeless advice, applicable to us today. Don't judge people by what they look like; consider their character instead.

NEXT STOP

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SAMSON AND DELILAH

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID AS KING

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID AS KING

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

Toward the end of Samuel's life, God instructs him to anoint a young boy, David, to be Israel's new king. But while David's older brothers are soldiers encamped along the battlefront against the Philistine army, David remains out in the fields caring for his father's flocks of sheep. Through David's experiences as a shepherd, God has prepared him to face a new threat. Just as God is present throughout the big story, his presence is a blessing in David's life. Armed with God's Spirit, David fearlessly goes head-to-head with the champion warrior of the Philistines—a giant named Goliath.

READ:

1SAM 17:1-58

OBSERVATION POINT

The stones David selected from the stream were not mere pebbles. They were round and smooth, very hard, and probably a little larger than a billiard ball. A really good slinger like David could make a stone fly at about 100 miles per hour. Even so, the stone that struck Goliath only stunned him, making him crash facedown on the ground. Goliath's beheading by David was what killed him.

EXPLORATION POINT

As a boy, David trusted God's power in facing the impossible. Others thought he was being a foolish child: David's brother

mocked him, accusing him of being proud and deceitful; and King Saul was skeptical of David's ability to fight Goliath. But through David's skill with a sling, God affirmed his power over evil and his love for his anointed one. Like the apostle Paul, David knew his power came from the presence of God in his life (Philippians 4:13). In the same way, we as Christians can live confidently and do great things with God in us.

NEXT STOP

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM

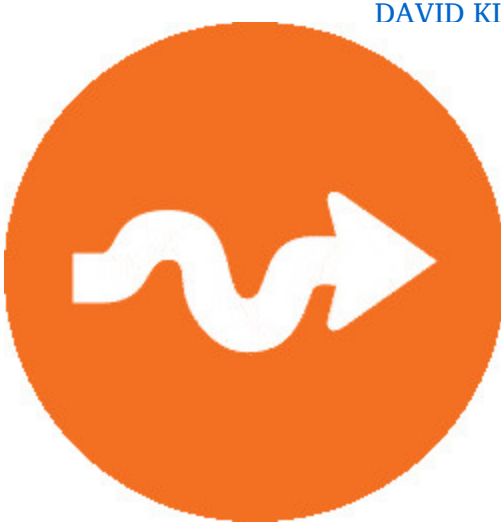
SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

SAUL BECOMES JEALOUS OF DAVID

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH



SAUL BECOMES JEALOUS OF DAVID

King Saul is thrilled with David's early accomplishments. He trusts the boy and brings him into the palace to be by his side. As time passes, Saul assigns greater tasks to David, who completes each one successfully. Soon David is overwhelmingly popular, and Saul's admiration and love for David turn into jealousy and rage. Without God's Spirit, Saul is filled with a spirit of depression and fear. As his life begins to unravel, Saul lashes out.

READ:

1SAM 18:1-30

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OBSERVATION POINT

Jonathan not only loved David as a friend, he also acknowledged David's anointing as the next king. Being the oldest son, Jonathan would have succeeded his father as king; however, Jonathan knew that God had selected David. By presenting David with his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt, Jonathan was symbolically handing over his right to the throne.

EXPLORATION POINT

After anointing David as the future king, God assigned him an unlikely task: assist the current king. David obediently and humbly took on each task King Saul gave him. Although David's becoming king was God's plan, the actual process was fraught with difficulties. Saul broke his promises, sent him into battle repeatedly, and forced him to flee for his life. God calls us to do his work today. He prepares and equips us for it, but he doesn't guarantee that everything will fall into place perfectly or that obstacles won't appear.

NEXT STOP

SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

SAUL BECOMES JEALOUS OF DAVID

SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

Saul's jealousy of David subsides, and he promises his son Jonathan that he will not kill David. Eventually, Saul breaks that promise when he is overcome by a tormenting spirit. In his rage, Saul hurls his spear at David, who narrowly escapes. With his anger renewed, Saul vows to track down David and personally kill him. When Saul gets word of David's whereabouts, he sends three waves of troops to bring him in, but their reports back to him seem very strange. Finally, Saul himself goes out to find David.

READ:

1SAM 19:1-24

OBSERVATION POINT

Saul's impulsive attempt to kill David with his spear would have had subtle yet significant implications. In ancient Near Eastern culture, if a dart, javelin, or spear was thrown at a servant and he escaped the attack, the man was freed from any obligations to his master. Therefore, David's actions as a fugitive could not be classified as treason or rebellion against the king. He was at liberty to do what was necessary to save his own life.

EXPLORATION POINT

Saul's character sharply contrasts with David's in this reading. Saul

is a manipulative, ruthless liar, oblivious to the laws of God and man. In contrast, David is an obedient servant of the king and of God. He is innocent of any wrong but is wise enough to know when to abandon his responsibilities to save himself. People like Saul and David are in our workplaces, our schools, and even our churches. David provides us with a fine example of how we should handle the Sauls in our lives.

NEXT STOP

GOD'S PROTECTION

GOD'S PROTECTION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

SAUL TRIES TO KILL DAVID

GOD'S PROTECTION

David narrowly escaped Saul's murderous impulses: a hurled spear and troops outside his home, ready to kill him. But David's wife, Saul's daughter Michal, warned him and helped him get away. Now he is on the run from King Saul. As a fugitive, David cries out to

God.

PS 59:1-17

OBSERVATION POINT

Dogs in biblical times were sometimes used as working animals to protect homes or flocks of sheep, but most of them were wild and fierce. They scavenged for food at night, feeding on dead bodies and roaming in packs like wolves. This latter group was not domesticated and certainly was not “man’s best friend.”

EXPLORATION POINT

Hopefully, we will never face the threat of death as David did. No matter what we face in life, we can know from this psalm that God is our source of strength. He will provide courage, perseverance, and patience to navigate any situation, no matter how serious or overwhelming. He is our shield, our protector, our safe haven of refuge who laughs at our enemies.

NEXT STOP

JONATHAN HELPS DAVID

JONATHAN HELPS DAVID

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD'S PROTECTION

GOD'S PROTECTION

JONATHAN HELPS DAVID

Blind with jealousy, King Saul mobilizes his royal troops to hunt David down and kill him. But two of Saul's children, Jonathan and Michal, love David and decide to protect him by helping him escape. First, Michal helps him slip out of their home under cover of

darkness. Then Jonathan meets up with David near Ramah, where uncertainty intensifies the situation. Together, they come up with a plan to determine Saul's intentions.

1SAM 20:1-42

OBSERVATION POINT

The new moon festival was a religious and civil celebration that occurred on the first day of each month. Under normal circumstances, David's desire to be with his family would have been an acceptable excuse for his absence from the king's table. Families customarily observed this festival together at least once a year. The people celebrated by resting, worshiping, bringing offerings to God, and sharing a sacred meal.

EXPLORATION POINT

In just a few short years together, David and Jonathan had become as close as brothers and took on the responsibilities of brothers: preserving family honor, protecting one another, and providing for one another and for their descendants. Then they were forced to separate in order to survive Saul's anger. After that, they were never together again. When Jonathan died in battle, David's loyalty to and love for him showed that David truly was a man after God's own heart.

NEXT STOP

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

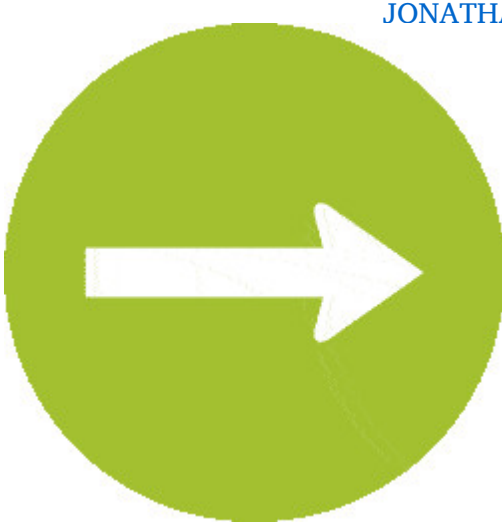
DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JONATHAN HELPS DAVID

JONATHAN HELPS DAVID



DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

After Jonathan and David uncover Saul's motives, David flees with a band of loyal men. Eventually, his brothers, relatives, and other men join him. They move from towns to wilderness strongholds to caves in the hill country. Saul pursues David, leaving a trail of bloodshed. David and his men move to Moab and back again, and they finally hide in the wilderness of En-gedi. When Saul hears of it, he sets out. This time, David comes within arm's reach of his enemy.

1SAM 24:1-22

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OBSERVATION POINT

Cutting Saul's robe may have been more than just a gesture to prove that David had been close enough to kill him. In that era, people showed their loyalty to a king by touching the edge of his robe; they showed contempt or disloyalty by cutting off a piece. This expression of disloyalty may have been the reason that "David's conscience began bothering him."

EXPLORATION POINT

David had the perfect opportunity to protect himself. With one blow he could quit running for his life. But David's conscience wouldn't let him strike. He submitted to a higher standard—Saul was the Lord's anointed servant. It wasn't for David to decide how to end Saul's life. Our lives are filled with opportunities to exploit a situation, defy authority, or ignore a regulation. We may even get away with it or be applauded by others for our actions. But our responsibility is ultimately to God, who knows everything and holds us to his standards and authority.

NEXT STOP

A CRY FOR HELP

A CRY FOR HELP

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE

A CRY FOR HELP

In the darkness of a cave, David had the chance to kill Saul and finally stop living life on the run. Instead, David spared Saul. David chose to honor the man whom God had anointed king and to trust in God's timing for his own ascent to the throne. Reflecting on this encounter, David cries out to the Lord in this psalm.

READ:

PS 142:1-7

OBSERVATION POINT

Being on the run to save his life was an exhausting experience for David. His enemies, both the king and the king's men, were attempting to trap and then assassinate him. King Saul had hunted David down wherever he went. Saul's traps forced David to be a fugitive. Although David lamented his current state, he trusted God to give him strength.

EXPLORATION POINT

Even David, anointed by God to be king, was not exempt from stress and hardship. David was in the crosshairs of King Saul's

insecurity and hostility, but he relied on God to get him through his hardships. We all experience fear, trouble, loneliness, and overwhelming circumstances, but God assures us of his goodness and provides us with the strength we need. God doesn't remove all the obstacles of life, but he does provide for and protect us as we face them.

NEXT STOP

DAVID BECOMES KING OF ALL ISRAEL

DAVID, NABAL, AND ABIGAIL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CRY FOR HELP

DAVID, NABAL, AND ABIGAIL

Despite Saul's assurances, David keeps his distance and avoids any possible confrontations. David and his men provide area landowners with security for their flocks and households. Among them is a man named Nabal. David's men protect Nabal's sheep

from wandering outlaws, so they ask him to return the favor in the form of provisions. Nabal, however, defies the usual custom of feeding strangers, even though this stranger is a future king. Offended, David takes matters into his own hands.

1SAM 25:1-44

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OBSERVATION POINT

David's men were insulted that they were not welcomed and fed. Not only had they protected Nabal's shepherds and sheep—an act that naturally called for kindness in return—they were also passing through at sheep-shearing time, which was the usual occasion for feasting and celebration. The custom was to share the festivities and the abundance of food with travelers, the poor, or strangers, unless they had been declared an enemy.

EXPLORATION POINT

Abigail was a wise and unusually independent woman. She recognized her husband's limitations and worked around his

foolishness, protecting him and their entire household. Her tact and diplomacy saved her husband's life. She did what she could but knew that she could not control the outcome. She left that in God's hands. Sometimes we too need to do the best we can and leave the rest to God.

NEXT STOP

THE DEATH OF SAUL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID. NABAL, AND ABIGAIL

THE DEATH OF SAUL

God called Saul, from the beginning of his reign, to save the people from their enemies the Philistines. But Saul and his army need God's guidance and blessing to succeed in defeating them. As his reign progresses, Saul drifts further and further away from God, and his leadership in battle becomes questionable. When the Philistine army attacks the weakened Israelites, Saul and his troops face them without the Lord's presence. During the battle, Saul himself is wounded.

1SAM 31:1-13

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OBSERVATION POINT

Israel's army formally honored the dead and the dying during and after battle. Dying in battle was an honorable death. The armor bearer—a position David once held—was responsible for finishing the job if his commander was mortally wounded. To be improperly buried was a fate worse than death itself. After bravely recovering the bodies, the men of Jabesh-gilead cremated them, a rare practice

in Israel, probably because they were decomposing.

EXPLORATION POINT

David was anointed by God, but he had yet to be crowned king over all Israel. Saul's death cleared the path for David to ascend to the throne. The death of Saul's sons, including David's beloved friend Jonathan, eliminated any legitimate objections to David's kingship. David would no longer be a fugitive; he would be king. Even at that time, being appointed to God's service involved two steps: God's call and human affirmation. This two-step process is still applicable today when God calls people to a special ministry or service for the church.

NEXT STOP

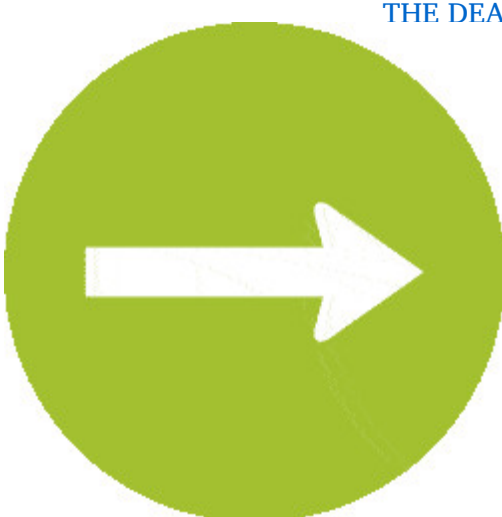
DAVID BECOMES KING OF ALL ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CRY FOR HELP

THE DEATH OF SAUL



DAVID BECOMES KING OF ALL ISRAEL

After Saul and three of his sons die in battle, another son, Ishbosheth, claims the throne of Israel, even though it rightfully belongs to David, whom the Lord anointed. Only one tribe, Judah,

crowns David king. A civil war ensues between Israel and Judah—between those loyal to Ishbosheth and those loyal to David. The war continues for two years, until Ishbosheth is murdered and Israel turns and recognizes David as king.

2SAM 5:1-25

OBSERVATION POINT

In the ancient Near East, a king's palace symbolized his status. Thus, by sending supplies for David's palace, Hiram, king of Tyre, acknowledged David as king of Israel. Hiram was the first king to do so, and this gave David international status. The people of Tyre needed a strong, peaceful relationship with Israel to continue using the trade routes that traversed Israel's territory. They also depended on Israel's farmlands for food.

EXPLORATION POINT

Although David was popular and handsome, his success was not his own doing. It came from the Lord. David faithfully consulted with God before battles and credited him with the win. He knew well that his abilities were from God and that God had blessed him with the kingship, children, and his victories in battle. Acknowledging God and remaining close to him were vital to David's success. As David did, we should praise God for making us who we are, giving us talents and abilities, and providing what we have from day to day.

NEXT STOP

THE GLORY OF GOD

THE GLORY OF GOD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID BECOMES KING OF ALL ISRAEL

DAVID BECOMES KING OF ALL ISRAEL

THE GLORY OF GOD

In addition to being a great warrior, King David was an accomplished poet. During his reign over Israel, David wrote many poems and songs. At least seventy-three are preserved as Scripture in the book of Psalms. Psalm 19 is a song of praise that celebrates God's magnificent creation and the order of his law.

PS 19:1-14

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OBSERVATION POINT

In the ancient world, the sun was considered a god and worshiped. David clearly refutes the notion that the sun has its own power by stating that it is part of God's creation, not a god itself. The sun is under God's control; he takes care of it by giving it a home in the heavens. The sun conforms to the patterns and purpose God has set for it.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's wisdom is displayed in several ways. We can see, feel, and experience it through his creation. The heavens reveal God's glory; they display his presence, orderliness, and creativity. His law of justice and mercy also show his wisdom and desire for order. David's life is an excellent example of God's wisdom being put into action and permeating every aspect of leadership. God is near to us and reveals himself in many ways. We just need to be more aware of him.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE GLORY OF GOD

THE GLORY OF GOD

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Having been a shepherd himself when he was a young man, David knew the responsibilities involved. He knew he needed to comfort his sheep and care for their needs instead of focusing only on himself. David refers to the Lord as his own shepherd, who would lead, protect, guide, and provide for him throughout his entire life.

READ:

PS 23:1-6

OBSERVATION POINT

In verse 5 the setting changes from a pastoral scene to a banquet hall, where a gracious host receives his guests. Enemies can only watch from a distance, for the host protects the guest. Another sign of the host's lavish hospitality and welcome is his pouring oil on the guest's head to soothe and refresh him. The host does everything possible to take care of any need the guest might have.

EXPLORATION POINT

In some ancient cultures, people viewed their kings as shepherds. God is more than a shepherd who leads; he is our King. The role of

shepherd involves compassion, humility, tenderness, love, and personal sacrifice. Kingship is associated with power, authority, wisdom, justice, and the elicitation of awe and reverence in others. God has all of these qualities. To profess “the LORD is my shepherd” is a testimony of our faith in him.

NEXT STOP

DAVID’S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

MOVING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

MOVING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

Almost ninety years ago, while Samuel was still a child, the Philistines defeated Israel in battle and captured the Ark of the Covenant. But God's presence among the Philistines plagued them, and after seven months they returned the Ark. For the next twenty years, the Ark remained in Kiriath-jearim at Abinadab's home under the care of his son Eleazar. During Saul's reign, the Ark wasn't given a second thought. Now, knowing its importance, King David arranges to bring the Ark to Jerusalem.

2SAM 6:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

Uzzah meant well, but he violated the Ark by touching it. God had given the Israelites specific instructions for moving the Ark of God —they were to use two poles inserted through corner rings (Numbers 4:6). Only the Levites were permitted to transport the Ark, and even they were not allowed to actually touch it. This time, however, no one bothered to check with the high priest. Spiritual matters and the details of this procedure were either forgotten or overlooked in the excitement. Months later, David had the Levites properly transport the Ark to Jerusalem.

EXPLORATION POINT

We don't have sacred objects like the Ark anymore, but many things still inspire reverence. We admire great cathedrals. We behave a certain way in a worship service. We bow our heads when praying. But often God's name is not treated as sacred. Our society tends to mishandle his name, taking it lightly or abusing it with swearing. Uzzah mishandled the Ark, the symbol of God's holy presence. We may not be struck dead when we misuse God's holy name, but we will someday be held accountable for it.

NEXT STOP

SING TO THE LORD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
MOVING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

SING TO THE LORD

The people of Israel were jubilant when the Ark of the Covenant was returned to them after the Philistines had stolen it. When the Ark was finally settled in the holy city of Jerusalem many years later, this psalm might have been performed as a song of joy in celebration.

READ:

PS 96:1-13

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OBSERVATION POINT

The nations around Israel worshiped gods and goddesses who were believed to live in the heavens. To declare that the Lord created the heavens clearly emphasized that God is far superior to any other gods. The God who creates is in control. The gods of the Canaanites did not create; they were merely idols.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is King of the universe. He created the world, and it stands firm under his control. He will judge all the nations, but he will do so fairly and truthfully. This is a reason for everything in Creation to

rejoice. God is a fair and just King of kings. As Christians, we have even greater reason to rejoice. God will declare us not guilty because Jesus already took on our guilt and paid the price for it.

NEXT STOP

DAVID'S MILITARY VICTORIES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SING TO THE LORD

DAVID'S MILITARY VICTORIES

After David brings the Ark and the Tabernacle to Jerusalem, God

renews his covenant with David. Trusting in God's promises, David battles the nations around his new kingdom: Philistia, Moab, Aram, Edom, Ammon, and Amalek. With God's help he defeats each one, securing the territory from the Euphrates River to the Brook of Egypt. This was the area God had originally promised to Abraham. Finally, God's people are at peace.

2SAM 8:1-18

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OBSERVATION POINT

Conquered nations showed their submission to the new ruler by paying tributes or taxes. During David's time, the taxes on agriculture could be as high as 12.5 percent of the harvest. The king taxed agriculture as well as any other natural resources he needed to prosper his kingdom. David set aside all the spoils of war and any other diplomatic gifts (such as precious metals) for the Lord. Solomon later used this supply of precious metals to decorate the Temple.

EXPLORATION POINT

God promised Abraham that the land of Canaan from the Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt would be his and his descendants'. That promise was made in 2091 BC. David's final battle to secure the specified territory took place around 980 BC, over 1100 years later! God had been true to his promise, but it was a long time in coming. Why it took so long, we do not know. God fulfilled his plan on his timetable. God shows that he is faithful and worthy of our trust. His timing may not be like ours, but he *will* fulfill every promise.

NEXT STOP

A CALL FOR HELP

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID'S MILITARY VICTORIES

A CALL FOR HELP

This psalm of lament recalls a national defeat in the midst of David's numerous victories. God replies with a promise to make Israel victorious over the nations.

PS 60:1-12

OBSERVATION POINT

A banner was a flag or sign carried into battle to identify different army units. It was also used to call the nation together. Throughout the forty years that Israel wandered in the wilderness, the leader of each tribe carried a banner as a visual guide for the people to follow.

EXPLORATION POINT

God gives us strength and power to be victorious. Human effort by itself cannot be completely successful or win battles of any kind. We cannot win alone; we must rely on God's power working in and through us to bring triumph.

NEXT STOP

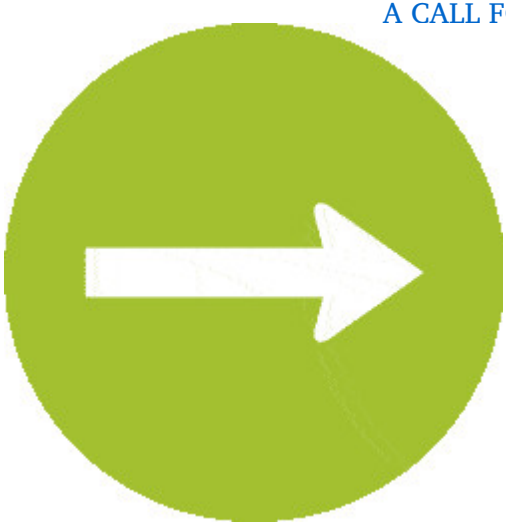
DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A CALL FOR HELP



DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

When David first entered Saul's service, he and Saul's son Jonathan became immediate friends. Jonathan was more loyal to David than to his own father, even giving up his right to the throne. In return, David's loyalty to Jonathan never wavered. After Saul and Jonathan die in battle, King David seeks out any surviving family members and finds Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. David's care for Mephibosheth displays his character as a man after God's own heart —he does not forget his promises.

2SAM 9:1-13

OBSERVATION POINT

Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul, was crippled after his nurse dropped him when he was a child (2 Samuel 4:4). His disability was more than just a physical limitation. Crippled animals were not allowed to be offered to God. Disabled priests were not allowed to serve in the Tabernacle. Likewise, Jonathan's disabled prince was not fit to be king.

EXPLORATION POINT

Disabilities do not carry the great social stigma that they used to. Though we are often more aware of and concerned about the limitations of others, David is a role model for his kindness to and care for the disabled son of his friend. He fulfilled his vow and kept the promise he had made to Jonathan when they were young men.

NEXT STOP

PRAISE THE LORD

PRAISE THE LORD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

PRAISE THE LORD

David was a man after God's own heart; he was exactly the kind of king God wanted for his people. He often did his best to imitate God's goodness by openly showing kindness and compassion to others. Here David praises God for all he has done. David gives us a glimpse of God's heart and his love for us, as shown by his actions.

PS 103:1-22

OBSERVATION POINT

To fear God does not mean to be afraid of him. It means to love God with all your heart, to be in awe of and respect him. A believer's fear of the Lord leads to praise, worship, and freedom. Joined with love and hope, this type of fear eliminates dread or slavish obligations. If we live in this kind of fear, we will live in peace, in confidence, and in a close relationship with God.

EXPLORATION POINT

This psalm is for everyone who thinks God is a big, mean, angry God who waits for an opportunity to catch us doing something

wrong. Although the psalm acknowledges that God gets angry, it emphasizes that he is slow to get angry and doesn't remain so for long (verses 8-9). The focus is on God's goodness and compassion rather than on his anger or desire to punish.

NEXT STOP

GOD KNOWS US WELL

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PRAISE THE LORD

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

Where others might have shown contempt, King David shows compassion and great generosity to Mephibosheth son of Jonathan. David is a powerful king in the region, and God has blessed him richly. He has all that makes a man prosperous—wealth, peace, wives, children. More than that, his people adore him. But David is still human. When he follows his desire for another woman, a series of sinful choices brings chaos to his life and his family.

2SAM 11:1-27

OBSERVATION POINT

The flat roofs of houses and palaces were used for outdoor living. People often strolled, socialized, or slept there in hot weather. After a hot day, the air would cool off most quickly on the rooftop. It would not have been unusual for the king to take a walk on the roof in the evening. Bathsheba did not consider that bathing on her rooftop would leave her in full view of anyone walking on the nearby palace roof.

EXPLORATION POINT

Often we are unhappy with rules and restrictions that God and society place on us. But David's self-indulgence and unrestrained sexual desire for a beautiful woman created havoc. God's rules about adultery and sex are for our own good. Violating them may give us a moment of pleasure but a lifetime of heartache. David learned all of this the hard way. God knows that our obeying his rules is for our own wellbeing and will bring us the greatest happiness.

NEXT STOP

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID

When Bathsheba's pregnancy threatens to expose David's affair, David resorts to greater and greater extremes to cover up the truth. He seems oblivious to his sin and to how it leads him to orchestrate the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah. Finally, God sends Nathan the prophet to tell the king an allegory that will help him see his deeds in a new light.

2SAM 12:1-25

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OBSERVATION POINT

Prophets were messengers from God who spoke on his behalf. They pointed out the sins of the people, called them back to God's law, and pronounced judgment. As Samuel was a prophet to King Saul, so Nathan was to King David. Many more prophets spoke out during the reigns of later kings of Israel and Judah, when the nation "did what was evil in the LORD's sight."

EXPLORATION POINT

We often justify our actions by thinking that “no one will get hurt.” That’s never the case. Someone is always affected, directly or indirectly, by what we do, even if it’s ourselves. Disregarding the seriousness of our sin is shameful. Nathan confronted David to open his eyes to his sinful behavior. The Nathans in our lives may be coworkers, parents, pastors, or friends. Each of us needs them. None of us is without sin.

NEXT STOP

A CRY FOR GOD’S MERCY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NATHAN REBUKES DAVID

A CRY FOR GOD'S MERCY

God sent the prophet Nathan to confront King David. David had sinned repeatedly in trying to cover up his affair with Bathsheba. Nathan's story makes David see with stunning clarity how he has sinned against God. After the confrontation, David writes this psalm, pleading for God's mercy and forgiveness.

PS 51:1-19

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OBSERVATION POINT

The last two verses of this psalm seem to be a bit out of place since they refer to rebuilding. They were probably added to this favorite song after the Jews returned from exile in Babylon. At that time they were focused on rebuilding the city walls and restoring the traditions of worship and sacrifice.

EXPLORATION POINT

Knowing that God forgives us and washes us “whiter than snow” should bring us great comfort and joy. Once we are forgiven we should live in joy, praising God for his goodness. We shouldn’t dwell on our mistakes. Dragging around our old sins deprives us of joy and the life God wants for us. We need to forgive ourselves, forget our past sins, and move joyfully into the future.

NEXT STOP

A PRAYER IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CRY FOR GOD'S MERCY

A PRAYER IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

Over the course of his lifetime, King David wrote many psalms. Some are songs of praise; others are pleas of repentance, like Psalm 51. This one is a prayer from a desperate man who is facing what seems to be an impossible situation. We don't know precisely when he might have written this psalm, but it is clear that David knew his only hope would be found in God. In it David cries to God and pleads for his attention.

READ:

PS 86:1-17

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OBSERVATION POINT

Pagan gods had the opposite character traits of the true God. They were angry and unpredictable and had to be appeased with blood and sacrifices—sometimes with human victims. The gods bore grudges and weren't forgiving. They could be bribed or manipulated to give blessings, but nothing ever satisfied them. Humans exhausted themselves trying to secure their favor. God, however, is the complete opposite; he is to pagan gods as truth is to lies.

EXPLORATION POINT

David prayed that God would remain true to the characteristics that David knew and could count on. We have the joy and comfort of knowing that God's character doesn't change. What he was like to David and the people of Israel thousands of years ago is precisely what he is like today. God's compassion, love, and faithfulness continue through all generations. This prayer was spoken by David, but it is so timeless that it can be our prayer too.

NEXT STOP

ABSALOM'S REBELLION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A PRAYER IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

ABSALOM'S REBELLION

In the wake of David's sin, God warns him that his family will reap the consequences. After his affair with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah, David watches as his household begins rebelling against him. David's son Amnon rapes his half sister Tamar. In revenge, her brother Absalom murders Amnon and then flees the country. After a time, David and Absalom reconcile, but soon Absalom manipulates the people to boost his popularity. He then attempts to seize David's throne.

2SAM 15:1-37

OBSERVATION POINT

Absalom was about thirty years old when he conspired against his father. He was good looking, with long, thick hair (2 Samuel 14:25-26). He was charming but insincere. He was the first nobleman in Israel to put on a great display of royal pomp with his horse-drawn chariot and fifty bodyguards. This show of majesty and wealth probably appealed to the masses. Absalom was good at sympathizing with the people, telling them what he thought they wanted to hear and thus winning them over.

EXPLORATION POINT

Absalom wanted some of his father's power and honor, so he attempted to seize the throne. Like Absalom, we often attempt to seize power from God and place ourselves on his throne. We want to take over his role. We think we can do a better job of running our own lives and determining what's best for ourselves. We don't want to subject ourselves to his rule. Our strategy may appear to work in the short run, but we sacrifice God's grace and blessings.

NEXT STOP

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ABSALOM'S REBELLION

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

Absalom's coup unravels in uncertainty, intrigue, betrayal, and double agents. David's former adviser Hushai embeds himself among Absalom's officials, but he has secret motives. Meanwhile, to protect himself and his position, King David escapes the capital of Jerusalem, flees to the east, and hides on the far side of the Jordan River. While he is in hiding, David's loyal supporters battle Absalom's army in the forest of Ephraim.

READ:

2SAM 18:1–19:8

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OBSERVATION POINT

The woods of Ephraim were very dense. In retreat, the soldiers may have gotten separated and lost. If they were on mules, low-hanging branches may have knocked them out or entangled them like Absalom. If they were on foot, the rough terrain, rocks, tree roots, pits, ravines, and dense underbrush could have snared them, causing injury or death. Perhaps they were simply missing in action. The major point is that David's small number of men—no more than 3,000—defeated Absalom's 20,000 troops.

EXPLORATION POINT

Joab and the army had strict instructions from David: Spare Absalom. The unnamed soldier who found Absalom dangling in a tree followed orders. Joab, possibly frustrated with Absalom's uprising and thinking like a warrior, disregarded the king's desire and murdered Absalom. His armor bearers helped him obscure whose dagger actually killed Absalom. As Sarah, Rebekah, and Moses had done before him, Joab took care of the situation his own way. We frequently ignore those in authority, thinking that we know better. We sometimes do the same with God, ignoring his laws and directions for our lives because we don't understand his reasons.

NEXT STOP

GOD KNOWS US WELL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PRAISE THE LORD

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

GOD KNOWS US WELL

We don't know when in his life King David wrote this psalm, but it describes how David, a man after God's own heart, perceived God and his presence. The psalm celebrates the comfort of knowing that God cares for his people at all times and in all places.

READ:

PS 139:1-24

OBSERVATION POINT

The Hebrew word translated “inner parts” (verse 13) is literally the word for “kidneys.” This Hebrew idiom signifies the center of emotions—the inner depth of a person’s moral character. In the English language, this aspect of our inner self is usually referred to as “the heart.”

EXPLORATION POINT

Psalm 139 presents a terrifying proposition or a comforting one, depending on how we view God. If we view him as a harsh dictator and rule enforcer, we must worry about him watching and knowing

our every move. If, however, we see him as a loving, caring, and compassionate parent and friend, we find all of this magnificently comforting and reassuring. It can bring us great joy that God cares so much for us.

NEXT STOP

DAVID MAKES SOLOMON KING

DAVID TAKES A CENSUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD KNOWS US WELL

DAVID TAKES A CENSUS

The nation of Israel is shaken in the aftermath of Absalom's conspiracy and subsequent death. Judah is the last tribe to reinstate David as king, but finally the nation's unity is restored. King David then quashes another rebellion, addresses a three-year famine, and fights several battles against Israel's ongoing adversaries—the Philistines. With King David's rule secured once more, he begins to wonder just how strong his army is.

2SAM 24:1-25

OBSERVATION POINT

Taking a census was not unprecedented in Israel. Moses took a census twice at God's command to find out how many were in each tribe of the nation. What was sinful about this census was that God did not request it, and David wanted to confirm how powerful he was. Up until then David had trusted God, not the might of his own armies, to win battles. David was indulging his misplaced trust.

EXPLORATION POINT

It's easy to see David's mistakes in trusting an army rather than God. He was proud of his victories and his mighty men. Today, we don't personally worry about national power or the size of the military—our government leaders do. Instead, we trust in retirement plans, college degrees, or professional success. We trust that our power comes from a corporate title, recognition from our boss, or political position or that our wealth comes from what we know, accomplish, or inherit. In doing so, we are as guilty as David. The first thing we should trust is God. He is the source of everything else.

NEXT STOP

DAVID MAKES SOLOMON KING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD KNOWS US WELL

DAVID TAKES A CENSUS

DAVID MAKES SOLOMON KING

At seventy years old, after forty years as king, David is feeble and in need of extra care. The kingdom of Israel is strong and at peace, but with David's health declining, Israel needs the next king to be appointed to ensure a peaceful transition. David's two oldest sons, Amnon and Absalom, are dead. His third son, Adonijah, is next in line as king, but God has other plans for who will lead the kingdom.

READ:

1KGS 1:1-53

737OFE386

OBSERVATION POINT

In the ancient world, some women held positions of authority and had professions. One common occupation was nursemaid. Abishag was a young girl who was not married. Her purpose was to be a nursemaid to King David, caring for him in his declining health. She had to be trustworthy for this high position, given its close proximity to the king. She must have remained a virgin because Adonijah tried to convince Bathsheba and Solomon to allow Abishag to marry him. Only a virgin would be worthy of marriage to a king's son.

EXPLORATION POINT

David had the right to name his successor. The Bible does not record whether he had ever sworn to Bathsheba that Solomon would be king; however, Solomon was his favorite son, and Adonijah probably sensed that. It was the usual practice of kings in the Near East to kill any relatives who might challenge them, so Bathsheba needed David to act quickly or else Adonijah might kill her and Solomon. What may look like palace intrigue to us was really God working through every player to fulfill his divine and perfect will. He is doing the same today.

NEXT STOP

A SONG FOR SOLOMON'S CORONATION

A SONG FOR SOLOMON'S CORONATION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID MAKES SOLOMON KING

A SONG FOR SOLOMON'S CORONATION

This psalm is one of only two psalms attributed to Solomon (along with Psalm 127). It may have been written for the day of his

coronation as king and read on that day as part of the celebration. Alternatively, it may have been written at a later time during his reign, looking back on that great day. Psalm 72 is a request for God's blessing on the king and his people.

PS 72:1-20

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OBSERVATION POINT

If the king was wise and just, he would be a blessing to the people. God would also bless the people with peace, harmony, and prosperity. A just king would be a compassionate father who cared for the poor, the orphan, and the widow. He would be a fair judge who administered justice to his people. Jewish tradition viewed this psalm as a description of the Messiah and his kingdom.

EXPLORATION POINT

In biblical times rulers were seen as representatives of God. They were expected to be wise, just, merciful, and compassionate, just as God would be. Our God is sovereign over all nations and kingdoms. Although the world is extremely complex, God expects us as his followers to respect and obey the leadership of those who have authority over us. The standard by which God judges all leaders is clearly stated in the beginning of this psalm.

NEXT STOP

DAVID'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

DAVID'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A SONG FOR SOLOMON'S CORONATION

A SONG FOR SOLOMON'S CORONATION

DAVID'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

King David has had a long and successful reign under God's guidance. In the process of transferring his power, David gathers the nation's leaders to address them and his son Solomon, the new king. David instructs the leaders to support Solomon. He then provides Solomon with detailed instructions for organizing the kingdom and with the plans for building the Temple.

1CHR 28:1-21

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OBSERVATION POINT

The writer of Chronicles is recalling “the golden years” of the nation. Writing after the return from captivity in Babylon, the writer recalls the most glorious aspects of David’s reign. The transition from father to son is remembered as a wonderful occasion untarnished by the question of which son would be king. There is no mention of Adonijah’s attempt to seize the throne, or of Bathsheba and Nathan’s scheme to ensure that Solomon would be the next king. Those unglamorous details are left in the history of 1 Kings.

EXPLORATION POINT

David’s speech emphasizes the fact that God is not distant and indifferent. God is actively involved in our lives, knowing all that we do and say. He intimately knows us and cares about us. He is available and eagerly waiting for us to seek him, trust him, and lean on him for strength and guidance. God’s love for us does not change and never will.

NEXT STOP

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM
THE WAYS OF THE WICKED

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

THE WAYS OF THE WICKED

Overwhelmed by his own trouble, the psalmist almost loses his faith as he focuses on the good life of evil people. But when he enters God's sanctuary (the Temple), he has an epiphany. By being in

God's presence through prayer and worship, the writer gains a new perspective that provides the answer. The Temple was a place of great peace and a sanctuary for the Jews. It was more than a symbol of God's presence with his people. It was the place where God's glory resided.

PS 73:1-28

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OBSERVATION POINT

David made all the plans for the Temple, including instructions for how the Levites were to share the responsibilities of worship and the maintenance of God's house. David appointed Asaph, a Levite, to be a leader of one of the choirs in the Temple. This was a duty that was passed on to his descendants as well. Many of the psalms of Asaph were probably written by his descendants at a later time in Israel's history.

EXPLORATION POINT

Everyone has been in the same place as the psalmist, asking, “Why do the wicked have it so good?” The answer to this timeless question comes from stepping back and gaining perspective. In the long run, the wicked, who have no faith in God, have nothing that will last. Those who belong to the Lord have his shelter, his peace, and his sanctuary to rely on. Everything in life will crumble, money will be left behind, and power and prestige will fade; but God’s love will last forever.

NEXT STOP

GIFTS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE WAYS OF THE WICKED

GIFTS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

As Israel prepares to build the Temple of the Lord, King David sets the precedent for generous giving. The commanders of the army, the tribal leaders, and the administrative staff then follow suit by generously donating their own gifts. The people's generosity and enthusiasm for the project is evident in their rejoicing. The dream to have a suitable house for the Lord God of Israel was coming true.

READ: 1 CHRONICLES 29:1-30

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OBSERVATION POINT

Huge quantities of gold and silver were needed for the Temple. The cities and nations conquered by King David paid tribute in gold and silver. The Hebrews also set aside the treasures they captured for the Lord's purposes. Decorating the Temple was the perfect way to use these items since the Lord had been the one to lead them into battle and to secure victory for them.

EXPLORATION POINT

The generous giving of the people reflected the generosity of their ancestors. When Moses was preparing to construct the Tabernacle, he called everyone to contribute jewels, gold, fabrics, and their talents. The people gave generously to ensure that God had a lovely dwelling place. We can honor God today by providing for the needs of the church and the body of believers—God's new temple (1 Corinthians 3:16). "God loves a person who gives cheerfully" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

NEXT STOP

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DAVID KILLS GOLIATH

DAVID'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

GIFTS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM

Although the Israelites had rejected God in favor of a human king, God did not leave them to appoint a ruler on their own. God has been present throughout the big story, selecting kings for his people. Just as he first chose Saul, then David, and filled them with his Spirit to lead his people, he now chooses Solomon. Then he appears to Solomon with an offer. Solomon's response shows great promise. Filled with God's Spirit, Solomon rules Israel with wisdom and justice.

READ:

1KGS 3:1-28; 4:29-34

OBSERVATION POINT

Brothels were common in cities of the ancient Near East, so it makes sense that these prostitutes shared a house. The prostitutes may have been Israelites or perhaps Jebusites, the native people who lived in Jerusalem before David captured it. God's law clearly forbade prostitution (Leviticus 19:29; Deuteronomy 23:18), but it still existed in Israel. Solomon was not judging their occupation; he was judging them as mothers.

EXPLORATION POINT

If someone offered to give you anything you asked for, what would

it be? Solomon was about twenty years old when he became king, but he had some idea of how difficult and important his job was. His request was discerning and selfless. His desire for an understanding heart pleased God, who granted him wisdom and blessed him abundantly. Solomon came to realize that the core of wisdom is staying close to God and following his will.

NEXT STOP

THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

TRUSTING IN THE LORD

SOLOMON'S PSALM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM

SOLOMON'S PSALM

King Solomon's wisdom extended to his writing ability. He wrote many songs of praise. Psalm 127 and many others were sung by the Israelite people as they traveled from all over the nation to the city of Jerusalem in order to attend various festivals and present their offerings to God.

READ:

PS 127:1-5

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OBSERVATION POINT

Family was the core of order and the social structure in Hebrew society. Sons would represent and speak for their parents “at the city gates,” where civil law was discussed. The people believed that God controlled conception; therefore, a large number of children in a family showed that a person was morally upstanding and blessed by God.

EXPLORATION POINT

All our attempts to succeed will be in vain if we don’t have God’s support. Without him in our lives, our plans will be useless. We can

work and strive, but our efforts will result in exhaustion and anxiety rather than the satisfying restfulness that God provides when we know we have been faithful and obedient to him.

NEXT STOP

THE PURPOSE OF PROVERBS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SOLOMON'S PSALM

THE PURPOSE OF PROVERBS

In his time, King Solomon was the wisest man in the known world.

He was extremely talented in many ways and wrote extensively. He recorded many wise sayings—some of his own, some collected from others. But his emphasis was this: The key to wisdom is “fear of the LORD.”

PR 1:1–2:22

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OBSERVATION POINT

“Fear of the LORD” does not mean being afraid of God. The kind of fear mentioned here implies awe of and respect for God’s power and person. When we hold God in high esteem, we respect the Creator of the universe and the immense power he has over everything. At the same time, we can still approach him as a loving and caring Father.

EXPLORATION POINT

Being in relationship with God has huge benefits. But first we must do two things: know him and fear him. Those two things are also the key to wisdom. Through a relationship with God we will gain

protection, knowledge, understanding, peace, and joy. Wisdom will equip us to ignore evil influences, judge twisted speech, and resist temptation.

NEXT STOP

TRUSTING IN THE LORD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM

THE PURPOSE OF PROVERBS

TRUSTING IN THE LORD

King Solomon collected his wise sayings and recorded them in this book. He wanted to preserve these instructions to educate the future generations of Israel. In this chapter he gives advice on gaining wisdom and describes the benefits resulting from that achievement.

READ:

PR 3:1-35

OBSERVATION POINT

Wisdom far exceeds the worth of gold, silver, or precious gems. For Solomon to make such a statement about wisdom was significant because he had great wealth, surpassing anyone else in the world. But that wealth was of little value compared to true wisdom.

EXPLORATION POINT

This passage shows that God is actively involved with us in our search for wisdom. God shows us the path to take (verse 6), he heals us and gives us strength (verse 8), he provides for us (verse 10), he corrects us (verse 12), and he is our security (verse 26). We

must be eager to find wisdom, but we don't do it alone. God is with us, helping us each step of the way.

NEXT STOP

A CONTRAST OF THE GODLY AND THE WICKED

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

TRUSTING IN THE LORD

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

This marks the beginning of the pithy couplets that make up the bulk of the book of Proverbs. These proverbs of Solomon continue to address a variety of topics, such as godliness, laziness, and the importance of working hard and watching what we say. Throughout, the focus is on learning what wise behavior and thinking looks like.

PR 10:1-32

OBSERVATION POINT

These two-line bits of advice were a popular form of literature in ancient times. The themes and topics vary and are randomly arranged. The lines are in a parallel structure contrasting wisdom and godliness with foolishness and evil. The proverbs found here are similar to Egyptian and Mesopotamian wisdom literature.

EXPLORATION POINT

How we speak and what we say is mentioned in a variety of ways throughout this section of Proverbs. Wise people select their words carefully and think before they allow words to roll off their tongues. It's more than common sense—it's God's advice. Read these carefully; they will probably save you from "eating your words."

NEXT STOP

A CONTRAST OF THE GODLY AND THE WICKED

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

TRUSTING IN THE LORD

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON

A CONTRAST OF THE GODLY AND THE WICKED

Solomon continues sharing his wisdom. These wise sayings are full of timeless truth for godly behavior and thinking. His advice is as relevant to our lives today as it was to the people of Israel thousands of years ago.

PR 12:1-28

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OBSERVATION POINT

Proverbs 12:10 might be a bit surprising to us: Being godly requires taking good care of animals. Throughout the Bible, God compares great leaders to shepherds who gently lead and care for their sheep. Responsibility and compassion are required for godly leadership.

EXPLORATION POINT

Nobody likes to be criticized. We may react negatively to correction and sometimes even feel crushed. But we should embrace discipline and correction. It is the best way to learn, to grow, and to improve our skills or behavior. The next time you hear words of correction, listen carefully, think about them, and know that they are for your benefit.

NEXT STOP

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CONTRAST OF THE GODLY AND THE WICKED

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER

Not all of Proverbs was written by Solomon; two otherwise unknown authors named Agur and Lemuel are also named in chapters 30 and 31. Proverbs ends with a beautiful, anonymous poem about an ideal wife. The wisdom found in this book transcends any differences in time and culture between us and the author.

READ:

PR 31:10-31

OBSERVATION POINT

The merchant ships mentioned in verse 14 are those of King Solomon's fleet. Solomon had ships in the port at Ezion-geber that sailed south from the Gulf of Aqaba into the Red Sea. His sailors traveled to foreign lands to collect gold, gems, exotic animals, sandalwood, ivory, and spices. These treasures from other countries made Solomon wealthy and the most famous king of his time.

EXPLORATION POINT

Although this reading may be a bit daunting to women, it can also encourage them to strive for a higher standard than the world

expects. These solid examples of godly womanhood demonstrate how we must apply wisdom to our lives as we care for others and engage in worthwhile, God-pleasing endeavors. This passage celebrates an ideal that is hard to match. But the ultimate goal for everyone is to be a person who fears the Lord.

NEXT STOP

EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER

EVERYTHING IS

MEANINGLESS

King Solomon was a prolific writer. He wrote thousands of poems and proverbs, which have been preserved and practiced for thousands of years. Throughout his life, Solomon spent considerable energy pursuing meaning and happiness through various means. In the later years of his reign, King Solomon—whose wisdom and wealth have become famous throughout the world—expresses his insights into the meaning of life.

ECCL 1:1–2:26

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OBSERVATION POINT

Solomon was the richest king in the world during his lifetime. He had more gold, treasures, wives and concubines, palaces, and horses than anyone else alive. Yet he realized that all those things did not guarantee happiness, purpose, contentment, or fulfillment. This observation has been around for centuries, yet no one seems to want to take Solomon's word seriously. Christians and non-

Christians alike continue even today to strive for money and for stuff that doesn't satisfy.

EXPLORATION POINT

King Solomon invoked extremes to make his point: Being wise or foolish, rich or poor, leads to the same end. So why bother? His conclusion is this: All work and striving has no meaning or purpose unless we have God at the center of our lives. When we focus on God and believe that everything we do is to further his Kingdom and give him glory, we will find satisfaction in life.

NEXT STOP

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CONTRAST OF THE GODLY AND THE WICKED

EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

King Solomon wrote a vast collection of wisdom sayings and observations on life. Many of his thoughts appear somewhat obvious, but they speak to every generation. Ecclesiastes is the most cynical of Solomon's wisdom writings, but this chapter is a delightful response to all the hopelessness and meaninglessness expressed in the opening chapters of the book. Solomon addresses every area of life in this famous passage.

READ:

ECCL 3:1-22

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OBSERVATION POINT

This poem is beautifully structured. Each line contains a pair of opposites: fourteen of them in seven verses. The first couplet examines the largest extreme, birth and death. Most of the comparisons are easily understood, but discerning the proper time for anything is the challenge of wisdom. The last pair, war and peace, brings the poem full circle: back to the stark juxtaposition of death and life from the opening line. All of these things are outside human control.

EXPLORATION POINT

What appears to be chaotic and meaningless to humans is purposeful and meaningful, even beautiful, to God. Fretting and worry are a waste of our time. Therefore, we should follow the advice of the writer—to be happy and enjoy ourselves by focusing on the good in the present, by being assured that God is in control, and by enjoying the gifts we have received from him.

NEXT STOP
IN PRAISE OF LOVE

ADVICE FOR YOUNG AND OLD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

ADVICE FOR YOUNG AND OLD

Solomon concludes his philosophy of life. He has had a prosperous and famous life, but after reflecting on all that has occurred, he has some advice for everyone, young or old: No matter where we find ourselves in life, we must never forget our Creator. Solomon's advice is valuable for each of us to review from time to time.

ECCL 11:7–12:14

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OBSERVATION POINT

The caperberry is a small, prickly bush well known in the ancient Near East. The buds of the plant were pickled before they were

eaten in order to stimulate sexual desire or increase the appetite of the elderly. The actual fruit of the caperberry bush was not edible.

EXPLORATION POINT

The conclusion (12:13-14) is an excellent summary of the wisdom found in Ecclesiastes. We should enjoy our work and our lives, and at the appropriate times we should pursue a range of emotions and activities. But everything we do should be framed by our reverence for God, who will hold us accountable for all we do with our lives.

NEXT STOP

IN PRAISE OF LOVE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

IN PRAISE OF LOVE

King Solomon's wisdom and creativity enabled him to write a wide variety of literature: praise songs, wise sayings, and even a love poem. This poem forms part of a great love story that exalts many aspects of love at its very best. It provides an inspiring example of

romance between a young man and a woman that is pure and beautiful.

SONG 1:1–2:17

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OBSERVATION POINT

In the ancient Near East, raisin cakes and apples were considered aphrodisiacs. These apples were not the same as the apples we know in North America, since the climate of the region is too warm to grow apples. Perhaps the tree referred to here is an apricot tree since it had fragrant blossoms, sweet fruit, and a full crown of leafy branches that produced shade.

EXPLORATION POINT

This erotic poem is included in the Bible as a testament to God's desire for human love to be beautiful, pure, and holy. God created and values human sexuality, love, and the union of a man and a woman. It is how God intended all love relationships to be. In our world, which often views sex as nothing but recreation, it is refreshing and delightful to understand what God truly intended the male-female relationship to be.

NEXT STOP

VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

IN PRAISE OF LOVE

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

In the latter years of his reign, David laid out all the plans and arranged for building a temple for God. He selected the supplies and appointed the craftsmen. Meanwhile, God secured peace all around the kingdom so that when Solomon became king, he could build “the house of the LORD.” In the fourth year of his reign, Solomon starts construction.

1KGS 6:1–7:12

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OBSERVATION POINT

Extensive excavation work flattened and increased the size of the hilltop where the Temple was being built. On the eastern and southern sides of the Temple area, massive walls of concrete were constructed to support the site. Another project secured water to supply the Temple area, carving numerous cisterns out of the rock to hold thousands of gallons of water. Builders completed the Temple in Solomon's eleventh year as king, but it stood vacant for almost another year until it was dedicated.

EXPLORATION POINT

We want all the details when we hear of something new and exciting: a new relationship, a wedding, a new car, a baby. The construction of the Temple in Jerusalem was the most exciting and highly anticipated project in the history of God's people. To memorialize this momentous event, the writer of this historical book included the story and all the details—the measurements, the craftsmen's names, the supplies and their sources, and the descriptions of each object. This detailed account is similar to a commemorative photo album.

NEXT STOP

A TEMPLE SONG

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SOLOMON BUILDS THE TEMPLE

A TEMPLE SONG

King Solomon's construction workers and craftsmen took seven years to build the holy place for God's presence on earth—the Temple. After the magnificent Temple was completed, God filled it with his glory, which was visible as a cloud. At that marvelous time, the people of Israel celebrated! David wrote this psalm before his death, anticipating this glorious occasion.

READ:

PS 30:1-12

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OBSERVATION POINT

Mourning clothes were simple garments made of sackcloth, a coarse, dark material (similar to burlap) made from goat or camel hair. People in mourning would remove their regular clothes and ornamentation and would don a sackcloth garment. It was made from two pieces of material sewn together along three sides, with openings for the arms and head. The garment was uncomfortable, adding physical misery to the emotional grief.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is a magnificent God. He is loving and faithful to his people.

His anger is brief, but his favor lasts through a lifetime. As long as our confidence remains in God, we will live firm and secure; without him our world would come crashing down. Prosperity and wealth do not guarantee security; only God can do that. God can overcome any of our weaknesses or failures and bring peace, calm, and joy to our lives.

NEXT STOP

THE ARK BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A TEMPLE SONG

THE ARK BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE

The Ark of the Covenant, a symbol of the Lord's presence, was built during the time of Moses, when the nation was wandering in the wilderness. The Ark led the Israelites across the Jordan River into the Promised Land and led their procession around the city of Jericho. Afterward, the Ark resided in the Tabernacle at Shiloh. It was stolen by the Philistines and later recovered, but eventually David moved it to Jerusalem and placed it in a special tent. Now Solomon moves the Ark one last time, into the Temple he has built —the house of God.

READ:

1KGS 8:1-21, 54-66

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OBSERVATION POINT

The Ark originally contained the two stone tablets of the law given to Moses, a golden jar of manna, and Aaron's budded staff. The stone tablets were a reminder to live under God's covenant. The jar of manna was a reminder that God had provided the Israelites with food every day while they wandered in the wilderness. And Aaron's staff was a reminder not to rebel against God's chosen leaders. At the dedication of the Temple, only the stone tablets are mentioned. Perhaps the other items had been lost or stolen during the Ark's wanderings.

EXPLORATION POINT

Over 400 years earlier, God presented himself to the Israelites in a pillar-like cloud during the day and a fire at night so they would see his presence with them as they traveled in the wilderness. The people at the Temple dedication had heard about this phenomenon, but they had not seen it. The cloud of God's glorious presence filling the Temple must have awed them. God's presence is with us today, but he doesn't manifest himself in a physical cloud. He's with us by his Spirit.

NEXT STOP

VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

IN PRAISE OF LOVE

THE ARK BROUGHT TO THE TEMPLE

VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

The kingdom of Israel prospers under the leadership of King Solomon. Word of his wealth and wisdom spreads beyond the neighboring kingdoms to the ends of the known world. The queen

of Sheba, intrigued by these stories, plans a visit to Israel to see for herself if this king is as remarkable as the tales that are told about him.

1KGS 10:1–29:13

OBSERVATION POINT

The queen of Sheba is thought to have come from ancient Arabia. She asked Solomon hard questions and “talked with him about everything she had on her mind.” The hard questions were probably posed in the form of riddles. Arabian literature at the time was typically filled with difficult riddles and proverbs. The Arabs used these elements to test for wisdom. Solomon answered and clarified even the most puzzling questions. The queen was overwhelmed by his responses.

EXPLORATION POINT

Centuries later, Jesus commended the queen's desire for knowledge and truth (Matthew 12:42). Solomon's life testified to her that his God was the source of his greatness. Solomon did not have to share the entire story of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His wisdom and his wealth showed her enough. What we do every day testifies to the influence Jesus Christ has in our lives. Our actions declare our faith and our beliefs. We can't say one thing and do another. Our lives are the true evidence of who rules in our hearts.

NEXT STOP

THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SOLOMON ASKS FOR WISDOM

VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

YEAR:
931 BC
CURRENT WORLD POWER:
Assyria, Babylon
STATUS OF GOD'S PEOPLE:
Divided Nation

THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH
Although God wanted to be the only King for his people, he allowed them to crown a human king and establish a monarchy. God specifically chose Israel's first three kings—Saul, David, and Solomon—who were then each anointed by a priest. These kings

ruled over the twelve tribes of Israel, united as one nation, for 120 years. During Solomon's reign the people experienced peace and prosperity. When God's Temple was completed, God's glorious presence filled the Temple, affirming to the people that God himself was with them.

After Solomon dies in 931 BC, his son Rehoboam becomes king over all Israel. But there is conflict brewing. Jeroboam, one of Solomon's labor managers, leads ten tribes to rebel against the king and start a second kingdom. Now there are two nations: Israel is the northern kingdom, consisting of ten tribes; and Judah is the southern kingdom, consisting of two tribes.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The kingdoms of Israel and Judah run parallel with each other for two hundred years, until Israel is conquered by the Assyrian Empire in 722 BC. The kingdom of Judah continues on for about 150 years until the Babylonians destroy it in 586 BC. To keep these two histories clear, we'll follow them separately.

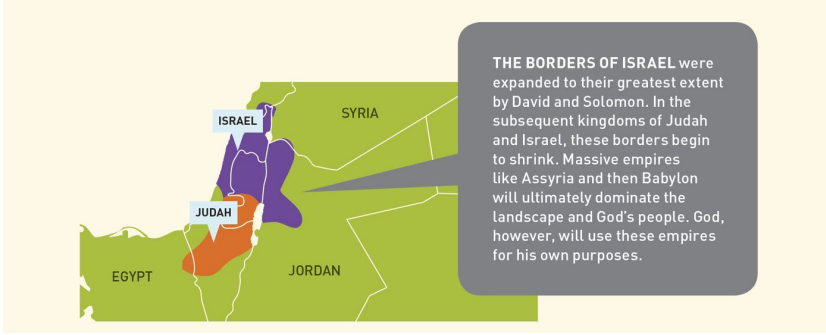
First we will follow the kings and prophets of Israel. Nineteen kings reign over the course of two hundred years; then in 722 the kingdom falls because most of its kings "did what was evil in the LORD's sight." God continues to speak to his people through the prophets, but they do not listen. As a result, their lives decline morally and spiritually until their downfall.

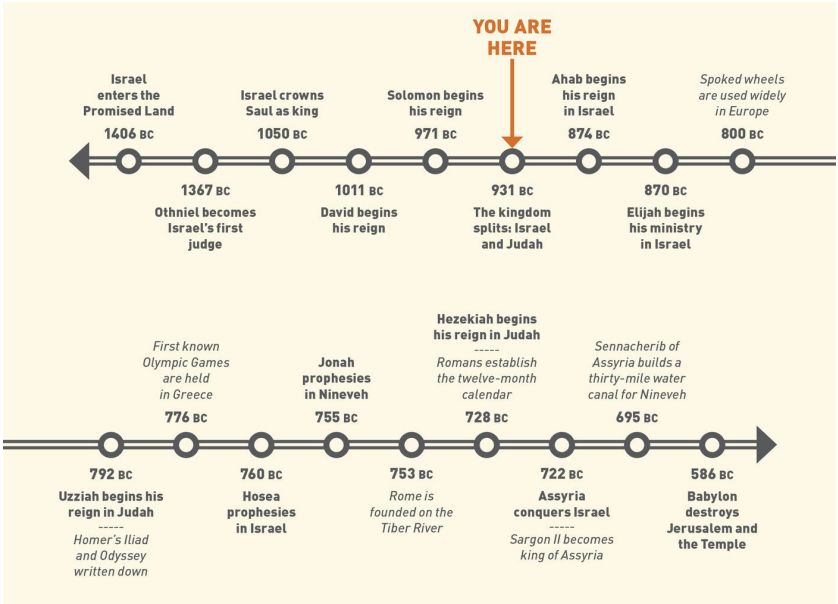
Then we will backtrack two hundred years to follow the kings and prophets of Judah from 931 BC until the kingdom's demise in 586 BC. Judah is ruled by nineteen kings (and one queen) over 345 years. Some of Judah's kings fear God and closely follow God's law. Others allow idolatry to creep into the people's religious practices. Although the prophets preach about the consequences of disobeying God, their warnings are not often heeded. Judah's sinfulness becomes too great, so God allows the Babylonians to invade the kingdom three times, taking captives and eventually destroying Jerusalem. Despite the kingdom's destruction, God promises that a remnant—a small group of God's people—will someday return to live in their land again.

JESUS AS TRUE NORTH

During the time of the two kingdoms, God's representatives on earth are kings, priests, and prophets. These human leaders are expected to obey God and his laws. By being obedient, they can represent God accurately and faithfully to the people. Most prophets are faithful, bringing news of hope and promises of a savior. But only some of the priests and kings follow the ways of the Lord. Their human weaknesses, their desire for power, and their undisciplined lives get in the way. Because of this, their roles are only shadows of the One who will ultimately obey God perfectly. Jesus Christ will come and accomplish all that prophets, priests, and kings have been called to do, but his coming is still hundreds of years in the future.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?





NEXT STOP

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

Unfortunately, the splendor and greatness of King Solomon's reign does not last. As he ages, Solomon becomes lax in his relationship with God, marrying foreign wives and allowing them to introduce idol worship to the kingdom. Once, God had promised Abraham that his descendants—now the kingdom of Israel—would be a blessing to all nations. Now, Solomon's sin has led to political conflicts in the kingdom that seem to be swamping God's promise. Far from having the global impact God had planned for them, the Israelites are an insignificant regional ethnic group heading for trouble.

1KGS 12:1-33

OBSERVATION POINT

The struggle between the northern and southern tribes was nothing new. During the time of the judges the people identified with and were loyal to their tribe, not their nation. Although the twelve tribes united under David and Solomon, jealousy and animosity continued to simmer, especially between the two largest tribes—Ephraim in the north and Judah in the south. The northern tribes disliked that Jerusalem, the center of politics and religion, was located in Judah's territory. The kingdom split in two: To the north was Israel, ten tribes led by Jeroboam; to the south was Judah, two tribes led by Rehoboam.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jeroboam intentionally set up new worship centers to secure his political power and position, but he was ignoring what God wanted for his people. The new centers were convenient for worship, but they led the people to worship idols, which violated God's first commandment. Gradually the people forgot all about the true God and drifted into worshiping the local deity, Baal. Convenience won out over what was true and right. We too must carefully choose what is right and true over what is current, popular, or most convenient.

NEXT STOP

KING AHAB AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH

KING AHAB AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH

KING AHAB AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

THE NORTHERN TRIBES REVOLT

KING AHAB AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH

After Israel splits into two kingdoms, God's people continue to pursue life apart from God. King Jeroboam lures the people into worshiping local idols rather than the one true God. Meanwhile, God reminds his people of the big story—of who he is and what he has done for them—through his prophets. From time to time, they repent and turn back to God, but their kings continually go back to their pagan practices. Eventually, a particularly wicked king, Ahab, rises to power over Israel. But God never deserts his chosen people. He speaks to them through the words of his prophet Elijah.

READ:

1KGS 16:29–17:24

OBSERVATION POINT

Jezebel was a Phoenician princess and a high priestess of the cult of Baal. Her father Ethbaal, king of Sidon, was high priest of the cult of Ashtoreth, or Asherah. When Jezebel married Ahab, she converted him and much of the kingdom of Israel to the worship of Baal and Asherah. She supported 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. Jezebel assumed a major political and religious role as queen of Israel and had a great influence on Ahab's decisions.

EXPLORATION POINT

Elijah, whose name means “my God is Yahweh,” prophesied for the God of Israel. He courageously declared his faith before King Ahab, who had made Baal worship the kingdom’s official religion. Elijah was in the minority. Other prophets had remained true to the Lord, but he was not aware of them and felt abandoned. Sometimes we may feel alone in our faith, too. Family or friends may have lost touch with God and drifted into complacency or other beliefs. Reading the story of Elijah encourages us with the reminder that God does not abandon his people.

NEXT STOP

JONAH RUNS FROM THE LORD

THE CONTEST ON MOUNT CARMEL

THE CONTEST ON MOUNT CARMEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

KING AHAB AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH

KING AHAB AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH

THE CONTEST ON MOUNT CARMEL

After three years of drought, the prophet Elijah receives word from God that rain is coming to revive the land of Israel. Rain would be God's gift to the Israelites, for the people had long since forsaken God and chosen to worship Baal as the giver of rain. As God instructs him, Elijah appears before King Ahab and challenges his prophets to an unprecedented contest on Mount Carmel.

1KGS 18:1-46

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OBSERVATION POINT

Pagan worshipers believed their gods had human characteristics and needs. Priests of Egyptian deities actually woke up their gods by feeding, washing, and dressing the idols. Elijah's sarcasm appropriately derided the belief that a god could be preoccupied with human-like activities.

EXPLORATION POINT

The majority of Israel got swept up in the pagan rituals and worship of Baal, Canaan's most popular god. Everyone wants to be associated with the strongest, the prettiest, the smartest, or the best in any category. But sometimes we settle for a god that isn't. We worship wealth, position, or power instead of pursuing the true God —the Lord Almighty, the supreme God of gods and King of kings. He's patiently waiting for us to come to him.

NEXT STOP

ELIJAH TAKEN INTO HEAVEN

ELIJAH FLEES TO SINAI

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
THE CONTEST ON MOUNT CARMEL

ELIJAH FLEES TO SINAI

The prophet Elijah has just engaged in the biggest battle of his life. He has boldly confronted the prophets of Baal and proved whose god was supreme: God won! That very day, the rain that God promised storms in from the sea. The three-year drought is over. It is a time for Elijah to rejoice. But Elijah is afraid and discouraged—Queen Jezebel is threatening his life.

READ:

1KGS 19:1-21

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OBSERVATION POINT

Great forces of nature can represent God's majesty and power, but God didn't use them in responding to Elijah. God had demonstrated his control over nature at Mount Carmel. The fire from heaven had consumed the sacrifice, and the rain had come after a three-year drought. God was not out to create awe and fear; instead, he wanted to reassure and comfort his prophet. God showed Elijah that he was not only powerful—he was also personal.

EXPLORATION POINT

Living in God's presence and knowing he is with us does not always

eliminate our fear when we are directly threatened. Being human, Elijah panicked when he received Jezebel's death threat. Whenever we feel discouraged by life or depressed, we can take some tips from Elijah's actions. First he slept; then he had something good to eat and drink. Most importantly, he talked to God to feel his presence and find out what God wanted him to do next.

NEXT STOP

ELIJAH TAKEN INTO HEAVEN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE CONTEST ON MOUNT CARMEL

ELIJAH FLEES TO SINAI

ELIJAH TAKEN INTO HEAVEN

God has protected Elijah through many dangerous endeavors. Now Elijah's ministry as God's prophet is coming to an end. God has already told Elijah to appoint Elisha as his replacement. Elisha has been serving as Elijah's assistant, traveling everywhere with him. When God is ready to take Elijah to heaven, Elisha is ready to continue the work that Elijah has begun in Israel.

READ:

2KGS 2:1-28

OBSERVATION POINT

A whirlwind is a violent, swirling wind like a tornado. It is common in Israel during the rainy season (May–October) but also occurs along the Mediterranean coast in early winter. In the Bible this natural phenomenon is associated with divine action: God often speaks from the whirlwind or uses it to display his power. But this occasion is the only time that a whirlwind serves as transportation to heaven.

EXPLORATION POINT

The process of dying is something we all have to face. Even Elijah, a

faithful servant of God and a famous prophet of Israel, did not stay on earth forever. He was taken to heaven in a dramatic way that has never been repeated. Our departure from earth will be much more ordinary, but thanks to Jesus, the destination can be the same.

NEXT STOP

ELISHA'S MIRACLES OF COMPASSION
ELISHA'S MIRACLES OF COMPASSION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ELIJAH TAKEN INTO HEAVEN

ELIJAH TAKEN INTO HEAVEN

ELISHA'S MIRACLES OF COMPASSION

The prophet Elisha begins prophesying soon after King Ahab's reign ends. God called Elisha to declare to Israel's kings and people that God, not Baal, was the one true God. Through Elisha's ministry, God wanted to reveal his character to all of Israel. Elisha's miracles showed them God's power and compassion.

READ:

2KGS 4:1-37

OBSERVATION POINT

In Bible times, olive oil was very valuable and was used for cooking; for lighting; and in medicine, salves, and cosmetics. Households typically had large storage jars that could hold six gallons of water or oil each. The widow's son collected these jars from the neighbors and then filled them with olive oil. This quantity of oil, when sold, would be enough to eliminate the widow's debt.

EXPLORATION POINT

Elisha's miracles met the immediate needs of people. These

miracles, especially the feeding of a crowd with only a few loaves of bread, anticipated Jesus' miracles and his ministry. The miracles not only displayed God's power but also his compassionate understanding of the everyday needs of the people. God is not distant. He is here with us, active in the daily routines of our lives. Every day he provides us with our "daily bread."

NEXT STOP

JEROBOAM II RULES IN ISRAEL

THE HEALING OF NAAMAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ELISHA'S MIRACLES OF COMPASSION

THE HEALING OF NAAMAN

Elisha's miracles display God's power to the Israelites. He advises the army, helps in practical ways, and even brings a woman's son back to life. He also ministers to others beyond Israel's borders, such as the Aramean warrior Naaman. His miracles testify that God isn't simply a regional deity—he is the all-powerful and only true God, the Lord Almighty.

2KGS 5:1-27

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OBSERVATION POINT

Biblical leprosy is not identical to modern leprosy, which is called Hansen's disease. The leprosy described in Leviticus 13 and 14

shares only some of the characteristics of Hansen's disease as it is known today. What the Bible calls leprosy encompassed a variety of infectious skin diseases, including the more common ailment psoriasis.

EXPLORATION POINT

God exhibited his sovereignty over *all* nations by giving victory to Naaman's army, whose soldiers were not of God's chosen people. God's power is unlike the power of the world that was displayed in armies, horses, and chariots. Nothing is outside his sovereign will. We only see a small part of his plan, but we can rest in the knowledge that a loving God, the Creator of all, is in control.

NEXT STOP

JEHU ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE HEALING OF NAAMAN

JEHU ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL

With God's blessing, Jehu, a ruthless military man, takes over the kingship of Israel. To secure his throne and restore the worship of God, Jehu kills those who have promoted Baal worship: Ahab's wife and son, Queen Jezebel and King Joram, as well as seventy royal princes. With the Baal worshipers gone, Jehu reforms Israel's religious practices, bringing the people back to God. In doing so, however, he has left a trail of blood and bodies behind him.

READ: 2 Kings 9:1-13, 30-37; 10:1-7, 18-31

OBSERVATION POINT

Decades earlier, King Ahab had built a large temple to Baal in the capital city of Samaria. Inside this temple was a sacred altar to Baal and an Asherah pole. The "innermost fortress" of the temple was a recessed area in a wall that contained an engraved stone image dedicated to Baal. Previously Elijah had killed off the Baal prophets;

now Jehu completely destroyed all other aspects of Baal worship in Israel.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jehu rooted out Ahab's family exactly as God had told him, but he made one big mistake—he kept the national religion of worshiping gold calves at Bethel and Dan. Instead of breaking that age-old tradition, Jehu allowed the idols to stand—this was his downfall. Sometimes we get hung up on traditions and continue doing things out of habit. From time to time it's important to examine those traditions to be sure they line up with what God requires.

NEXT STOP

JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOASH RULE IN ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JEHU ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL

JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOASH RULE IN ISRAEL

After Jehu purges Baal worship from Israel, his son King Jehoahaz brings it back, undoing all the progress his father had made. As Elisha looks on, Israel plunges back into idolatry. The Lord is furious at his people for once again forgetting him and all he has done for them. To punish them, he sends other nations to attack them. Eventually, Jehoahaz's son Jehoash, a victorious warrior, comes to the throne. With God's power he is able to fight off the invaders and delay the total destruction of Israel a little longer.

2KGS 13:1-25

OBSERVATION POINT

The Bible's inspired historical record is not an exhaustive account of the accomplishments of the kings of Israel and Judah. The Bible mentions eighteen other records of the deeds of kings and prophets. These documents consisted of poetry, royal court records, and records by the prophets. Among them were *The Book of Jashar* (Joshua 10:13), *The Book of the Acts of Solomon* (1 Kings 11:41), and *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel* (1 Kings 14:19). All have been lost to antiquity.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is patient with his people. Jehoahaz kept idol worship alive, but turned to God in prayer when things got really bad for Israel. God graciously answered him. God rewards obedience and responds even to small acts that acknowledge him and show love for him. He answers the earnest prayers of his people, even though we are sinful. He is "a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness" (Psalm 86:15).

NEXT STOP

JEROBOAM II RULES IN ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ELISHA'S MIRACLES OF COMPASSION

JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOASH RULE IN ISRAEL

JEROBOAM II RULES IN ISRAEL

After Jehoash saves Israel from invaders and reclaims the captured towns, his son Jeroboam II begins to rule in Samaria. He rules Israel for 41 years, longer than any other king of Israel. During Jeroboam's time as king, Israel experiences its greatest prosperity since the glorious reign of Solomon. The Israelites also reclaim some of their lost territory, secure their northern borders against Assyria, and enjoy peace.

READ:

2KGS 14:23-29

OBSERVATION POINT

The prophet Jonah mentioned here is the same Jonah who ran from God and ended up in the belly of a great fish. Although Jonah is best known for his prophecy to Israel's enemies, the Assyrians in Nineveh, he also prophesied to Israel around the same time as Amos and Hosea, who warned against the greed and corruption of the wealthy that resulted in injustice for the poor.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's compassion and love for his people continues through all generations. Although Jeroboam II worshiped idols, God remained

faithful to the covenant promises he had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He used Jeroboam's skills to restore stability and prosperity to Israel for a time. God's compassion and care for his people is greater than his need to correct or punish them. This is still true today: "The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love" (Psalm 103:8).

NEXT STOP

JONAH RUNS FROM THE LORD
JONAH RUNS FROM THE LORD

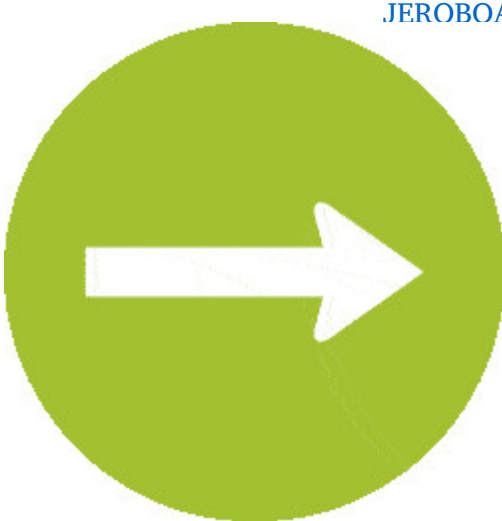
ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

KING AHAB AND THE PROPHET ELIJAH

JEROBOAM II RULES IN ISRAEL

JEROBOAM II RULES IN ISRAEL



JONAH RUNS FROM THE LORD

Long ago God promised Abraham that his descendants would be a blessing to all nations. Jonah was one of God's prophets who was sent to a foreign nation with a clear warning: Change your sinful

ways or God will punish you. Throughout the big story, God has love and compassion for all people of every nation. He gives fair warning to everyone that their actions will be judged. God summons Jonah to warn the Assyrians of Nineveh to repent or face impending doom.

JON 1:1–2:10

OBSERVATION POINT

The Hebrew phrase used here for “great fish” could refer to any large animal that lives primarily underwater. The exact species of animal or fish referred to is unknown. Perhaps it was a unique fish God made for just this purpose, or perhaps it was a type of shark or whale. The great white shark, the whale, and the whale shark all have throats large enough to swallow a human.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jonah was startled and angry to think that God could care for or love Israel's worst enemy, Assyria. Jonah was sure that it wasn't fair that the bloodthirsty Assyrians would get a chance at God's salvation. God's radical forgiveness did not fit Jonah's paradigm of justice. But this was a glimpse of what God had in mind for the world: a salvation that came from his grace alone, available to all—rich and poor, righteous and wicked.

NEXT STOP

DEATH OF A NATION

HOSEA'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

JONAH GOES TO NINEVEH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JONAH RUNS FROM THE LORD

JONAH GOES TO NINEVEH

For a second time, God calls Jonah to preach to Nineveh. Jonah now knows he cannot run away from God, so he listens and obeys. He reluctantly travels north to the capital of Assyria. It's a very large city with a sizable population. It's also the city of Israel's most dreaded enemy.

READ:

JON 3:1–4:11

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OBSERVATION POINT

The leafy plant that grew quickly to provide shade for Jonah may have been a castor oil plant or a cucumber vine. The castor oil plant is a shrub that grows to be over twelve feet high, with very large, wide leaves. God miraculously caused the plant to grow to its full height overnight.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is always eager to save those who willingly and openly receive his word, recognize their sin, and repent. God was making a huge statement to Jonah—that his compassion and grace extend beyond

the Israelites to people that they saw as the worst and the most sinful people in the world. Salvation is by God's grace alone; it is his gift to us, and we can do nothing to deserve it.

NEXT STOP

HOSEA'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JONAH RUNS FROM THE LORD

JONAH GOES TO NINEVEH

HOSEA'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

Hosea prophesies in Israel near the end of King Jeroboam II's reign, during a time of moral, social, and religious decline. Like other prophets of his day, Hosea preaches against the excesses of the rich and their oppression of the poor. Most poignantly, Hosea's personal experience with an unfaithful wife is a living prophecy that represents the relationship of God with his unfaithful people, Israel.

READ:

HOS 1:1–2:5

OBSERVATION POINT

In ancient societies, prostitution was more acceptable than it is today, but in Israel it was a disgraceful profession of outcasts. The imagery of prostitution used in Hosea and in Ezekiel implies judgment and shame. Israel was to live by different standards than the people around them. But they committed spiritual adultery by pursuing sin and the idols of other nations. The Israelites' "other lovers" were the Canaanite gods, especially Baal and Ashtoreth.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Israelites were guilty of spiritual adultery: following the sinful

ways of other nations even though God had called them to be faithful to him alone. We are sometimes guilty of spiritual adultery as well. Too often we want to follow the trends of the culture we live in rather than standing out and standing up for the Lord. We should carefully examine our lives to ensure that we are being faithful to God.

NEXT STOP

THE VISIONS OF AMOS

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HOSEA'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

Like other prophets, Hosea speaks for God and uses the first person to communicate God's words vividly. He recalls the loving relationship God had with his people in the past and is distressed over their neglect of him. Hosea makes it clear that, although God will punish Israel, he also promises to "bring them home again."

HOS 11:1-12

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OBSERVATION POINT

In other passages in Hosea, God is described as a lion who attacks Israel to do it harm (5:14; 13:7). Here the image is used to portray God as a lion who roars to protect his people and to announce his coming to help them.

EXPLORATION POINT

God had initiated a covenant relationship with his people, but they were unfaithful to that relationship. God would punish them for this

by sending them into exile, but his plan went beyond the punishment stage. He promised a time of restoration and renewal because of his great love for his people.

NEXT STOP

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON JUDAH AND ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON JUDAH AND ISRAEL

During the reign of King Jeroboam II, a shepherd named Amos receives a call from God to begin a brief prophetic ministry in Israel. Amos lived and preached at the same time that God called Jonah to preach to Nineveh. Amos cannot ignore God's roar or the visions of judgment that God gives to him. He is compelled to share God's message of punishment with Israel, Judah, and the surrounding nations.

AMOS 1:1-2; 2:4-16

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OBSERVATION POINT

A poor person would use his cloak as security for a loan. The law of Moses required the holder of the cloak to return it by dusk, since nights were cold and the cloak kept the debtor warm. It was also against the law to take any clothing at all from a widow. The rich in Israel were abusing this law; not only would they keep cloaks longer than was allowed, but they also openly flaunted their collection of cloaks at religious festivals.

EXPLORATION POINT

The social, moral, and religious structure of Israel had completely disintegrated. The people ignored justice and forgot about mercy; they were callous, ruthless, and corrupt. God was not going to tolerate Israel's callous abuse of his law. Judgment inevitably followed. God wants his people and his Kingdom to reflect his desire for justice, mercy, and compassion. As Christians, we must promote justice and mercy in all aspects of life to ensure that God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

NEXT STOP

ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO LEARN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON JUDAH AND ISRAEL

ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO LEARN

Amos continues his prophecy, which is filled with vivid imagery describing Israel's many perversions of justice and proper worship. He is appalled by the rich who exploit the poor in order to support the lavish lifestyles they have grown comfortable with. He detests the people's worship practices, which have become empty rituals and actions with no heartfelt meaning.

AMOS 4:1-13

OBSERVATION POINT

God had designated the Temple in Jerusalem as the only appropriate place for worship. But Israel set up their own places of worship at Bethel and Dan, and they worshiped local deities in other cities like Gilgal. They prided themselves in their pious acts, offering sacrifices every morning and tithing every three days. They thought God would acknowledge their religiosity, but their worship was hollow and insincere. Their excessiveness was an empty show.

EXPLORATION POINT

God desires sincere worship that comes from genuine love for and devotion to him. He expected the Israelites to uphold his standard, and he expects the same from us today. The number of times we show up at church or the amount of money we give means nothing to him if we are not sincere. Pious acts and thoughtless rituals are just a show for others if our motivation is not from our hearts.

NEXT STOP

THE VISIONS OF AMOS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HOSEA'S WIFE AND CHILDREN

ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO LEARN

THE VISIONS OF AMOS

Amos sees five visions from God: a swarm of locusts, a fiery drought, a plumb line, a basket of ripe fruit, and the Lord standing at the altar. These experiences help him to see as well as hear what will happen to the kingdom of Israel. He knows that God is angry with the people of the northern kingdom and that he will punish them for their sinful living.

AMOS 7:1–8:3

97 4 0 F 2 3 8 6

OBSERVATION POINT

The sycamore-fig tree was a large tree that grew fig-like fruit. It was common in the region, often planted along roads for shade. It was a high-yielding tree that provided several crops of fruit each year. The fruit had to be carefully cared for in order for it to develop correctly, ripen, and be edible. Fruit that was poorly cared for or rotten was used as cattle feed.

EXPLORATION POINT

God built his people Israel in perfect alignment with a “plumb line”—the laws he gave them at Mount Sinai. Now God was

measuring the lives of the people of Israel against those laws and finding them lacking. We too know the way of right living and what God expects of us. God's message to us has been carefully preserved in the Bible. We are already made right with God through Christ, but we too must strive to live according to the "plumb line" of the Bible.

NEXT STOP

DEATH OF A NATION

FIVE KINGS OF ISRAEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE VISIONS OF AMOS

FIVE KINGS OF ISRAEL

After King Jeroboam II's reign, a series of coups terrorizes the kingdom of Israel as one king after another seizes the throne by murdering his predecessor. The sins of these kings are ruining the kingdom and harming its people. Violence ensues inside and outside Israel's borders. The Assyrians of the north invade Israel over and

over again, seizing many cities and deporting the people.

2KGS 15:8-31

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OBSERVATION POINT

The kings of Israel and Judah were routinely compared to the earlier kings of the nation. King David was a good king after God's own heart; all good and God-fearing kings were compared to him. But Israel's kings were compared to King Jeroboam and his "evil ways": building pagan shrines, appointing priests from the common people, placing gold calf idols at Bethel and Dan, and creating a religious festival to worship the calves.

EXPLORATION POINT

God was slow to become angry with his people. He sent his prophets to warn them to change their evil ways, but the people didn't listen and the leaders didn't enforce change. God's patience would eventually run out. We tend to avoid making changes in our lives, especially if we don't suffer immediate consequences. But we need to listen for God's voice and realign our thinking and actions with his way.

NEXT STOP

DEATH OF A NATION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JONAH RUNS FROM THE LORD

THE VISIONS OF AMOS

FIVE KINGS OF ISRAEL

DEATH OF A NATION

God has been patient with Israel for two hundred years. He has warned and threatened and loved his people and their kings. God's plan in the big story was to live among his people, but they have ignored and resisted and avoided him. Numerous prophets warned the leaders that destruction was coming if they did not seek God, shun idolatry, and show mercy. But eventually the prophets' voices cease. God abandons the kingdom of Israel to face the ruthless Assyrians alone. Pounded by Assyria, the people of Israel finally prove to be too weak to ward off their invaders.

READ:

2KGS 17:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

Israel, the northern kingdom, consisted of ten tribes: Ephraim, Naphtali, East and West Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, Reuben, Gad, and Dan. When the kingdom of Israel was conquered, it disappeared. Afterward, it was often referred to as the ten lost tribes of Israel. Not only did the Assyrians take the people captive and move them north to their nation, but they also transplanted other captive peoples into the territory of Israel. Mixing up nationalities like this prevented unity and possible uprisings against the conquerors.

EXPLORATION POINT

God had clearly stated the terms of his covenant to his people: Obedience would bring blessings and joy; disobedience would bring anguish and punishment. God used judges, kings, and prophets to remind the people to follow him and obey the terms of the covenant, but the people didn't listen or follow. They chose to join the Canaanites in worshiping idols. Being flexible and adjusting to those around us can be good, but we need to choose wisely and remain committed to obeying God above all.

NEXT STOP

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

REHOBOAM RULES IN JUDAH

REHOBOAM RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DEATH OF A NATION

DEATH OF A NATION

REHOBOAM RULES IN JUDAH

The succession of kings was supposed to be seamless: David handed the throne to his son Solomon, and in turn Solomon would hand it to Rehoboam. But when Solomon drifts away from God, God decides to divide the kingdom in two—giving only two southern tribes to Rehoboam. Meanwhile, Jeroboam, a former supervisor of Solomon's labor force, returns from hiding in Egypt and crowns himself king of the ten northern tribes. War breaks out between Jeroboam's Israel and Rehoboam's Judah, and conflict will continue sporadically for the next two centuries. We already followed the history of Israel; now we turn back to experience the history of Judah.

READ:

2CHR 11:1-23; 12:13-16

OBSERVATION POINT

The migration of the Levites and the faithful followers of the Lord from the northern kingdom to the southern significantly affected Judah. These people immigrated for multiple reasons. Spiritually, these Levites and devoted followers of God did not want to live in a nation of idol worshipers; practically, the Levites were unemployed and unsupported. The Levites lived on the tithes of the people. True Levites depended on God and kept alive the knowledge and service of the Lord. By contrast, Jeroboam's government paid its new priests to say what the king wanted to hear.

EXPLORATION POINT

The writer of Chronicles is clear about what is important in the long run—a king's relationship with God. Rehoboam was faithful to God for the first three years of his reign. God responded by blessing him with success: building projects; an influx of faithful priests, Levites, and other people from the north; and a large family. But Rehoboam goes down in biblical history as an evil king because "he did not seek the LORD with all his heart." His worldly accomplishments are lost to history. The only thing that is remembered is his relationship with God—or lack thereof.

NEXT STOP

ABIJAH, KING OF JUDAH

ABIJAH, KING OF JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

REHOBOAM RULES IN JUDAH

REHOBOAM RULES IN JUDAH

ABIJAH, KING OF JUDAH

From among all his sons, King Rehoboam selects Abijah (called Abijam elsewhere) to be the next king of Judah. The succession goes without dispute from Abijah's brothers. Rehoboam has carefully scattered his other sons throughout the kingdom, giving them power and responsibilities in other areas to keep them content and away from Jerusalem.

2CHR 13:1-22

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OBSERVATION POINT

Abijah and his priests were devoted to God. By bringing priests and trumpets into battle, Abijah showed that he trusted God, not the size of his army, for a victory. The use of trumpets marked this occasion as holy. Abijah clung to God's promise to Moses: "When you . . . go to war against your enemies who attack you, sound the alarm with the trumpets. Then the LORD your God will remember you and rescue you from your enemies" (Numbers 10:9).

EXPLORATION POINT

God intended the Promised Land to be a place of peace, calm, and rest for his people. Those conditions had been realized during Solomon's reign, but even the "golden age" was tarnished by sin. God's Kingdom is characterized by peace, not war; by justice, not injustice. Christ has shown us a new way to live and to promote God's Kingdom. Our world still struggles with sin, but we are called to promote the Kingdom of peace, rest, and justice until Christ comes again.

NEXT STOP

ASA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

ASA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ABIJAH, KING OF JUDAH

ABIJAH, KING OF JUDAH

ASA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

King Abijah's son Asa becomes king and reforms Judah's religious practices. Although Judah's national religion centers on worshiping the Lord, people cling to their local idols—including Baal and Asherah—and to the degrading practices of those traditions. Asa is determined to rid Judah of as many of these shrines and statues as possible.

READ: 2 Chronicles 14:1–16:14

2CHR 14:1-15

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OBSERVATION POINT

The word translated as “grandmother” could refer to any female relative. But “queen” refers to the biological mother or grandmother of the existing king, not to the woman he married. The queen mother or grandmother held a position of great influence within the kingdom, although she had no formal political power. Asa was so dedicated to God that he was willing to punish his own relative to demonstrate the seriousness of worshiping idols.

EXPLORATION POINT

Religion in Judah was more than mere acts of worship. It

represented relationships, with God and with other humans. The king represented God on earth. His behavior was to mimic God's righteousness. The biblical accounts that have endured long after the royal records—such as *The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel*—give the kings credit for only the things they did that were worthwhile in the Lord's eyes. The king's relationship with God and his treatment of the people were all that mattered.

NEXT STOP

JEHOSHAPHAT RULES IN JUDAH

JEHOSHAPHAT RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ASA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

ASA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

JEHOSHAPHAT RULES IN JUDAH

King Asa's son Jehoshaphat becomes the next king of Judah. He has a successful and impressive reign as he honors God and works hard to educate the people in the law of the Lord. However, in his desire for peace, Jehoshaphat makes an alliance with the kings of Israel. Jehoshaphat's choice does not please God, but God does not destroy his reign.

2CHR 17:1-19; 19:4-11

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OBSERVATION POINT

Solomon and Rehoboam fortified numerous cities to protect Judah from its enemies. Since Judah was at war with Israel sporadically for fifty years, Jehoshaphat continued fortifying cities, especially along the northern border with Israel. A fortified city was surrounded by a stone wall, sometimes two. Each one was 15 to 25 feet thick and at least 35 feet high. Trenches were dug outside the walls. Every city entrance was secured by towers and gates and occupied by soldiers equipped with swords and shields.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jehoshaphat was the only king of Judah who sponsored national religious education. He hired traveling teachers, priests, and Levites to educate the people about God and his laws. God wanted his people to live well—exhibiting peace, justice, and mercy. Jehoshaphat was determined to inform the people about how God wanted them to live. Today, we don't need a king's decree to pursue religious education. God's Word is openly and readily available for us.

NEXT STOP

JEHORAM RULES IN JUDAH

JEHORAM RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JEHOSHAPHAT RULES IN JUDAH

JEHOSHAPHAT RULES IN JUDAH

JEHORAM RULES IN JUDAH

King Jehoshaphat does many good things for Judah, but in making peace with Israel he makes the mistake of marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of King Ahab of Israel. The marriage brings peace to the two kingdoms, but it also reintroduces idol worship into the kingdom of Judah because Athaliah has worshiped idols her whole life. Jehoram's reign undoes his father's reforms to the kingdom.

READ:

2CHR 21:1-20

OBSERVATION POINT

The prophet Elijah named here is the same Elijah who confronted King Ahab and Queen Jezebel in the northern kingdom of Israel. He predicted no rain would fall until God said so, and he challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 17–18). This was all happening around the same time as King Jehoram's reign in Judah.

EXPLORATION POINT

King Jehoram was really, really bad, not only toward God but also toward the people. The wars, the invasion of Judah, and Jehoram's agonizing disease and death were the result of his disobedience to God. In the Old Testament the common belief was that disaster and disease were directly correlated with punishment for sin. While Jehoram's life shows that this can be true, Christ reminded us when he healed a blind man (John 9:1-34) that disease and death are not always God's punishment for specific sins.

NEXT STOP

QUEEN ATHALIAH RULES IN JUDAH

QUEEN ATHALIAH RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JEHORAM RULES IN JUDAH

JEHORAM RULES IN JUDAH

QUEEN ATHALIAH RULES IN JUDAH

King Jehoram reigns for eight years in Judah with his wife Athaliah. Then his only surviving son, Ahaziah, comes to the throne, but he reigns for only one year. When Ahaziah is killed by Jehu, his mother, Athaliah, seizes power and murders the rest of Judah's royal family, even her own grandchildren. She intends to wipe out any trace of David's descendants, but in God's great providence, one royal grandson survives.

READ:

2CHR 22:10–23:21

OBSERVATION POINT

Hiding the baby Joash in the Temple was ingenious. Athaliah, a Baal worshiper, would never go near God's holy Temple. And the Temple was large—surrounding the sanctuary on three sides was a three-story building that contained ninety storerooms. These rooms were used as bedrooms for the priests and as storage for Temple supplies, spears and shields, musical instruments, and treasures seized after battle. The high priest, Jehoiada, was well aware of the plan to hide the royal prince and helped protect him for six years.

EXPLORATION POINT

The royal family of David had shrunk down to one infant—Joash. By protecting this prince, God kept his promise to David that David's kingdom would last forever. Because the baby was rescued secretly, many people of Judah may have thought the royal line of David was extinguished. It appeared to be a hopeless situation. For humans, it was, but not for God. Even today, God's plan cannot be thwarted by people. The preservation of this baby beautifully illustrates God's absolute faithfulness to his people and his promises.

NEXT STOP

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DEATH OF A NATION

QUEEN ATHALIAH RULES IN JUDAH

OUEEN ATHALIAH RULES IN JUDAH

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

After a series of good and bad kings ruled Judah, Joash, a seven-year-old boy, ascends to the throne. He has survived the killing spree of his wicked grandmother, Athaliah, and is the only child from David's line to survive. His reign casts a ray of hope into the dismal history of Judah. God's promise to King David was almost snuffed out, but God's big story had never been in doubt—God would win. David's dynasty is secure in the hands of this seven-year-old and his protector, Jehoiada, the high priest of God Almighty.

2CHR 24:1-27

OBSERVATION POINT

The Temple was 140 years old at the time Joash became king. It had been abused and neglected by the people of Judah during the many years they worshiped Baal and Asherah, so it was in dire need of cleaning and restoration. Joash's first attempt to collect taxes for Temple maintenance didn't work, so he instituted a voluntary gift program to provide the funds for restoring the Temple to its original splendor.

EXPLORATION POINT

Joash was a God-fearing king until the death of his great adviser,

Jehoiada. When his advisers changed, his focus veered away from God. The people forgot Joash's religious reforms and restored idol worship. The influence of his advisers made all the difference in Joash's rule. We need to surround ourselves with godly advisers and friends. Those who influence our thoughts and actions can lead us either away from God or toward him.

NEXT STOP

A BRANCH FROM DAVID'S LINE
MOURNING OVER THE LOCUST PLAGUE

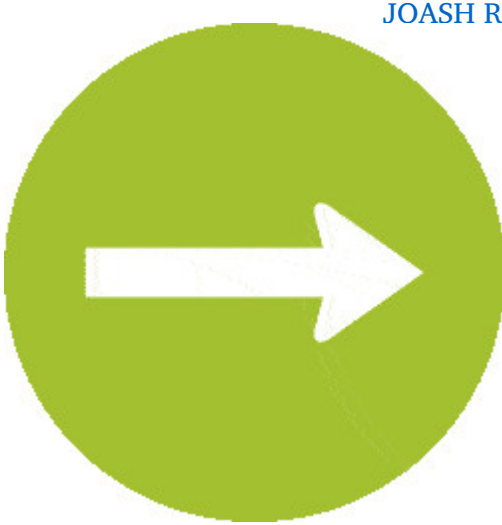
MOURNING OVER THE LOCUST PLAGUE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE



MOURNING OVER THE LOCUST PLAGUE

Joel doesn't give any definite historical references to date his prophecy, but many think he was a prophet in Judah at about the time of King Joash's reign. Joash fears God (at least at first) and promotes religious reform in the nation. But the many years of idol worship and neglecting the one true God are difficult to overcome. Joel prophesies that a plague of locusts will come as God's way of punishing the people for forgetting him for so long.

JOEL 1:1-20

OBSERVATION POINT

Joel spoke literally about a plague of locusts. The locusts devastated four key crops of the region: grapes that became raisins and wine, fig trees that grew fruit twice a year, olive trees that grew olives for food and for oil, and grain. The extent of the plague threatened the people and animals with starvation. It was so harsh that the offerings of grain and wine at the Temple stopped.

EXPLORATION POINT

Almost every generation has one major historical event that impacts their lives: a war, a natural disaster, a recession, or an assassination of a national or religious leader. The people of Judah experienced a natural disaster—a plague of locusts that destroyed their lives. The hardships of such catastrophes are undeniable, but they should not define our lives. How wonderful it would be if Christians made a miraculous blessing from God their special remembrance to "pass down from generation to generation"!

NEXT STOP

UZZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

THE LORD'S PROMISE OF HIS SPIRIT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

MOURNING OVER THE LOCUST PLAGUE

THE LORD'S PROMISE OF HIS SPIRIT

Joel's message warns the people of the coming plague. The day of the Lord is a frightening thought, but Joel reports that there is still time to turn back to God. Punishment will come, but it will not last forever. Joel closes his prophecy with a message of great hope for

the future, when God's Spirit will come and live in all of God's people.

JOEL 2:18–3:21

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OBSERVATION POINT

This great prophecy came true on the day of Pentecost in AD 30, when God's Spirit descended on the gathering of believers in Jerusalem. Christ had returned to heaven but had promised his disciples that he would send them an Advocate to be with them. On the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter quoted this passage to show that what was happening was a fulfillment of God's plan.

EXPLORATION POINT

God promises to fill his people with his Spirit rather than leaving them alone and in despair. The people of Judah didn't comprehend how or when this bright future would come. After a prophecy has been fulfilled, such as the Spirit's arrival, it is easy to understand how it all works; but until God reveals a fulfillment, prophecies remain clouded in mystery. Through faith we can believe and trust in God's promises.

NEXT STOP

UZZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

MOURNING OVER THE LOCUST PLAGUE

THE LORD'S PROMISE OF HIS SPIRIT

UZZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

Despite Joash's promising reforms, Joash himself does not remain faithful to God. Eventually his own officials murder him, and his son Amaziah succeeds him as king. King Amaziah rules Judah for 29 years, but he spends the last twelve years of his reign in exile

before being assassinated himself. Amaziah's sixteen-year-old son, Uzziah, becomes the next ruler of Judah.

2CHR 26:1-23

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2CHR 26:1-23

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OBSERVATION POINT

Uzziah undertook massive construction projects to repair damage from an earthquake that occurred during his reign (Zechariah 14:5). He built towers throughout the country to protect his people from wandering bandits and invading armies. He also expanded Judah's territory. Judah controlled the coastal highway to the west. To the south, they recaptured the port of Elath on the Gulf of Aqaba and rebuilt it. They also captured territory in the east and built towns to secure the area.

EXPLORATION POINT

God blessed Uzziah and made him a great ruler whose fame spread. God has no problem with rulers' greatness and power, but he is concerned with their attitudes. When Uzziah became proud and overstepped his responsibilities, God did not tolerate his pride and greed. God struck him immediately with leprosy, a disease that stripped him of his greatness. God is the source of all wealth, greatness, and fame; he gives, and he takes away. It's important to receive such blessings as a gift and not as an entitlement.

NEXT STOP

ISAIAH'S CLEANSING AND CALL

ISAIAH'S CLEANSING AND CALL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

UZZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

UZZIAH RULES IN JUDAH

ISAIAH'S CLEANSING AND CALL

Isaiah becomes a prophet to the nation of Judah when King Uzziah dies in 740 BC. Isaiah's prophetic ministry will span sixty years, through the decline and fall of Judah's sister nation, Israel. He warns the people of Judah that they too will be destroyed if they don't turn back to God. The book of Isaiah contains only a few details about Isaiah's personal life, but perhaps the most significant detail is that he responds when God asks, "Whom should I send?"

ISA 6:1-13

OBSERVATION POINT

Seraphim are fiery angelic beings of supernatural origin. This is the only mention of seraphim in the Bible, but they seem to correspond to the "living beings" mentioned in Revelation 4:6-9. They are situated around the throne of God, attending him and praising him continually. They have six wings: two to cover their faces so they will not gaze on the glory of God, two to cover their feet, and two with which to fly.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's question to Isaiah, "Whom should I send?" is timeless and universal. God is still looking for individuals to follow his call and spread his message throughout the world. God needs every one of us in one way or another to tell others about his love, his saving grace, and his desire to have a relationship with the people he created. No act is too small to do great things for God's Kingdom.

NEXT STOP

HOPE IN THE MESSIAH

AHAZ RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ISAIAH'S CLEANSING AND CALL

AHAZ RULES IN JUDAH

After King Uzziah dies, Jotham becomes king and rules for sixteen years. When he dies, his son Ahaz takes the throne. But Ahaz rejects God, so God sends enemies to punish him and the kingdom of Judah. Aram, Israel, Edom, Philistia, and Assyria all battle Judah during Ahaz's reign. For sixteen long years, the kingdom reels in turmoil, and the people suffer greatly because of Ahaz's sin.

READ: 2 Kings 28:1-27

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OBSERVATION POINT

Because Ahaz worshiped foreign gods, he had little interest in the glorious Temple, God's house. It was useless to him. He closed up the sanctuary and left it sealed during most of his reign, but he continued to use the courtyards that surrounded the main building to sacrifice offerings to other gods. The only good thing about Ahaz's actions is that he merely neglected the Temple; he didn't destroy it.

EXPLORATION POINT

For a time God allowed wicked nations, including Israel, to pour punishment, humiliation, and shame on Judah. But he then used other peoples to judge these wicked nations. Aram and Israel were conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC while Ahaz was still king of Judah. Assyria was conquered by the Babylonians in 612 BC. Edom was crushed and Philistia overrun by the Babylonians.

Nations rise to greatness and then collapse. Empires control territories and then are conquered by others. God is the supreme judge and ruler of the entire earth forever!

NEXT STOP

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

AHAZ RULES IN JUDAH

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL

Several years after his call, Isaiah speaks for God about the coming judgment that will lead to the downfall of the northern kingdom, Israel. King Ahaz of Judah is in a panic because Israel and Syria have joined forces to attack Judah's capital city of Jerusalem. Isaiah reassures the king that God has said, "It won't happen." He then gives the king God's promise for the future.

READ:

ISA 7:1-25

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OBSERVATION POINT

The prophecy “the virgin will conceive a child” was ultimately fulfilled when Christ was born seven hundred years later. However, a partial fulfillment occurred soon after it was announced, either in the birth of Ahaz’s son Hezekiah, who became king of Judah, or in one of Isaiah’s children. Immanuel, meaning “God with us,” was a sign of assurance that God was present with his people, protecting them no matter what happened.

EXPLORATION POINT

God’s words through Isaiah gave the people hope for the future.

They could endure the pain of the present—the threat of war, desolation, and captivity—if they knew God would stay with them through it all and that someday their nation and beloved city would be restored. God always provides hope for us today too, no matter what circumstances we currently face. All trials and suffering, no matter how difficult, will end.

NEXT STOP

HOPE IN THE MESSIAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ISAIAH'S CLEANSING AND CALL

THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL

HOPE IN THE MESSIAH

The people of Judah are mainly concerned about the immediate threat of Syria and Israel's alliance against them, but God uses the prophet Isaiah to remind them that God is in control of their future, both in the crisis of the moment and in the needs of the distant future. After seeing God's judgment on Israel for her unfaithfulness, Judah will face judgment themselves. But Isaiah also has words of hope: a light breaking into the darkness from an unexpected place.

READ:

ISA 8:1–9:7

OBSERVATION POINT

"The army of Midian" (9:4) refers to the nation that had been an enemy of Israel for generations. Hundreds of years earlier, when the Israelites were on the march to the Promised Land, they fought against the Midianites, who had seduced the people into idolatry. Later, during the time of the judges, Gideon battled with the Midianites again. In all their encounters with this enemy, the Israelites were victorious with God's help. This passage is a reminder of the great things the nation was able to achieve by trusting the Lord.

EXPLORATION POINT

Isaiah's famous words enlightened the people living in a world of darkness and despair. Israel was about to face destruction, and the forecast was the same for Judah. The glory of God's chosen people was tarnished. In the middle of the bad news, Isaiah spoke the words that throughout time have brought hope and instilled joy in the hearts of those who hear them: "A child is born. . . . And he will

be called . . . Prince of Peace.” God’s message is for the ages, but today it is also for you.

NEXT STOP

A BRANCH FROM DAVID’S LINE

A BRANCH FROM DAVID’S LINE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

HOPE IN THE MESSIAH

HOPE IN THE MESSIAH

A BRANCH FROM DAVID'S LINE

God will no longer tolerate the continual disobedience of his chosen people. Because he loves his people, he will discipline them by sending them away from the land and his presence, but he will not leave them destitute. As he did with Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and David, God remains faithful to his chosen people even while they are being disciplined. God speaks through Isaiah to declare the coming destruction of Judah. But not everything he says is doom and gloom. He also provides visions of a delightful future time filled with peace, calm, and joy for all of God's creation.

READ:

ISA 11:1-16

OBSERVATION POINT

The nation of Israel is compared to a forest that will be cut down but not destroyed. From a tree stump will come a shoot and a branch that will bring new life to David's dynasty. Both the oak and the terebinth trees, the two most common trees in the region at that time, were symbols of stability and longevity. The oak tree grew up to 80 feet high and lived as long as 300 years! The terebinth tree was associated with God's presence and was frequently used to mark a place where someone had encountered God.

EXPLORATION POINT

Isaiah's words were sweet for people who were facing judgment and exile. His message brought visions of paradise, where everything would be peaceful and all Creation would live in harmony. Justice would prevail and fairness for all would be the norm. Some of this message was fulfilled with Christ's birth and ministry, but this ideal time will arrive fully when Christ comes again to rule the earth and establish his Kingdom. Let us pray that he comes quickly to bring about his Kingdom of peace.

NEXT STOP

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM
MISERY TURNED TO HOPE
GRIEF OVER SAMARIA AND JERUSALEM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A BRANCH FROM DAVID'S LINE

GRIEF OVER SAMARIA AND JERUSALEM

During King Ahaz's reign, God calls Micah to be his prophet. Micah presents God's message to the people of Israel and Judah even though it is not a pleasant one: Samaria (the capital of Israel) and Jerusalem (the capital of Judah) will be ruined, many of Judah's other cities will be destroyed, and the people will experience one of their most feared punishments—exile from their land.

MIC 1:1-16

OBSERVATION POINT

The prophets regularly used prostitution as a metaphor to describe the people's persistent attitude toward God. They had abandoned God and committed adultery with pagan gods. The worship of Baal and Ashtoreth in particular actually did include sexual activity with shrine prostitutes, so the people were both figuratively and literally guilty of adultery.

EXPLORATION POINT

Shortly after God's people escaped from Egypt, God told them to have nothing to do with the neighboring cultures in the Promised Land. He commanded the Israelites to annihilate the Canaanites because they were extremely wicked. The Israelites, however, left many of the Canaanites alive. Over centuries the Israelites forgot God's warning and adopted the cultural and religious practices of the Canaanites. Today Christians face a similar dilemma. We need to carefully examine and select what contemporary practices are acceptable to our faith and are pleasing to God.

NEXT STOP

MISERY TURNED TO HOPE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A BRANCH FROM DAVID'S LINE

GRIEF OVER SAMARIA AND JERUSALEM

MISERY TURNED TO HOPE

God's words to the prophet Micah have contained mostly prophecies of doom and destruction, punishment and despair. Micah communicates God's anger and disappointment with his people, but then the tone of his message changes. He adds words of encouragement, words that contain hope for the future.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

God was true to his word. He punished the people for their sins, but he brought a group of survivors (a “remnant”) back home about seventy years after the first Babylonian invasion. The nations that had conquered Israel and Judah were destroyed: Assyria fell to the Babylonians, and Babylon eventually fell to the Persians.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is faithful to every promise he makes. He made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he kept it. God judged his people, but he did not completely destroy them; he refined them

and restored them, protecting and loving them throughout the process. Similarly, God will not spare us from situations that would refine us, but he will be with us as we endure them. And he will restore us to wholeness again.

NEXT STOP

HEZEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

HEZEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

MISERY TURNED TO HOPE

MISERY TURNED TO HOPE

HEZEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

Judah's succession of kings continues: Uzziah, then Jotham, then Ahaz. The people's faithfulness fluctuates with each one. After wicked King Ahaz dies, his son Hezekiah reigns over Judah. Hezekiah, a God-fearing man, transforms the kingdom with religious reforms, hoping to turn the people back to God. Since the Temple has been closed for some time, Hezekiah's first act as king is to reopen and rededicate it as the house of the Lord. Under Hezekiah's godly rule, Judah becomes a prosperous and peaceful nation again.

2CHR 29:1-36
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OBSERVATION POINT

After being closed up for years, the Temple was filthy. Two phases were required to restore the Lord's house for proper worship. First, the Temple's contents and interior had to be purified with water or with fire. The second stage involved rededicating the priests and the Temple to God. Repairs to the neglected or damaged structure and furnishings were also included in the process. Once everything was ready, God's Temple was ready for worship and sacrifice.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is always willing to forgive and restore his people. After the

years of idolatry and turmoil under King Ahaz, the people and the priests rededicated themselves to God. In response, God restored Judah to its former glory, a glory that the kingdom had not experienced since the time of Solomon. God assures us that after punishment comes restoration; after exile, he restores peace and wholeness to his people. His promise is true today—after sadness comes joy; after destruction, rebuilding; after emptiness, fullness.

NEXT STOP

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HEZEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER

After restoring God's Temple, King Hezekiah reinstitutes the celebration of Passover for both Israel and Judah. Hezekiah invites the poor who were left behind in the land of the northern kingdom when it was destroyed by the Assyrians just twenty years before. The people of Israel have not celebrated Passover in such great numbers since they entered the Promised Land with Joshua about 400 years earlier. The joint religious celebration symbolizes restoration and honors their mutual history as God's chosen people: the Exodus from Egypt. It is a momentous and joyous occasion.

READ:

2CHR 30:1-27

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OBSERVATION POINT

Passover was a carefully structured holy day. It was a grand celebration—the Israelites' "Independence Day," a day to remember their freedom from slavery in Egypt. For the people left in the fallen northern kingdom, the idea of celebrating in Jerusalem was a source of hope. They had been invited to share in a celebration that exhibited the glory of the southern kingdom! Having lived their entire lives in a nation that worshiped Baal, the number of people who would remember this God-ordained festival may have been pretty small. But they made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and rededicated themselves to God.

EXPLORATION POINT

The people left in Israel had grown up in a heathen, Baal-worshiping society. Now a new generation could observe the festivals decreed by God. Celebrating Passover marked a new beginning for spiritual renewal among the people of Judah and the few who remained in Israel. Throughout the history of the church, God's Spirit has moved people to seek spiritual renewal and revival. Renewal can happen locally, regionally, or nationally, but we don't have to wait for others to respond. We can choose to renew our relationship with God each day.

NEXT STOP

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

CELEBRATION OF PASSOVER

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

King Hezekiah faithfully trusts God. God blesses him, and thus he is very successful. He even stands firm when King Sennacherib of Assyria invades Judah and threatens the capital city of Jerusalem. Hezekiah does all that is in his power to prepare for battle, but he prays to God to save his people. God responds with an awesome miracle.

2CHR 32:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

Hezekiah and the people of Judah were terrified of the Assyrians, who had destroyed Israel twenty years earlier. Now the Assyrians were terrorizing the cities near Jerusalem and breaking down their walls. Anticipating an attack, Hezekiah and his army prepared to defend Jerusalem. In spite of Sennacherib's letter, the people trusted their king and their God. When all seemed lost, they remembered that God could save them from anything—even the world's most feared empire.

EXPLORATION POINT

Judah faced an impossible situation with the Assyrians looming close by, so they turned to the Lord for courage and protection. God displayed his strength and sovereignty through a miracle that shamed the mightiest and most feared king in the world. God rewarded Hezekiah's and Isaiah's great faith. They relied on God's strength to accomplish the seemingly impossible—destroy the power of the Assyrians. "What is impossible for people is possible with God" (Luke 18:27).

NEXT STOP

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HEZEKIAH RULES IN JUDAH

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

As a spokesperson for God, Isaiah sometimes conveys messages to the people about the future. He addresses the people and the nations in general but also speaks directly to the king. He is closely connected to the events in the royal palace during the reign of King Hezekiah. He is a confidant of the king and acts as liaison between him and God when Hezekiah becomes ill.

READ:

ISA 38:1–39:8

OBSERVATION POINT

While lying on his bed, King Hezekiah could see the sundial of Ahaz. His father, King Ahaz, built it during his own reign as a way to determine the time. The sundial measured time through the shadow that stationary objects cast on it. The shadow would move up each step as the sun set. How the sun's shadow reversed itself is not known; it is one of the mysterious miracles of the Bible.

EXPLORATION POINT

King Hezekiah displayed his wisdom as he turned to God and received a longer life, but later he foolishly bragged to the king of

Babylon about his wealth and military. Suddenly Hezekiah cared only about what happened in his lifetime, not the future suffering of his descendants or the destruction of the nation. Sometimes we, like Hezekiah, are concerned only about our own lives and comfort, giving little attention to the future and the consequences of our actions.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S SUFFERING SERVANT

COMFORT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

COMFORT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Isaiah's historical narrative about King Hezekiah ends suddenly, and he returns to foretelling future events in his usual poetic structure. He has a very special message from God for his people—a message of comfort and hope. God will not only comfort his people with words of hope while they are in exile, but the future will bring even greater comfort: the personal presence of God, and the restoration and renewal of everything that has been broken.

ISA 40:1-31

OBSERVATION POINT

The image of a flat, accessible road reflects the Near Eastern custom of preparing a safe and convenient way for royal travel. Royal representatives traveled the road ahead of the king to ensure that it was as smooth and even as possible. Workers removed stones, leveled out rough spots, filled in holes, and cleaned up trash and litter. A Greek legend tells of a queen who ordered hills removed to level the roadway. The flat road was costly, but it made her words famous and her trip shorter.

EXPLORATION POINT

The almighty God, Creator of all things, can view his people as mere grasshoppers, yet he cares about them, giving power to these "weak" creatures and providing them with the strength to "soar like eagles." There is no one like God. Nothing made by human hands, though covered with gold and draped with jewelry, can compare to God's creativity, power, compassion, or love. God is without equal . . . and he is our Father!

NEXT STOP

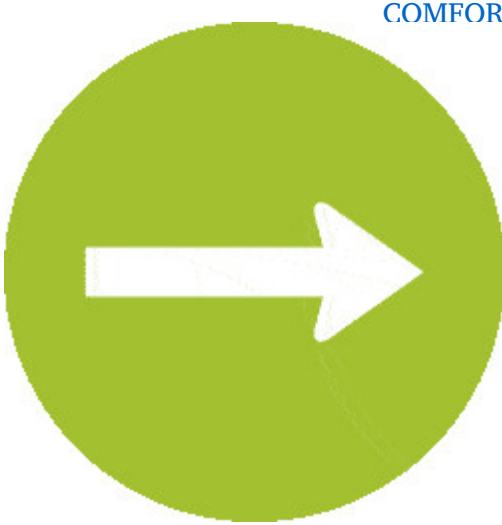
THE LORD'S SUFFERING SERVANT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY

COMFORT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE



THE LORD'S SUFFERING SERVANT

After all the discouraging news of destruction and exile, Isaiah proclaims God's good news to the people. God has made a promise: They will return to Jerusalem after their exile and will experience a future of peace, restoration, and salvation. Beyond that there is even greater hope. God will send a special servant who will suffer and know the deepest grief, but this servant will ultimately prosper and be exalted.

ISA 52:13–53:12

OBSERVATION POINT

Isaiah spoke about a servant who would lead God's people, but the servant's appearance would be in shocking contrast to what was expected of great rulers of the time. God's power would manifest itself in the servant's humility and helplessness. The Israelites would be expecting a powerful savior-king like David, who would overpower their enemies and bring peace and prosperity. When he arrived, Jesus was not recognized by many as this servant. He was not what they had anticipated, but he was exactly what God had planned.

EXPLORATION POINT

God had a wonderful, surprising plan. The servant would restore the relationship between God and humans that was destroyed in the Garden of Eden. Humans would turn their backs and look the other way because they wouldn't understand how a weak and insignificant person could be of any help to them. We don't know how we would have responded to Christ if we had been alive when he came. We are privileged to have God's whole story to see how the message of the prophets was fulfilled when Christ came to earth.

NEXT STOP

JOSIAH RULES IN JUDAH
INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SALVATION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S SUFFERING SERVANT

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SALVATION

In this chapter, Isaiah continues to speak for the Lord in the first person, representing God's direct message to his people. After giving the people a command to rejoice and reminding them of God's great compassion for them, he extends an invitation to everyone who needs God's salvation. He makes the message very clear by evoking everyday experiences of being thirsty and hungry. No one should refuse God's offer.

READ: Isaiah 55:1-13

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OBSERVATION POINT

Water was the standard beverage of the time. Offering wine or milk to drink was generous. Fresh milk, similar to buttermilk, was available, but since it did not keep long in Israel's warm climate, it was difficult to find in the cities. Wine was common but considered a luxurious beverage because it had to be purchased. Milk and wine

were symbols of the rich blessings of God's covenant love for his people.

EXPLORATION POINT

God has revealed himself through the Bible. Our God is a great God who reveals his character, ways, and attributes to us. But we only know a fraction of all that God is. Verse 8 reminds us that he thinks and operates in ways that are beyond our comprehension. We will never fully understand the God who reigns supreme over the heavens and the earth.

NEXT STOP

GOOD NEWS FOR THE OPPRESSED

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SALVATION

GOOD NEWS FOR THE OPPRESSED

Isaiah continues his message to the people about the wonderful future God has in store for them. His message is filled with visions of justice and prosperity, majesty and joy. The Exile will end; mourning and sadness will cease. But much more than that will occur. God promises restoration, wholeness, abundance, and righteousness!

ISA 61:1-11

OBSERVATION POINT

Isaiah uses wedding imagery to explain the level of joy that awaits God's people. Weddings were great celebrations and elaborate affairs. The bridegroom wore special head gear, a turban similar to those worn by the priests. The bride wore an assortment of jewels. Dancing, music, and feasting made the occasion very special.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's words of promise to his people are words we can treasure today. When we find ourselves struggling through low points or stretches of suffering and misery, we can find hope in these words. We won't just "get back to normal." God has promised much more than that. After the "pits" we will get back on level ground, and then we will soar in joy!

NEXT STOP

PRAYER FOR MERCY AND PARDON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOOD NEWS FOR THE OPPRESSED

PRAYER FOR MERCY AND PARDON

In the closing chapters of his book, Isaiah presents praise and prayer to God. In his prayer he asks God to come to earth in an awesome display. He acknowledges the people's faults but asks God to end his anger and to have mercy on the nation that will be severely punished. Then God replies. He reminds Isaiah that he's been waiting with open arms and that he will give his people a glorious future.

READ:

ISA 64:1-12; 65:17-25

OBSERVATION POINT

When the exiles heard the words, “I will create Jerusalem as a place of happiness. . . . I will rejoice over Jerusalem” (65:18-19), they took those words literally, believing that someday the grandeur and glory of the Temple, the palaces, the walls, and all that they loved in their holy city would be restored to their former splendor. At that time they did not know that Isaiah’s vision was about the distant future, when God’s Kingdom would come and Jerusalem would be a symbol of the perfect kingdom.

EXPLORATION POINT

The new heaven and the new earth will bring about a new order as the culmination of all things. Some features of this new order are difficult for us to envision: extended life, resurrection, the end of evil and corruption, no sorrow, and no death. Other characteristics of the new order will be familiar to us: God's comfort, salvation, joy, peace, and blessing. The new order will display God's greatness, holiness, justice, and glory. The old ways will be gone; the new will be forever.

NEXT STOP

MANASSEH AND AMON RULE IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PRAYER FOR MERCY AND PARDON

MANASSEH AND AMON RULE IN JUDAH

Although God blessed Judah for King Hezekiah's faithfulness, Hezekiah's son Manasseh turns the nation back to idolatry. God responds by abandoning Manasseh and allowing him to succumb to the Assyrian invaders. In captivity, Manasseh realizes and confesses his sin, but his son Amon continues in Manasseh's old evil ways. The kingdom of Judah is in a spiritual free-fall.

READ: 2 Chronicles 33:1-25

OBSERVATION POINT

In the ancient Near East, human sacrifice was a widespread practice for appeasing the gods or ensuring safety during a national crisis. Archaeologists have uncovered evidence of child sacrifice occurring between 400 BC and AD 400. In his law, God clearly prohibited human sacrifice. Children were entrusted to parents for protection and nurturing. God expected his people to be radically different

from all other nations—to illustrate God's love and kindness to his people.

EXPLORATION POINT

When people repent, God extends mercy and forgiveness. King Manasseh, seeing the error of his ways in worshiping idols, confessed his sin. God forgave him and restored him to his kingdom. With thanksgiving, Manasseh cleared out idols, shrines, and altars to the local gods, attempting to undo all the wrong he had done in the kingdom. But Manasseh's change of heart did not eliminate the consequences from years of sinful living. Our sins have consequences that we have to face. God forgives us for our sinful ways, but he does not always make the consequences of our actions disappear.

NEXT STOP

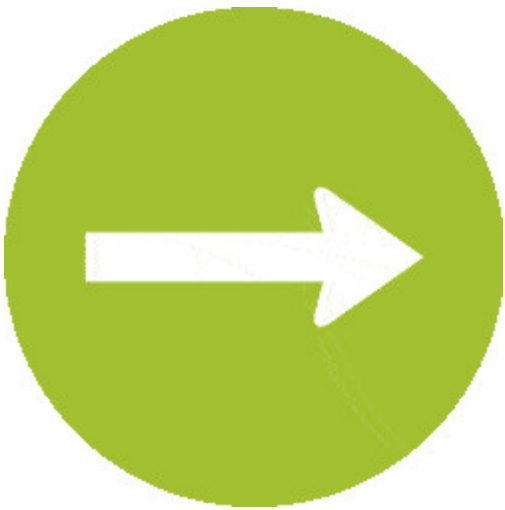
JOSIAH RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S SUFFERING SERVANT

MANASSEH AND AMON RULE IN JUDAH



JOSIAH RULES IN JUDAH

King Hezekiah and his son Manasseh both died peacefully, but King Amon's officials conspired against him. The people then crown his son Josiah king of Judah. The new king is only eight years old, but Josiah follows God like his ancestor King David. At an early age he introduces major religious reforms to the nation. In the process of restoring the Temple, officials find an old manuscript and bring it to the king. When they read it to him, Josiah knows what he must do. For the 31 years of Josiah's reign, the kingdom of Judah experiences stability and renewal.

READ:

2CHR 34:1–35:27 35:20-27
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OBSERVATION POINT

By the time Josiah had been king for twelve years, the Assyrian Empire had lost much of its power, leaving the territory of Israel unsupervised. Josiah was able to expand his religious reforms into the former tribal regions of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and Naphtali. When officials found the Book of the Law in the Temple and read it to Josiah, the king had the authority to renew the covenant for all of Israel and Judah. The custom generally was that whatever the king believed and did, the people followed.

EXPLORATION POINT

Josiah was mortified when he realized how his ancestors had neglected God's law. Because Josiah loved God, God promised him that he would not see the destruction of the nation. God extended his mercy a little bit longer, delaying the punishment that Judah deserved. But what about the righteous people who reformed under Josiah? They still eventually suffered at the hands of the Babylonian invaders. Sin has a nasty way of affecting both current and future generations. The consequences of our actions often impact others in unexpected ways.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST NINEVEH

JEREMIAH'S CALL AND FIRST VISIONS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOSIAH RULES IN JUDAH

JEREMIAH'S CALL AND FIRST VISIONS

During the thirteenth year of King Josiah's reign in Judah, Jeremiah receives his call from God to be a prophet. He will relay God's pronouncements against Judah and Jerusalem. He predicts the fall of the holy city and the seventy-year exile in Babylon, but he also imparts a message of hope. For most of his life, Jeremiah will live and work in Jerusalem, and he will be a consistent voice for God during the final years of the nation of Judah.

JER 1:1-19

OBSERVATION POINT

The almond tree was common in the region. It grew as tall as twenty-five feet and blossomed in late January with a display of pink or white flowers. The tree held divine significance: God had Aaron's staff bud, blossom, and form mature almonds to identify Aaron as high priest (Numbers 17:8). The almond branch is used here as a sign to Jeremiah that the Lord was watching. The image suggests a play on the Hebrew words *shoqed* ("watching") and *shaqed* ("almond tree").

EXPLORATION POINT

God chooses individuals for specific tasks even before they are born. He may call us to do great things for him when we are young (Jeremiah, Daniel, and Mary were all teenagers), when we are old (Abraham, Sarah, and Moses were over eighty), or any time in between. God has our place and purpose in life planned for us. Just as he assured Jeremiah that he would provide him with the necessary skills, God will provide us with what we need as well.

NEXT STOP

JEREMIAH SPEAKS AT THE TEMPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JEREMIAH'S CALL AND FIRST VISIONS

JEREMIAH SPEAKS AT THE TEMPLE

Jeremiah is appalled by the people's unjust ways, inhuman practices, and idol worship. He first tries to convince the people of Judah to repent of their sins and turn back to God. When his initial efforts fail, he speaks about God's anger and the judgment that is

certain to come. He knows that God will not let the people's evil go unpunished.

JER 7:1–8:3

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OBSERVATION POINT

Judah's idol-worshiping neighbors believed that a symbol was virtually identical to what it represented. This idea crept into Israelite thinking early on and stuck. In earlier days the people considered the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle to be magical or charmed objects that would protect them. Now they thought the Temple would protect them from the onslaught of the Babylonians, even though they had ignored God and rebelled against him.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's people lived in total chaos, worshiping heathen gods, blatantly violating God's law, and naïvely believing that no enemy could destroy them. God spoke to them through Jeremiah, but they

didn't listen. It may be easy for us to condemn their behavior, but we shouldn't be so quick to judge. First we need to take a good look at ourselves in comparison with how God wants his church to act in the midst of a godless society.

NEXT STOP

HOPE DESPITE THE DISASTER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JEREMIAH SPEAKS AT THE TEMPLE

HOPE DESPITE THE DISASTER

God instructs Jeremiah to lead a life that symbolizes the coming judgment on Judah. The prophet uses object lessons to get his point across, but the people think him foolish. God commands him to live out his prophecy, not marrying or having children to show the bleak outlook for Judah. But as dismal as the future appears, Jeremiah also shares God's promise of hope for a new beginning.

READ: Jeremiah 16:1-21
207 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

The Israelites had various ways of mourning their dead: They dressed in sackcloth, covered their heads with ashes, wailed in distress, and sat with the mourning family. Cutting themselves and shaving their heads were practices that were prohibited in God's law (Deuteronomy 14:1). Their new practices showed how far the people had drifted from God's instructions for holy living. They had abandoned God's law and adopted the heathen practices of their neighbors.

EXPLORATION POINT

The people had abandoned God for idols. For hundreds of years God's prophets had called the people to repent and change their ways. God's judgment was sure. But he wasn't going to abandon them forever; he promised to renew them during their time in exile and eventually return them to Jerusalem. God never leaves us in

hopeless despair. He always provides hope for us to hold on to, even during the most gut-wrenching times in our lives.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST NINEVEH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOSIAH RULES IN JUDAH

HOPE DESPITE THE DISASTER

THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST NINEVEH

During the reign of several kings of Judah (Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah), Nahum acts as God's prophet. Nahum preaches about a century after Jonah's message saved Nineveh from God's anger. The conversion of the population didn't last through several generations. Nineveh, representing the Assyrian Empire, has become as wicked as ever, and Nahum speaks of the city's coming destruction.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

The phrase “wicked counselor” (1:11) refers to the current king of Assyria. God already had dealt with an Assyrian king earlier, during Hezekiah’s reign in Judah. When Sennacherib attempted to capture Jerusalem in 701 BC, he failed because an angel of the Lord entered the Assyrian camp at night and killed 185,000 soldiers. Frightened, Sennacherib packed up and returned to Nineveh. As strong as the Assyrians thought they were, they were no match for God. Nineveh was later destroyed in 612 BC by the Babylonians.

EXPLORATION POINT

No empire, nation, or ruler is beyond God's judgment. God is ruler of the nations, the sovereign and mighty King of creation, of all that was and is and will come to be in the course of human history. Because God is just, he demands justice for everyone and every nation. He delights in justice, peace, and mercy. Those are part of his character and are attributes of his Kingdom.

NEXT STOP

JERUSALEM'S REBELLION AND REDEMPTION

JERUSALEM'S REBELLION AND REDEMPTION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST NINEVEH

THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST NINEVEH

JERUSALEM'S REBELLION AND REDEMPTION

Zephaniah shares God's message with the people of Judah during the reign of Josiah. The great Assyrian Empire has already destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel, and it is still a major power and influence in the world. Josiah will ultimately prove to be a good king, but his reforms have not yet taken hold in wicked Judah. Zephaniah—a contemporary of Jeremiah, Nahum, and Habbakuk—lives in an unsettled time and must share an unsettling message.

READ:

ZEPH 3:1-20

OBSERVATION POINT

Judah's leaders, prophets, and judges were guilty of violence and crime in Jerusalem. The people were led astray because they lacked godly wisdom and guidance. The leaders abused their power, killed innocent people, and stole their wealth. False prophets spoke of fanciful visions rather than God's true message. The judges did not seek justice, and the priests never bothered to teach God's law to the people. Virtually everyone in a leadership position was doing the complete opposite of their God-given responsibility.

EXPLORATION POINT

Isaiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah all spoke of judgment and of hope. They told the people that God's judgment was inevitable but that judgment would not be the end. The people and their nation would not disappear. God would restore his people; he would bring them back to their land and rebuild the nation. He would give them hope and a future. God's promise holds true today too. In our darkest hours, during the most difficult times in our lives, God is with us. He promises us renewal, hope, and a future.

NEXT STOP

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY
JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOIAKIM RULE IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JERUSALEM'S REBELLION AND REDEMPTION

JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOIAKIM RULE IN JUDAH

In Judah, King Josiah's obedience to God was a rest stop in the southern kingdom's long-term decline. The prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Zephaniah had pointed out the nation's sins and encouraged God's people to change. But the people had disobeyed God's law for too long; they had to be held accountable for their deeds. In the final twenty years of Judah's history as a kingdom, a quick succession of evil kings, including Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, propel it toward its ultimate demise.

2KGS 23:31–24:7

OBSERVATION POINT

In the ancient Near East, people would change their names to reflect a great life event. Abram, Sarai, Jacob, and Joseph all had their names changed for this reason. Similarly, conquering rulers often changed the names of captives to demonstrate their power and control over them. They chose names that would irritate the captive peoples. Thus, the king of Egypt changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim; King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah; and Daniel's and his friends' names were changed when they were captives in Babylon.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's patience had run out. His people had consistently disobeyed his law, worshiped idols, tolerated greed, and overlooked injustice. The new kings appointed by foreign rulers were mere figureheads and did not correct the judges or priests. Evil controlled everything. Decline was inevitable. Today, God's Spirit empowers each of us to know right from wrong. When we see injustice, corruption, or abuse of power, we have the capacity to speak up and fight for change. That is our responsibility as citizens of our nation and as members of God's Kingdom.

NEXT STOP

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JERUSALEM'S REBELLION AND REDEMPTION

JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOIAKIM RULE IN JUDAH

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

During the reign of King Jehoiakim, Jeremiah preaches God's message through various symbolic demonstrations. His methods, however, do not make him popular, especially with Jehoiakim and the other leaders of Judah. They intentionally find ways to make his life miserable. The people do not want to listen; they're content to live in their customary evil ways. Yet Jeremiah continues to preach.

READ:

JER 18:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

The visit to the potter was a symbol of what God was about to do. God (the potter) decided how to mold the people (the jar). Since the jar did not meet the potter's standards, he destroyed it and started over. God had provided the people with his Book of Instructions (the law). Having failed to follow the instructions, Judah faced judgment. God was going to destroy the nation and start over.

EXPLORATION POINT

Sometimes we're as guilty as the people of Judah who didn't want to hear the truth. We flock to preaching that satisfies us and makes

us feel good; we shun preaching that reveals God's truth, holds us accountable for our actions, and leaves us uncomfortable. God's truth and our accountability to it may hurt, but it is our responsibility to listen and to analyze our motives, actions, and responses.

NEXT STOP

KING JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE SCROLL

SEVENTY YEARS OF CAPTIVITY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

SEVENTY YEARS OF CAPTIVITY

During King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, Jeremiah, who has been preaching for twenty-three years, breaks the bad news to the people. They will experience their worst punishment to date—exile to a foreign land. For seventy years, the people of Judah will be displaced and their land will be desolate. But Jeremiah shares good news too: God's anger won't last forever. Judah will be restored, and the nations who have violated Judah will be punished.

JER 25:1-38

OBSERVATION POINT

Many of the nations listed here had opposed God's people at one time or another in their history. The king of Egypt had invaded during Jehoahaz's reign, changed the replacement king's name, and demanded high payments for tribute. The Philistines had been Judah's enemy for hundreds of years—since the time of the judges. Edom, Moab, and Ammon had been enemies since the Israelites traveled to the Promised Land. All of these nations would be conquered by the Babylonians and absorbed into the huge Babylonian Empire.

EXPLORATION POINT

People think God is angry and wrathful because of passages like this one. But the point here is that God is really a God of justice. God will not tolerate wartime atrocities, lawlessness, and the conceit of rulers who glory in their own power. He is the Creator and Sovereign Ruler of the universe who has the right and the power to judge all that he has created. No injustice will go unpunished. God promises that injustice and evil will not last forever.

NEXT STOP

JEREMIAH'S ESCAPE FROM DEATH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SEVENTY YEARS OF CAPTIVITY

JEREMIAH'S ESCAPE FROM DEATH

God has given his people every possible chance to repent and return to worshiping him alone. He instructs Jeremiah to act like a town crier in the busiest place in the city so that the majority of the people will hear his words. They listen to his message, but their response is not repentance and obedience. Instead, they form an

angry mob.

JER 26:1-24

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OBSERVATION POINT

City gateways were places for officials to hold court hearings, sign legal documents, and negotiate agreements. These gateways were double gates in the city walls (which were six to ten feet thick) and resembled a short tunnel. The city elders would gather in the gateway to offer their years of wisdom to the officials and recall history. In this busy thoroughfare, the crowds could also voice their opinions and help enforce the final decision.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jeremiah's proclamation of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple put him in direct conflict with the crowd. No one wanted bad news or to hear that they needed to repent. They took Jeremiah's decree not as the word of the Lord but as a threat from a political troublemaker. Even today we bristle at those who challenge our cultural norms. But we need to listen closely and consider that the directive or discipline could be from God.

NEXT STOP

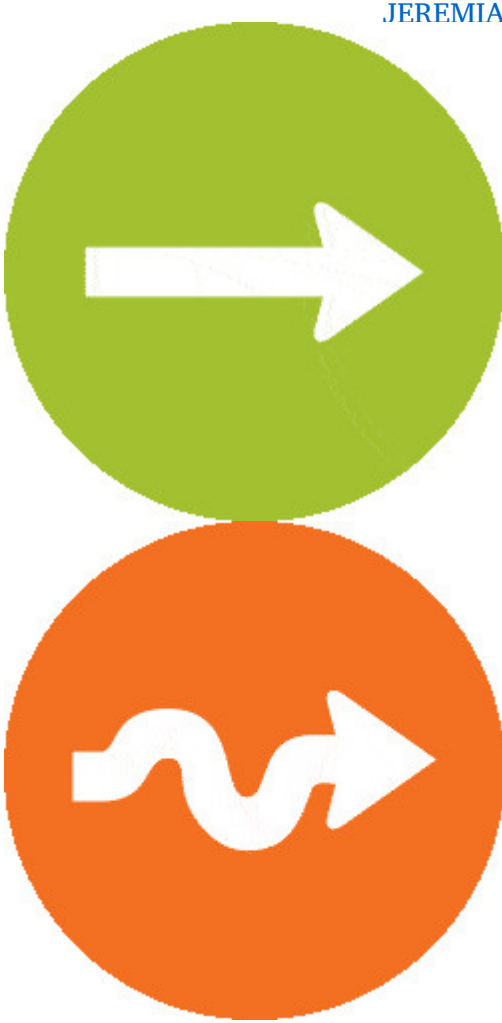
KING JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE SCROLL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

JEREMIAH'S ESCAPE FROM DEATH



KING JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE SCROLL

Jeremiah's entire ministry has been spoken out loud in the Temple courts. Now God wanted a written account of all that he has said through Jeremiah. It is easy for leaders to ignore or silence the

verbal ramblings of a prophet; it is harder to ignore those same words written out and recorded for future generations. Once the words are recorded, there is no excuse for not knowing about God's anger and coming judgment.

JER 36:1-32

OBSERVATION POINT

Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, wrote God's words down with ink on a papyrus scroll. We know the scroll was made of papyrus because the king cut it up and threw it into a fire. A leather scroll is difficult to cut and would give off a terrible stench. The ink Baruch used was probably made by mixing the black carbon from soot or the leavings of oil lamps with oil or a gum substance from trees or animals. This is the only time that ink is mentioned in the Old Testament.

EXPLORATION POINT

King Jehoiakim completely misjudged the importance of the scroll.

He thought it just contained the rantings of old Jeremiah, but it was really the words of the Lord. Destroying the scroll did not stamp out God's word. The second scroll endured for generations and its contents are readable today. The king did not have the power or authority to stop God and his message. King Jehoiakim is long dead, but God's Word has endured.

NEXT STOP

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER
HABAKKUK'S COMPLAINTS AND THE LORD'S REPLIES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

KING JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE SCROLL

HABAKKUK'S COMPLAINTS AND THE LORD'S REPLIES

The prophet Habakkuk sees that evil is rampant in Judah, and he approaches God to ask why he allows such evil. Habakkuk is disgusted with Judah's behavior and wants to know what God is going to do about it. When told, he is appalled by the answer. His own views about the way God should interact with the world are challenged significantly.

HAB 1:1–2:20

OBSERVATION POINT

The language of nets and hooks that Habakkuk uses in this section is a creative mix of literal and metaphorical language. We know from the literature and art of the time that the Assyrians sometimes used literal hooks inserted through the lip or nose of captured people to lead them away from their homeland into exile. The language of fishnets is probably intended to suggest the utter helplessness of God's people as they are caught up in the overpowering force of a conquering army.

EXPLORATION POINT

Everything is under God's control. He may use one nation's power to punish another, but in the end no person or nation will escape God's attention and judgment. We may not always understand what God is doing, but we can be sure of one thing and take comfort in it: Our loving and compassionate God is in control. When injustice and cruelty seem rampant, hold on to God's words: "If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place."

NEXT STOP

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

KING JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE SCROLL

HABAKKUK'S COMPLAINTS AND THE LORD'S REPLIES

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

Habakkuk finishes his dialogue with God and then closes his message with a prayer of praise. He is in awe of the Lord and reflects on some of the great things God did in the early history of Israel. He closes with a great profession of his faith in the Lord, recognizing that he can rest in God's plan for the world rather than expecting things to happen a certain way.

HAB 3:1-19

OBSERVATION POINT

In verses 8-15, Habakkuk draws from the history of God's people, focusing on some of God's miracles. He makes references to one of the ten plagues in Egypt, when God turned river water into blood; to God's parting of the Red Sea so the people could cross on dry ground; and to the sun standing still during the Israelites' battle with the Amorites, which was one of their first conflicts after entering the Promised Land.

EXPLORATION POINT

Habakkuk makes a beautiful statement of faith at the end of this chapter. He clearly states that even if all that makes his society prosperous—fig and olive trees, grapes and wheat, flocks and cattle—disappear, he will still praise the Lord and be joyful. It is good to praise God for the blessings he gives us, but ultimately we should praise him because he is our loving God who created, cares for, and saves us.

NEXT STOP

DANIEL IN NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S COURT

DANIEL IN NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S COURT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

HABAKKUK'S PRAYER

DANIEL IN NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S COURT

In 605 BC Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonian Empire, raids Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem. He captures noblemen's sons and princes from the royal court, draining the country of its best and brightest individuals. After bringing them back to Babylon, he indoctrinates them in the ways of his nation. Four young men—Daniel and his three friends—are among this first group of captives.

DAN 1:1-21

OBSERVATION POINT

Daniel and his friends were selected for an elite and rigorous education. Babylonian literature was a vast collection of wisdom writings, mythological stories, magic chants, legal documents, ancient histories, letters, dream and vision records, mathematical books, and astrology charts. Many Babylonian records, such as contracts, inscriptions, and the Babylonian Chronicles, have been discovered and are available to historians today.

EXPLORATION POINT

Daniel and his friends were yanked out of their country and dragged off to enemy territory. They probably experienced a range of emotions—anger, fear, and grief—but their faith remained intact. Daniel obeyed God and rose to a significant position of power, authority, and influence in a hostile environment. He helped fulfill God's purpose during seventy years of royal service. Like Daniel, we are called to remain faithful to God no matter where we live. God's good will prevail in every nation and in every situation throughout time.

NEXT STOP

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLD STATUE AND THE BLAZING

FURNACE

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DANIEL IN NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S COURT

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

The princes of Judah—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—are still in the training program in the royal courts of Babylon when King Nebuchadnezzar begins having frightening dreams that disturb his sleep. When the usual court attendants can't satisfy the king's request for an interpretation of his dreams, chaos threatens the royal court. Before the king slaughters all his wise men, Daniel hears of the problem and comes to everyone's rescue.

DAN 2:1-49

OBSERVATION POINT

While most of the Old Testament is written in Hebrew, Daniel 2–7 and parts of the book of Ezra were written in Aramaic. The Babylonian and Persian empires, because they encompassed so many smaller cultural and linguistic communities, utilized Aramaic as a common language for commercial and official communication. It eventually replaced Hebrew as the main language for exiled Jews.

EXPLORATION POINT

Nebuchadnezzar's vision offers a panoramic view of history, showing God's sovereignty. When we get preoccupied by our narrow section of time, fretting over our purpose in the world, we can find peace and comfort in remembering that God is in control at all times, working his plan moment by moment. We may not see what he is doing at any specific time—we may even be mystified throughout our lifetimes—but we must trust that God is doing what is good, for the purpose of moving history toward the glorious goal of his everlasting Kingdom.

NEXT STOP

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLD STATUE AND THE BLAZING

FURNACE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DANIEL IN NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S COURT

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLD STATUE AND THE BLAZING FURNACE

Nebuchadnezzar's immense pride, enhanced by Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue, encourages him to construct a gold statue and set it where everyone can see it. He demands that everyone in the kingdom bow down whenever they hear the royal musical interlude. But Daniel's friends, now called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, remain true to God and refuse to worship the idol.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Nebuchadnezzar's statue was tall and slender, perhaps similar to the Egyptian obelisks that recorded the accomplishments of a ruler. The 10-to-1 ratio of height (90 feet) to width (9 feet) would not create a human shape, so an obelisk is possible. It may also have been a human form raised up on a high pedestal. Either way, the image was huge and impressive: as tall as an eight-story building and overlaid with gold!

EXPLORATION POINT

Daniel's friends were singled out for not bowing down to the image

while thousands of other officials obliged. Their courage and faithfulness to God is commendable. Obeying God was important to them; they were willing to die rather than disobey the King of the universe. Sometimes we are tempted to go along with the crowd or follow a trend that violates our faith and values. We need to slow down and evaluate the situation in light of what we believe.

NEXT STOP

EZEKIEL'S VISION AND CALL

JEHOIACHIN RULES IN JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLD STATUE AND THE BLAZING FURNACE

JEHOIACHIN RULES IN JUDAH

The voices of the prophets resound through Judah as King Jehoiachin comes to the throne. The Jews who, like Daniel, were educated, talented, or from noble families, had already been snatched up by the invaders and deported to Babylon. Conditions get worse as King Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to the city of Jerusalem.

2KGS 24:8-17

OBSERVATION POINT

Nebuchadnezzar took about 10,000 people captive from the city of Jerusalem. This was his second round of deporting people from the city. The first group, consisting of royalty and the educated, was led away to Babylon about eight years earlier. This time he captured commanders and soldiers, craftsmen and artists. He weakened Judah by carrying off the best and brightest so that they could never rebel against him.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Israelites considered exile from their homeland to be a fate worse than death, but it wasn't. Those who went into exile still had their lives and the hope of restoration and a future. Many things in our lives, at first glance, appear disastrous, but God has everything under his control. And he loves us. We may not always understand our circumstances, but someday we will understand his reasons.

NEXT STOP

GOOD AND BAD FIGS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JEHOIACHIN RULES IN JUDAH

GOOD AND BAD FIGS

During King Jehoiachin's reign in Judah, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon captures a second group of people from Judah and carries them off to exile in Babylon. This group consists of a pool of talented individuals, including the king, leading government officials, artists, and craftsmen. Shortly after this event, God sends Jeremiah a vision about good figs and bad figs to help explain the situation.

READ:

JER 24:1-10

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OBSERVATION POINT

Around this time, the groups of deported Israelites living in Babylon took on the name “Jews.” The Jewish community in Babylon was still under God’s covenant, but they lived in exile. The people in exile and those still in Jerusalem had conflicting views of which group was blessed and which was rejected by God. Jeremiah’s vision helped clarify that issue.

EXPLORATION POINT

God’s thinking can be completely opposite from human thinking. He revealed this to Jeremiah in the vision of the figs. What

appeared to be a blessing—living at home in Jerusalem—was a curse. What appeared to be a curse—exile and captivity in a foreign land—was a blessing and a guarantee of hope for the future. God creates a future using those whom the world classifies as useless and without value.

NEXT STOP

EZEKIEL'S VISION AND CALL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLD STATUE AND THE BLAZING FURNACE

GOOD AND BAD FIGS

EZEKIEL'S VISION AND CALL

Jeremiah and Ezekiel both prophesy to God's people at the same time. Jeremiah is back in Jerusalem, watching the final days of destruction and their aftermath. Ezekiel is in Babylon living with the people who have been captured and taken into exile. Although the two prophets are in different places, they both receive visions from God that contain important messages for God's people.

EZEK 1:1–28; 10

OBSERVATION POINT

Ezekiel was taken to Babylon in 597 BC, during the second major deportation of people from Judah. After being in captivity for five years, Ezekiel received a call to be a prophet. Ezekiel was from a priestly family; if he had been back in his homeland he probably would have served in the Temple. God used him instead to preach to the Jews who lived far from home.

EXPLORATION POINT

God did not need the Temple or the homeland of Judah; he was in all places at all times. Because the sinful Jews had taken on the pagan belief that gods were confined to a worship area or a piece of land, God needed to clarify that he was everywhere—in the foreign land with the exiles, in Jerusalem with their loved ones, and in every place in between.

NEXT STOP

JEREMIAH IS IMPRISONED

PROPHETIC SIGNS AND ACTIONS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

EZEKIEL'S VISION AND CALL

PROPHETIC SIGNS AND ACTIONS

Ezekiel receives instructions from God to act out what is going to happen back in Jerusalem. The objects Ezekiel must use to demonstrate Jerusalem's demise are unusual, but Ezekiel is obedient and follows God's command. His symbolic acts reflect only a fraction of the suffering going on back in his homeland of Judah,

but they are a steady reminder to the Jews who are already in exile that they are living under judgment for their national sins.

EZEK 4:1–5:17

OBSERVATION POINT

Ezekiel's outlandish actions were vivid object lessons that reinforced his messages from God. He acted out what was happening to the people back in Jerusalem, hundreds of miles away. These play-acts seemed as ridiculous to the people then as they would be to us today. But Ezekiel's behavior got everyone's attention even if they didn't care to listen. What Ezekiel said and did probably caused plenty of discussion among the exiles.

EXPLORATION POINT

The people were exiled in Babylon because they had broken their covenant with God. At Mount Sinai, God had clearly told his people the rules of the covenant. The Israelites didn't uphold their end of the agreement; they forgot about the God who cared for and loved them, worshiping local idols instead. God had told his people over and over to return to him, but they ignored every warning. God was angry with them and punished them just as he had promised. But his anger would not last forever.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S GLORY LEAVES THE TEMPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PROPHETIC SIGNS AND ACTIONS

THE LORD'S GLORY LEAVES THE TEMPLE

In an earlier vision, Ezekiel witnessed a profound desecration of God's holy place in Jerusalem. He saw idols in the Temple sanctuary and people openly worshiping the sun in the Temple courtyard. This blatant idol worship infuriated the Lord. Ezekiel's next vision is equally shocking. It reveals that God will abandon his Temple by withdrawing his presence from that holy place.

EZEK 10:1-22

OBSERVATION POINT

The Ark of the Covenant, located in the Most Holy Place of the Temple, was protected by two large statues that represented winged angelic creatures called cherubim. Ezekiel's vision gives us a fantastic, detailed description of these spectacular creatures that guard the Ark. They had four faces, four wings, four hands, and were completely covered in eyes! Strange and spectacular creatures indeed.

EXPLORATION POINT

Throughout the Exodus and the wanderings in the desert, God was present in a cloud by day and in a fiery pillar at night. When the Tabernacle was completed, his presence was visible as a cloud that hovered over the tent. After Solomon completed the Temple, God's glory filled the building in a cloud (1 Kings 8:11). Now, in dramatic fashion, God was about to depart from his holy Temple and withdraw his presence from his people, just as they had long ago withdrawn from him.

NEXT STOP

SIGNS OF THE COMING EXILE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S GLORY LEAVES THE TEMPLE

SIGNS OF THE COMING EXILE

When God sends Ezekiel another set of instructions for his next message, Ezekiel's still in Babylon with the exiles. Back in Jerusalem, Zedekiah is king. The Babylonians have again invaded Judah, overrunning most of the Judean countryside and the towns outside Jerusalem. The army is closing in on the capital city. The end is near, and Ezekiel acts it out for all to see.

READ:

EZEK 12:1-28

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OBSERVATION POINT

God's commands to Ezekiel to tremble while he ate and to shake while he drank were indications of what the people in Jerusalem were feeling. They suffered tremendous anxiety and fear as the Babylonians tightened their siege on the city and threatened total destruction. The messages God gave Ezekiel all were fulfilled exactly as God said.

EXPLORATION POINT

Exile was not what God wanted for his people. He had planned for them to live in a land of plenty and to have peace, prosperity, and

harmony—if they loved him and kept his commandments. While the nation had periods of devotion and obedience to God under great spiritual leaders, their tendency to embrace local religions eventually displaced loyalty to God. God had promised life if they stayed faithful; he had promised punishment if they strayed. God was faithful to his promise.

NEXT STOP

NO DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SIGNS OF THE COMING EXILE

NO DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON

For the third time, the Babylonian army invades the nation of Judah and heads straight toward Jerusalem. King Zedekiah realizes that maybe everything Jeremiah has been telling him is going to come true. The king's men ask Jeremiah to intercede with God for them. They expect that Jeremiah's influence with the Almighty will save everyone at the last moment. They still expect God to graciously and miraculously save the city. Jeremiah has surprising news for them.

READ:

JER 21:1-14

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OBSERVATION POINT

The “mighty miracle” that is referred to here is God’s defeat of the Assyrian army during the reign of King Hezekiah—an angel saved Jerusalem by killing 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in the middle of the night. But there was a big difference between that situation and this one: Hezekiah himself prayed to God, and he believed that God could save his people. King Zedekiah had no such belief and thought that others could manipulate God into doing some magic.

EXPLORATION POINT

God offered one last chance for salvation to the people in Jerusalem. That choice, however, required amazing trust in God because his command was to surrender to the enemy. God’s command made no sense, but he was in complete control. Only a few followed his instructions. They were taken captive, but at least they were alive to hope for a better future. Putting ourselves completely in God’s hands and being obedient to him no matter what the circumstances will ensure the best possible outcome.

NEXT STOP

JEREMIAH WEARS AN OX YOKE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NO DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON

JEREMIAH WEARS AN OX YOKE

Jeremiah has been a tireless preacher, but several times God has called on him to physically act out his prophecies rather than simply to deliver a speech. This time, God instructs Jeremiah to actually wear a heavy wooden yoke while he proclaims his message

of judgment on Judah and on five countries in the surrounding area. The prop is sure to get everyone's attention.

JER 27:1-22

227 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

When a prophet foretold doom, kings looked everywhere for a second opinion. False prophets made predictions on behalf of the idols. Fortune-tellers claimed to discern the future by examining animal livers or viewing the stars. Interpreters of dreams told what dreams meant for future events. Mediums believed they could talk to the dead, and sorcerers recited incantations as curses or blessings. But none of them had any clue as to what was going to happen.

EXPLORATION POINT

God had not given up on his people. He tried again to get their attention by making Jeremiah wear a yoke as a symbol of the Babylonians' control over Israel. God speaks today through pastors, teachers, mentors, and friends. God may not require them to be as dramatic as Jeremiah or to incorporate grandiose gestures into their messages, but hopefully we are more receptive to their words of wisdom than the people of Judah were to Jeremiah. God still speaks.

NEXT STOP

RACHEL'S SADNESS TURNS TO JOY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JEREMIAH WEARS AN OX YOKE

RACHEL'S SADNESS TURNS TO JOY

Through years of ministry, Jeremiah hounds God's people with messages of doom, despair, and destruction. As long as he believes there is a way to make the people repent, he warns them. Once Babylon begins to take the people away into exile, God tells Jeremiah to share a different message with the people. The Lord's message reassures them that the future holds peace and hope after judgment.

JER 31:1-40

OBSERVATION POINT

God made a major covenant with his chosen people at Mount Sinai. Each generation had to teach their children the instructions that accompanied those old covenant promises (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). But God's new covenant with his restored people (those who returned to Jerusalem after the Exile) would be different: God would write his instructions on the people's hearts. Everyone would know the Lord, but this isn't simply a matter of facts and theology. It is a vibrant internal relationship.

EXPLORATION POINT

After all the warnings and the words of doom and destruction, God's love for his people shines through. Once again we see that God does not leave his people trampled by despair. He lifts them up and promises them a future of hope, restoration, peace, and happiness. Whenever we feel discouraged or depressed, we should turn to God for assurance that after a time of difficulty, trial, and instruction, God will rejuvenate us and restore peace and joy to our lives.

NEXT STOP

JEREMIAH'S LAND PURCHASE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

RACHEL'S SADNESS TURNS TO JOY

JEREMIAH'S LAND PURCHASE

Jeremiah's lifestyle itself is a part of his various messages to the people of Judah. He actually purchases a piece of property to show the people that he truly believes God will do exactly as he says. He knows that God will bring the people back from Babylon to the area where they currently live. Although things look bleak now,

someday that land will be valuable again.

JER 32:1-25

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OBSERVATION POINT

Jeremiah's cousin Hanamel asked him to buy a field that was part of the family land in the town of Anathoth. He was following the law of Moses, which stated that a family member had to buy a piece of property for sale by a relative to ensure that the land stayed in the family (Leviticus 25:25-28). This was a bizarre thing for Jeremiah to do, since the land was already under the control of the Babylonians.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jeremiah put his money where his mouth was. He had declared over and over again that God promised a life back home for the exiles after their stay in Babylon. This purchase of a field demonstrated Jeremiah's faith in God's words. It can sometimes be difficult to believe that God will fulfill his seemingly impossible promises, but like Jeremiah, we need to trust him—and act accordingly.

NEXT STOP

A WARNING FOR ZEDEKIAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JEREMIAH'S LAND PURCHASE

A WARNING FOR ZEDEKIAH

Time is running out. After two previous invasions, the Babylonians once more swarm over the Judean countryside, capturing cities just a few miles away from Jerusalem. All that Jeremiah predicted is about to come true. No last-minute miracle is going to take place. The fate of the people and Jerusalem is sealed. Jeremiah delivers a message to King Zedekiah with some bad news and some good news.

JER 34:1-22

OBSERVATION POINT

The Lord promised to protect King Zedekiah during the Babylonian attack, siege, and plunder of Jerusalem. This was a soothing promise for the king to cling to as the enemy invaded; however, significant details about his future were missing. The king did die peacefully, but he was first captured and tortured by the Babylonians, then dragged into exile (see 39:5-7).

EXPLORATION POINT

The judgment of Judah was set. The Babylonians were making a clean sweep through the nation. Yet God was compassionate to the one who sat on David's throne. He sent a message of hope saying that the king would experience a peaceful death. God will never leave his children in total despair. He provides a glimmer of hope that will sustain us through our most difficult times.

NEXT STOP

JEREMIAH IS IMPRISONED

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

EZEKIEL'S VISION AND CALL

A WARNING FOR ZEDEKIAH

JEREMIAH IS IMPRISONED

King Zedekiah rules Judah as a puppet king controlled by Babylon. The Babylonians threaten Judah from a northern position as the Egyptians push in from the south. The Babylonian army backs out of Judah's territory to confront the Egyptians. There is a temporary calm, but Jeremiah tells Zedekiah this is only a short reprieve and that the Babylonians will eventually triumph. This is not what the king wants to hear, and Jeremiah is punished.

JER 37:11388283

OBSERVATION POINT

Cisterns, like the one Jeremiah was thrown into, were used to collect rainwater during the winter rainy season for use in the dry months (May through September). The cistern was empty of water, but was still wet enough to have deep mud at the bottom. The officials who threw Jeremiah in were intent on killing him by starvation or suffocation if he slowly sank deeper into the mud. Although Jeremiah was saved from the depths of the cistern, he stayed in prison until the fall of Jerusalem.

EXPLORATION POINT

Judah's king and officials wanted Jeremiah to tell them about their future, but when they didn't like what they heard, they punished Jeremiah. God was speaking, but no one was listening. Too often we don't want to listen to wise and godly words of advice, direction, or correction. When we challenge God to speak to us, perhaps we need only to listen more closely to those around us.

NEXT STOP

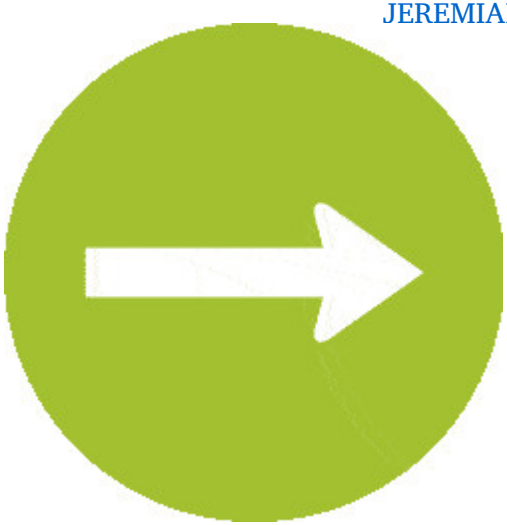
THE END OF JUDAH

THE END OF JUDAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
JEREMIAH IS IMPRISONED

JEREMIAH IS IMPRISONED



THE END OF JUDAH

The final kings of Judah—Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah—are mere puppets in the hands of invaders. Egyptian and Babylonian rulers subjugate the kings until Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem in 587 BC. Over twenty years, encompassing the reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invades Jerusalem three times and carries off the city's elite, educated, and influential people. The third time, his army burns and utterly destroys the great city. The kingdom of Judah is dead.

2CHR 36:1-21

OBSERVATION POINT

At Mount Sinai, God prescribed a time of rest, called a Sabbath year, for people and for the land (Leviticus 25:1-12). Every seventh year, the people were to let the land rest, eating only what the uncultivated vineyards and fields happened to produce. However, the people never observed this law for all the years they lived in the Promised Land. Now that they were going into exile, the land at last would have its long-overdue Sabbath rest. For the next seventy years, the land would be at peace, undergoing restoration and renewal.

EXPLORATION POINT

The people who were carted off to Babylon considered exile the worst punishment of all. They felt alone and deserted by God. But God had not left his people. Speaking through his prophet Ezekiel, God promised them a future hope. After a time of discipline and exile, he would bring his people back to their land and restore Israel's former glory. Today God still promises a future of hope. He assures us of light and hope for the future no matter what difficulty, pain, or suffering we currently face.

NEXT STOP

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A BRANCH FROM DAVID'S LINE

THE END OF JUDAH

THE END OF JUDAH

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Throughout his big story, God always wants to be close to his people. At many times throughout Israel's history, individuals and even the entire nation were obedient to the Lord. But over the last four hundred years, the people of Judah and their leaders have forgotten the Lord and started worshiping other gods. God has sent prophets to plead with them to turn back to the Lord. He has sent foreign invaders who wage war on Judah, even taking the people into captivity, but those hints of coming judgment do not change anything. Now the nation of Judah is scattered and its capital city, Jerusalem, is destroyed.

READ:

JER 52:1-30

2 Kings 24:18-25:26

OBSERVATION POINT

The Babylonian siege made the residents of Jerusalem prisoners in their own city. The Babylonians captured and cut off all roads, and food and supplies ceased to arrive in the city. The enemy would normally have cut off all sources of water into the city as well, but King Hezekiah had previously secured the water supply from the Gihon Spring. The siege began on January 15, 588 BC, and ended July 18, 586 BC, two and a half years later, when the Babylonians' battering rams broke down a section of the city wall.

EXPLORATION POINT

Time was up, and God's patience had run out. He had to restore justice. The people suffered the consequences of disobedience exactly as God had told Moses and recorded in the Book of Instructions. But God's covenant with David remained intact. David's kingdom would not end; a remnant would endure. The nation was destroyed, but God gave his people hope through the words of his prophets. God's people and their nation would be restored and would flourish at a later time.

NEXT STOP

A VALLEY OF DRY BONES

SORROW IN JERUSALEM

SORROW IN JERUSALEM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

SORROW IN JERUSALEM

The city of Jerusalem is in ruins. Scattered handfuls of people are left to fend for themselves among the rubble of the once-proud city, while most have been hauled off into exile by the Babylonians. Jeremiah the prophet, who wrote Lamentations, is one of these few survivors who remain. He weeps as he views the smoldering ruins of God's holy city.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Every year the Israelites celebrated seven major festivals: Passover; First Harvest; the Festivals of Unleavened Bread, Harvest, Trumpets, and Shelters; and the Day of Atonement. The priests were the primary officials overseeing all the festivities. Since the Temple was now in ruins, the priests no longer had any purpose. They were jobless and destitute like so many others.

EXPLORATION POINT

In Lamentations 1:22, the destroyed Jerusalem (personified as a woman weeping over the suffering caused by sin) offers a prayer to

God for justice. God's justice is orderly. His promise of forgiveness is sure, but he must punish, cleanse, and refine his people before he can restore them and their city. God's forgiveness blots out our sins but not all the consequences of our actions.

NEXT STOP

GRIEF IN BABYLON

PRAYER FOR RESTORATION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SORROW IN JERUSALEM

PRAYER FOR RESTORATION

Overcome with grief at the great destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah prays to God, begging him to remember the people of Judah. In his plea, Jeremiah reviews the atrocities God's people have suffered and summarizes the conditions they are currently enduring. He asks God to have mercy on the people and restore the joy they once had.

LAM 5:1-22

OBSERVATION POINT

The phrase “hanged by their thumbs” alludes to Babylonian war atrocities. Impaling captives on stakes was the standard method of execution at this time in history. The victors also tortured Judah’s leaders, and sadistic soldiers raped the women. Many people were slaughtered, most were exiled, and a few were left to struggle for survival in a land with no food, no shelter, and little protection.

EXPLORATION POINT

This passage paints a picture of the potential chaos that can result from life without God. It’s discouraging, but God promises not to leave us in despair. He always provides a glimmer of hope. God is on his throne; he rules the heavens and the earth. He will never totally abandon his people. No matter how difficult and dark the present may be, we can find peace and assurance in God’s promises.

NEXT STOP

GRIEF IN BABYLON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SORROW IN JERUSALEM

PRAYER FOR RESTORATION

GRIEF IN BABYLON

The Israelites were exiled to the foreign land of Babylon. The once-joyous people of Israel suddenly were overcome with grief and unable to sing their joyful songs of praise. The Babylonian soldiers recall their delightful singing and taunt the people to continue with their songs so the guards can be entertained.

PS 137:1-9

OBSERVATION POINT

The nations of Edom and Israel had been rivals ever since their origins, when Esau and Jacob were rivals. When the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, the Edomites rejoiced while the city burned and encouraged the Babylonians in their ruthless destruction. This psalm was a cry to God for retaliation.

EXPLORATION POINT

Even in their deep despair, the exiles from Judah clung to God (symbolized by the city of Jerusalem) and to God's promise to judge the nations. When we are in deep despair, overwhelmed with grief, or convinced that all is lost or hopeless, we can find new hope in God. He will keep us secure and restore our joy.

NEXT STOP

EDOM'S JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED

EDOM'S JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
GRIEF IN BABYLON

GRIEF IN BABYLON

EDOM'S JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED

After the fall of Jerusalem, the prophet Obadiah preaches a message of judgment on the nation of Edom. The Edomites had been an enemy of the Israelites since the time of Israel's early journeys in the wilderness. The king of Edom had refused to allow Moses and the Israelites to travel through his country on their way to the Promised Land.

OBAD 1:1-21

OBSERVATION POINT

The nation of Edom was descended from Jacob's twin brother Esau,

and it was an obvious rival to the nation of Israel. During the reign of Jehoram, the Edomites, who were subjects to Judah, rebelled and declared independence. When the Babylonians later attacked Jerusalem, the Edomites sided with them. Later, Edom was destroyed by invaders, just as Obadiah predicted.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is Lord of all. Every nation in the world belongs to him and is under his control. They are subject to his judgment whether or not they acknowledge him. The Edomites were a proud people who felt secure in their homes high on the cliffs of their nation. Power and pride in this world will come to an end, but power and pride in the Lord will last forever.

NEXT STOP

A VALLEY OF DRY BONES

EZEKIEL AS ISRAEL'S WATCHMAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

EZEKIEL AS ISRAEL'S WATCHMAN

The Babylonian army captured and destroyed Jerusalem in the summer of 586 BC. It takes months for the news to reach the exiles already living in Jewish towns throughout the Babylonian Empire. Some of the exiles have been living in enemy territory for twelve years, but they still don't understand what is going on. God gives Ezekiel another message to preach to the people to help them recognize their sin and ask for forgiveness.

OBSERVATION POINT

The watchmen of a city would announce the approach of an enemy or any other threat. They were positioned at the city gates, on the city walls, or in towers built just for this purpose. They also patrolled the city streets at night, and at harvest time they would guard the fields and vineyards. As soon as they spotted danger in the distance, the watchmen would sound the alarm—usually a loud blast on a ram's horn.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Jews didn't understand God's anger. They didn't see a reason for their loss. They didn't repent, they didn't change, and they didn't think it was their fault. They blamed God for being unjust and for allowing a wicked nation to overrun their way of life. They discussed Ezekiel's message as if he were an eccentric new lecturer in town, not the spokesman of God himself. God assured Ezekiel that the people would eventually get the message and know that he was God's messenger.

NEXT STOP
A VALLEY OF DRY BONES

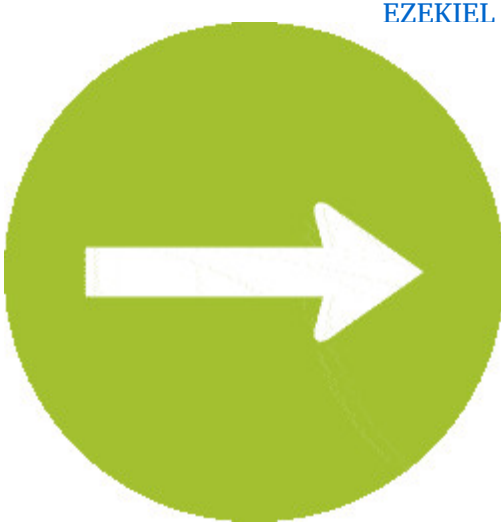
ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

EDOM'S JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED

EZEKIEL AS ISRAEL'S WATCHMAN



A VALLEY OF DRY BONES

God's plan was to love and be in relationship with his people. He had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would bless them and their descendants. He had promised David that his kingdom would never end. But the kingdom of Judah has been devastated. Only a small group remains faithful while in exile. The big story appears to be in jeopardy. But it is not over. Ezekiel gives hope to the Jewish exiles in Babylon through a strange vision of bones. This vision reveals a promising future, the next chapter in the big story: a new life, a new people, and a new unified nation.

EZEK 37:1-14

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OBSERVATION POINT

Dry bones and skeletons are usually considered creepy. Stories of skeletons never seem to end well. This one is different because God is in control of it all. Ezekiel's vision describes a two-stage resurrection. First, flesh appears and covers the dried-out bones. But bones and flesh are still lacking: They need the breath, or Spirit, of the Lord in them to be fully restored. By the end of the story, the dried-out bones have come to life!

EXPLORATION POINT

God was about to do something amazing. He was going to restore the dead, dried-up, disillusioned group of exiles into a lively, Spirit-filled people. Just as he had saved his chosen people from the "death" of slavery in Egypt and had given them a new identity and life in the Promised Land, so now he would restore the exiles to a new life in their homeland. He would renew their strength and revive their spirits. God promises that renewal and restoration will come after exodus or exile. It did for God's chosen people; it will for us too.

NEXT STOP

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

THE LORD'S GLORY RETURNS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A VALLEY OF DRY BONES

THE LORD'S GLORY RETURNS

Ezekiel's visions become brighter and brighter. Hope pours from his prophecies: God has big plans for his people. The future is bright with the promise of a new life, a new nation, and a new Temple! During his vision of the new Temple in Jerusalem, Ezekiel carefully notes all the details for reconstruction: the wall and gates, the courtyards, the rooms surrounding the sanctuary, and the Temple itself. Although God's glory had departed from Jerusalem in judgment, God would return and bring great hope.

READ:

EZEK 43:1-12

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OBSERVATION POINT

Ezekiel had been in exile for twenty-five years when he had his Temple vision. The four chapters dedicated to the grand dimensions and details served two purposes: (1) God's people would be ashamed of their sins, which had caused the destruction of the first Temple; and (2) the people would be motivated to return to God and go home to rebuild the new Temple. The total area dedicated to the Temple and priests was 28 square miles—18,000 acres!

EXPLORATION POINT

The Jews returned to their homeland and rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem, but not to the grand specifications recorded in Ezekiel. Some believe that the Temple in Ezekiel's vision is the great Temple that will be filled with God's glory as Christ sits on the throne during his thousand-year reign on earth. Others see the Ezekiel's grandiose language being fulfilled theologically in the person of Jesus, who extends the presence of God on earth beyond any physical boundaries.

NEXT STOP
NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM ABOUT A TREE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S GLORY RETURNS

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM ABOUT A TREE

Jerusalem has been destroyed. The Babylonian army has ravaged and burned the Temple, the royal palaces, and all the major buildings. They have hauled off captives to Babylon for the third

and last time, leaving only the poorest and weakest behind. Daniel is still serving Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon's royal court, but he is no longer a young man. He is now one of Nebuchadnezzar's closest, most trusted advisers.

DAN 4:1-37

241 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

Nebuchadnezzar was struck with a mental illness called boanthropy, in which a person believes himself to be an ox or cow. This illness, though rare, has been observed in individuals in modern times as well. Nebuchadnezzar lived outside the city like an animal for seven years. Historical records of the king's affairs are void of any entries from 582 to 575 BC, suggesting that this event did take place. God used the illness to make Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge that the Lord Almighty was sovereign over all kingdoms of the world.

EXPLORATION POINT

God rules the world. He builds kingdoms, "gives them to anyone he chooses," and destroys them according to his timing. No power; no president, dictator, or terrorist; no war machine or nuclear armament is outside of God's control. God's presence and control permeates every level of society and government. He is the King of earth and heaven who cares for, loves, and works toward the full restoration of his creation.

NEXT STOP

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM ABOUT A TREE

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Nebuchadnezzar ruled the Babylonian Empire for forty-two years. After his death the empire endured years of turmoil, murder, and deterioration, with four different kings in less than a decade. The empire finally enjoyed some internal peace under Nabonidus and his son, Belshazzar. Belshazzar ruled over the province of Babylon while his father, who was king of the entire empire, was living in Arabia. These events occur on the evening of October 12, 539 BC, when Daniel was about eighty years old.

DAN 5:1-31

OBSERVATION POINT

At the time of this banquet, the city of Babylon was under siege by the army of the Persian Empire. Belshazzar had stored plenty of supplies inside the city and felt confident that the massive walls of Babylon would keep the enemy out. He was able to control his fear of the invading army, but he could not hide his terror when the mysterious hand of God wrote on the wall. God was able to accomplish in four written words what an entire army could not do.

EXPLORATION POINT

Belshazzar repeated the mistakes Nebuchadnezzar made. He did not acknowledge that God was the ruler of the universe, and he did not humble himself before the Lord. God gives gifts to every human—life, talents, and abilities—and therefore nothing we are or do is outside of God's authority. We must trust him for everything, and in that trust we receive freedom and the comfort of knowing that we are not alone. God is with us, caring for and loving us with each breath we take.

NEXT STOP

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A VALLEY OF DRY BONES

A VALLEY OF DRY BONES

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

Throughout the big story, God has selected individuals to be examples for his people: Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and now Daniel. These individuals were heroes of the faith who, though still hindered by human flaws, were near to God and obedient to his calling. Daniel, a teenage prince of Judah, was taken into captivity to the city of Babylon where he became a great leader. Many years passed. Daniel is now an old man. The Persian Empire has swallowed the Babylonian Empire, and a new ruler, Darius, is in control of the province of Babylon.

READ:

DAN 6:1-28

OBSERVATION POINT

In biblical times, lions inhabited Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia. Asian lions differed from their African counterparts in that they were smaller and had thicker coats and thinner manes. Lions were often trophies of kings and nobles, who kept them in captivity or used them in executions of political prisoners. Lions became extinct in the Middle East hundreds of years ago, but they could still be found in the area around the Euphrates River until the 1800s AD.

EXPLORATION POINT

What happened to Daniel was simple: He was set up. The officials were jealous of this Jewish immigrant who had risen to a high government position, and they were out for revenge. Daniel had climbed the royal ranks, adjusting to the changes of three administrations, but he had never altered his stance with God. Daniel remained firm in his faith, and God always protected him. Our lives move fast. Circumstances, positions, and power all will change, but God never changes. He is the one we need to hold on to, to keep us focused when uncertainty swirls around us.

NEXT STOP

WAITING FOR RESTORATION

WAITING FOR RESTORATION

THE TIME OF THE END

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

THE TIME OF THE END

The second half of the book of Daniel records more of Daniel's visions. God sends Daniel these revelations concerning the future history of the world. Much of it can now be understood in light of what occurred in the era between Daniel and the time of the New Testament. The final chapter of Daniel begins in the middle of an ongoing vision concerning the very end of time.

DAN 10:1–11:1; 12:1-13

OBSERVATION POINT

God is described as keeping many books throughout the Bible. Daniel mentions books three times (7:10; 10:21; 12:1). These books contain God's plans (Psalm 139:16), people's sufferings (Psalm 56:8), the names of the righteous (Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 69:28; Malachi 3:16-18; Revelation 20:15), and even deeds that require judgment (Revelation 20:12-14). We can be sure that God knows precisely what is happening in the world, especially as it pertains to his people.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Jewish exiles did not understand this prophecy, but they found comfort and hope in it. We have the privilege of reading this book after much of the prophecy has been fulfilled. How awesome that much of this prophecy has taken place exactly as God revealed it! Let's live in hope that the rest of its fulfillment will come, trusting God as Daniel did so that we will "rise again to receive the inheritance set aside" for us.

NEXT STOP

WAITING FOR RESTORATION

ITINERARY
PREVIOUS STOP

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN

THE TIME OF THE END

YEAR:
539 BC
CURRENT WORLD POWER:
Babylon, Persia
STATUS OF GOD'S PEOPLE:
Exiled Subjects

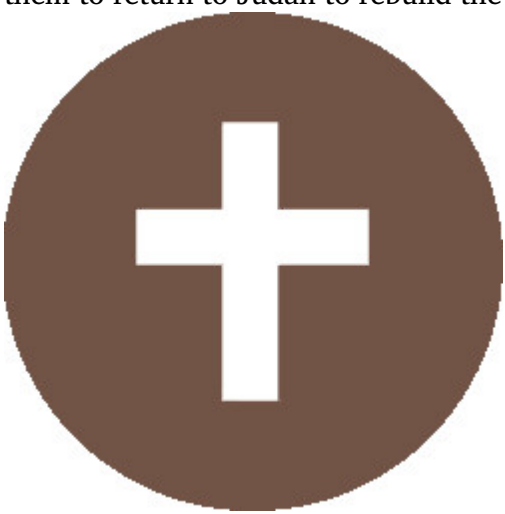
WAITING FOR RESTORATION

When Israel and Judah were conquered by foreign empires, the people were exiled and scattered. Assyria obliterated Israel, and Babylon devastated Judah. Years of war and invasions have left the "land flowing with milk and honey" ravaged, scorched, and largely deserted. Jerusalem is now a pile of burned-out buildings and

broken-down walls. God's holy Temple has been stripped of its beauty, ransacked of its treasures, torn down, and torched. Clusters of survivors live as best they can amid the devastation, the destroyed vineyards, and the overgrown pastureland.
God has remained in control even as foreign empires destroyed the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. He proves his power by working miracles not just in Israel, but also in Babylon. He reveals his presence no longer in the Temple but by speaking through the prophets. He wants the people to know that he is still with them, even though they are far from their homeland. Through his prophets, God promises to protect, preserve, and bless his people even while they are in captivity.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The Babylonian Empire is eventually overtaken by the Persians. Although they still exercise control over the entire region, the Persian kings tolerate many religions and desire to return people to their own homelands. In God's timing, a Persian king named Cyrus will rise to power, release the Jews from captivity, and encourage them to return to Judah to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

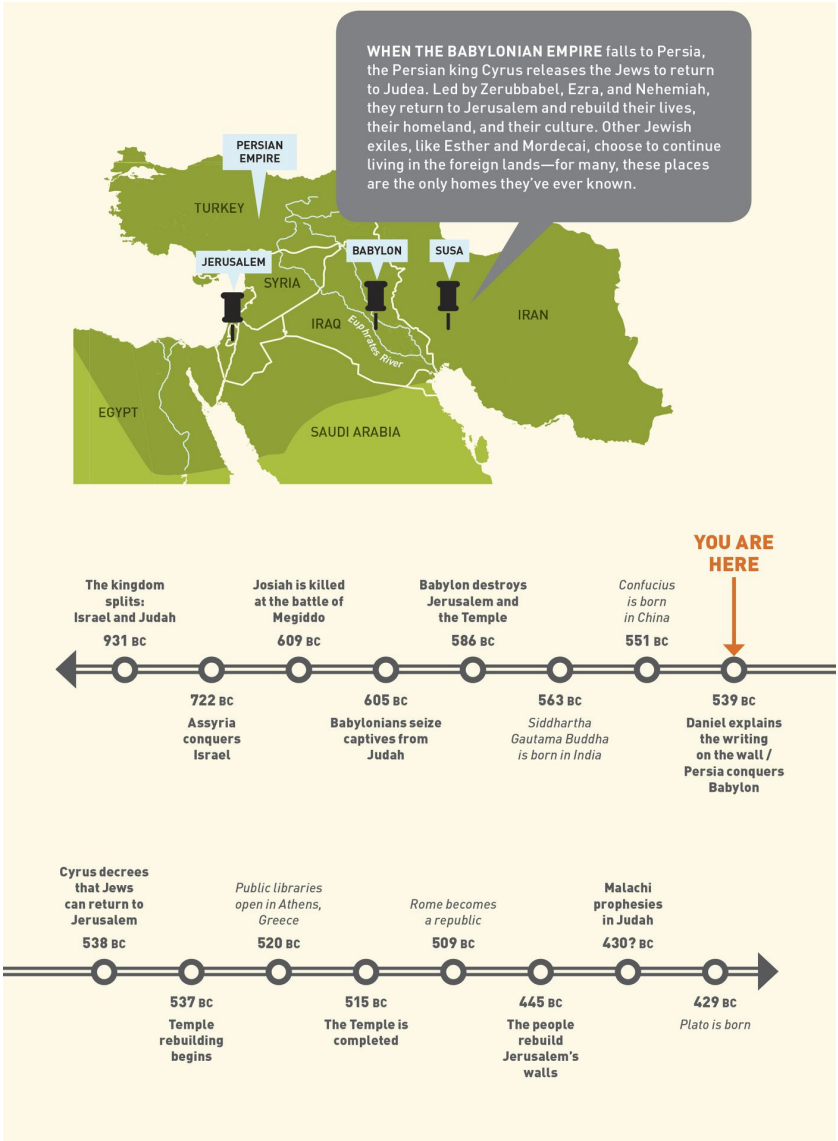


JESUS AS TRUE NORTH

God's prophets provide words of hope to the people—hints that a savior is coming. A king of David's line will take the throne again. More than any other prophet, Isaiah promises the people that God will rescue Israel, but other prophets also describe a future hope. Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi promise a future for the exiles. The people are uncertain about who the prophesied savior-king will be and when he will come, but the

prophets remind them that it is God in whom their hope rests. So they continue to wait for him—the promised one, Jesus.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?



NEXT STOP

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

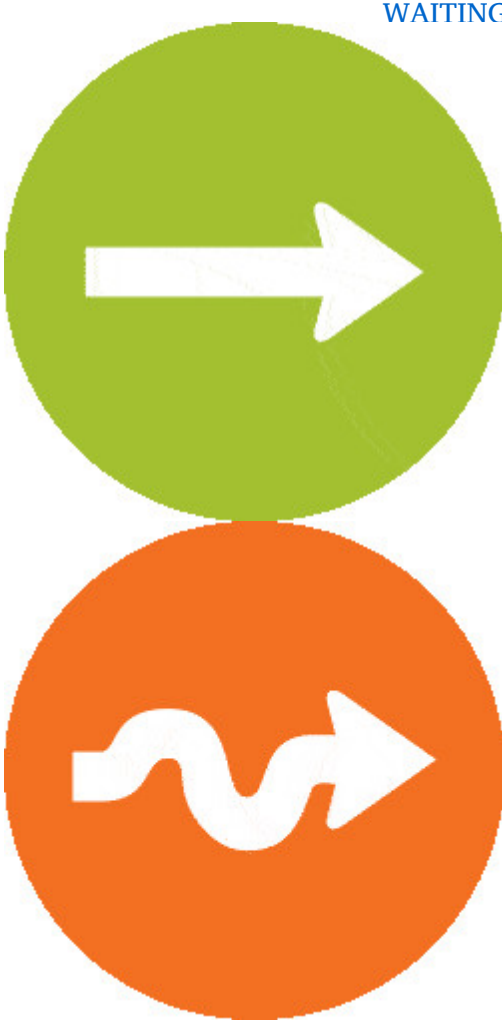
CYRUS ALLOWS THE EXILES TO RETURN

CYRUS ALLOWS THE EXILES TO RETURN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

WAITING FOR RESTORATION



CYRUS ALLOWS THE EXILES TO RETURN

In 538 BC, Cyrus the Great rules the Persian Empire. In order to keep peace in his empire, he encourages people who had been displaced by the Babylonians to return to the countries they had

come from. He decrees that the Jews, who are living in and around Babylon, are free to return to their homeland to rebuild their society and God's Temple.

EZRA 1:1–2:2; 2:64-70

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OBSERVATION POINT

About 50,000 Jews, under the leadership of Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel, journeyed west to Jerusalem. Most of the these Jews were from Jerusalem and the surrounding towns; very few priests and Levites responded to the opportunity. Many more people chose to remain in their adopted country. They had no interest in a four-month journey back to a dangerous area and a ruined city. The lists of the returning exiles in Ezra were an important record to verify who was an authentic Jew, worthy of a position in the reestablished society.

EXPLORATION POINT

God was true to his promise: A remnant of his chosen people returned to their homeland. Zerubbabel, from the family of King David, led the diminished group. Everyone was part of a new beginning—a new branch from the line of David. From this surviving group of exiles would come the Messiah, the King of kings! Throughout history, God has used the insignificant, the humble, and the weak to do great things. He continues to work through a wide variety of people, using their talents and limitations.

NEXT STOP

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

WAITING FOR RESTORATION

CYRUS ALLOWS THE EXILES TO RETURN

CYRUS ALLOWS THE EXILES TO RETURN

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

The Jewish exiles who return to Judah go home to towns and villages scattered throughout the region. For some this means returning to Jerusalem, but many people only gather in the city occasionally for worship. They first rebuild the altar in the Temple courtyard to present sacrifices to God. Then they plan to start reconstructing the Temple. God was never far from his people even though they were far away from their land. His promise through the prophets to return the people to the land with new hope and new hearts is now being fulfilled.

EZRA 3:1-13

OBSERVATION POINT

The exiles feared and shunned the “local residents,” the foreigners who were resettled in Israel (the northern kingdom) by the Assyrian king Esarhaddon after he conquered Israel in 722 BC. Some of these transplants moved south into Judah and Jerusalem during the seventy years that the Jews were in captivity. These foreign residents knew about God but only worshiped him along with their pagan deities. A pagan altar may have been located on the sacred spot of the original altar. If the people of Judah had to destroy it before rebuilding God’s altar, they might encounter retaliation.

EXPLORATION POINT

God graciously gave his people another opportunity to be his holy nation by bringing them back from captivity in Babylon. Once settled, the people rightly focused on God and on observing the law of Moses. Building an altar and then the Temple foundation testified to the fact that they had listened to the prophets during the Exile and had learned from the experiences of their ancestors. They were determined not to waste this opportunity to be restored.

NEXT STOP

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS: WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

A CALL TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

A CALL TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

A CALL TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

Fifteen years after constructing the foundation for the Temple, the Jews, who returned from exile, still have not finished the building. In 520 BC God sends the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people in Jerusalem in their work. Haggai points out the people's neglect of God and renews their enthusiasm for finishing the building project.

OBSERVATION POINT

Sometimes there is a direct correlation between everyday events and God's judgment or blessing. Haggai tells us that the drought that yielded a poor harvest was the direct result of God withholding his blessing on the people for their sinful behavior. The people had forgotten that curses as well as blessings were attached to God's covenant (Deuteronomy 28:22-24, 38-40). Haggai reminded them of these conditions of their agreement with God. When the people put God first, his blessings would return.

EXPLORATION POINT

Haggai's message is uncomfortably relevant to our circumstances today. We are so concerned about our own homes, comfort, and lifestyles that we neglect to put God first in our lives. God's prophets today are our preachers who remind us to shift our priorities and put God first. With God's purposes first in our lives, we won't lack anything we need.

NEXT STOP

A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LORD

A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LORD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CALL TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

A CALL TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LORD

Zechariah begins his prophetic ministry just over two months after Haggai began his preaching. His eight visions encourage the returned exiles and give them hope for the future. He asks the people to rededicate themselves to the Lord and finish rebuilding the Temple.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Myrtle trees grew in abundance in the Kidron Valley, which was located to the east and southeast of Jerusalem. These large, fragrant evergreen shrubs with dark shiny leaves and white flowers grew abundantly along rivers and streams. The branches, leaves, and berries from these trees were used for perfumes, medicine, and decoration. This prophetic messenger is coming from a place of symbolic abundance and peace.

EXPLORATION POINT

Zechariah's vision declares that God is in control of everything,

including small nations and mighty empires. He guards and protects his chosen people and the city of Jerusalem. God was in control during the darkest period of Israel's history. God gave hope and, as we know, brought that hope into the world hundreds of years later with the coming of Jesus. He was faithful to his promises. He still is.

NEXT STOP

THE TEMPLE'S DEDICATION

THE TEMPLE'S DEDICATION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LORD

A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LORD

THE TEMPLE'S DEDICATION

The Jews enthusiastically began rebuilding the Temple. But when their efforts were blocked, the construction came to a halt. For the next sixteen years the foundation sits untouched because of political

problems and personal distractions. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah not only renew the people's enthusiasm for the project but also renew their hearts, reviving their love for and devotion to God. Now the people are eager to complete their work of reconstructing God's Temple and restoring proper worship.

EZRA 6:1-22

OBSERVATION POINT

When the Persians conquered the Babylonian Empire, it was the king's practice to reestablish displaced people and their gods in their original homes. Darius, reading the decrees of Cyrus, proclaimed that the Persian government would provide everything the people needed to rebuild the Temple: daily food, construction materials, and animals for sacrifices. The king's motivation was simple—if he helped the relocated people, they would be loyal to him and would pray that whatever god they worshiped would grant long life to the king.

EXPLORATION POINT

What had seemed impossible to the Jews in Jerusalem—finding enough supplies and money to finish the Temple—became possible. Haggai's announcement that the Persian Empire would pay all the expenses for the Temple (Haggai 2:7) came true! God is a God of the impossible. He is always at work: He works through his own people who are faithful to him, and he works through kings and rulers who know nothing about him. He is a sovereign God with authority over the ways of the mighty and the lowly. Nothing is outside his ability or control.

NEXT STOP

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

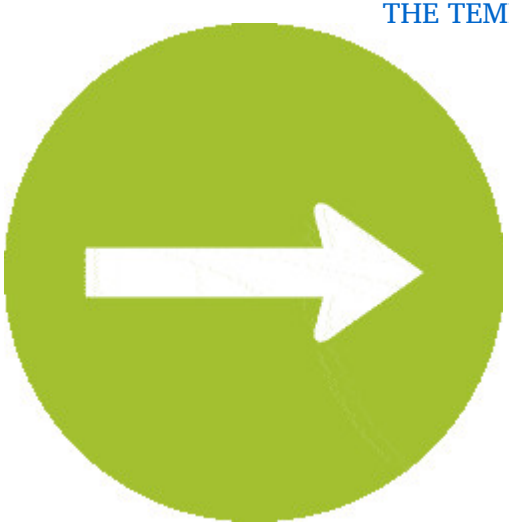
ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE TEMPLE'S DEDICATION

THE TEMPLE'S DEDICATION



ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

During the seventy years of the Jews' captivity, the Babylonian Empire has been overtaken by the Persians. These powerful conquerors from the east destroyed Israel's dreaded enemies. The Persians firmly control all lands and peoples. While some Jewish exiles have returned to their homeland under Zerubbabel's leadership, others remain in cities throughout the empire. Esther, a Jewish orphan adopted by her cousin Mordecai, settles in Susa. Soon she, like Daniel, rises to a royal position, and she will help save the Jewish nation.

ESTH 1:1–2:23

OBSERVATION POINT

Seven major feasts are included in this story. The king gave a 180-day banquet that probably included strategic planning to invade Greece. At the same time, Queen Vashti gave a separate banquet for the women. Then the king held a seven-day banquet for the people in Susa. When Esther became queen, he honored her with a banquet and declared a holiday, meaning that he reduced taxes, freed slaves, canceled debts, and suspended requirements for military service. Esther gave two private banquets for the king. The story concludes with the national celebration—the Feast of Purim.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is never mentioned in this book, yet his presence and his control are clearly evident. This story has no coincidences; the events all fall under God's providence. God's sovereign will moves people into positions of power at just the right time. He works through cultural practices and political intrigue to bring about his will. God continues to protect and provide for us too, no matter our current circumstances. He is always in control of all things in heaven and on earth.

NEXT STOP

HAMAN’S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

HAMAN’S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

Esther becomes queen of Persia in 479 BC, four or five years after Vashti was deposed. Soon afterward, Mordecai overhears Xerxes' personal guards plotting to assassinate the king. Immediately he relays the news to Esther, who informs the king. The plot is foiled, the guards killed, and the event recorded in the king's book. Meanwhile, the ambitious and ruthless Haman rises to prominence in Xerxes' royal court, and a confrontation with Mordecai sets an ominous plan in motion.

READ:

ESTH 3:1–4:17

OBSERVATION POINT

Some Bible translations use the word “hang” rather than “impale” in Esther, but the punishment of hanging was not practiced in biblical times. Impalement was a means of torture, a form of execution, or a method for displaying a corpse. A sharpened pole was thrust through the body and then erected for display. It was a common practice in ancient times to warn others of the consequence of a crime.

EXPLORATION POINT

The threat to the Jews was critical. If Haman got his way, God’s chosen people would be massacred, and the hope for restoration of the royal line of David would abruptly end. Since Persian edicts could not be reversed, the situation looked hopeless from a human point of view. Mordecai was certain that God would not allow his covenant people to be snuffed out; someone (if not Esther) would come to the rescue. He trusted that God could handle this impossible situation.

NEXT STOP

ESTHER'S REQUEST TO THE KING

ESTHER'S REQUEST TO THE KING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

ESTHER'S REQUEST TO THE KING

The Jews of Susa join Mordecai and Queen Esther in fasting for three days and nights. The maids who attend Esther do the same. When the fast is over, Esther daringly enters the inner court of the king, even though it is a great risk. She hopes that King Xerxes will welcome her and allow her to speak. In light of the dangerous nature of her actions, her request of the king is surprisingly mundane: an invitation to dinner.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

The king was protected from any unwanted people and unpleasant news. No one in mourning was allowed past the outer gate of the palace, and an individual had to be summoned to come near the king. Although being queen offered Esther some authority and power, it did not grant her unfettered access to the king. Since Xerxes hadn't called to see her for a month, Esther had no idea where she stood with him. She was taking an enormous risk.

EXPLORATION POINT

God's hand is at work in all this court intrigue. These many

“coincidences” are his work, not a random set of circumstances due to chance. Haman was full of himself, bragging to family and friends of his honorable position with the king. Then in one day Haman’s puffed-up pride was completely deflated. His dreams of glory gave way to a humiliating experience. Haman’s excessive pride exemplifies Proverbs 16:18: “Pride goes before destruction, and haughtiness before a fall.”

NEXT STOP

A DECREE TO HELP THE JEWS

A DECREE TO HELP THE JEWS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ESTHER’S REQUEST TO THE KING

ESTHER'S REQUEST TO THE KING

A DECREE TO HELP THE JEWS

At the second dinner banquet, King Xerxes again asks Queen Esther what she desires. He offers her "half the kingdom"—an extremely generous offer, though not a literal one. Esther chooses her words carefully, articulating her request in striking terms. The effect on King Xerxes is profound and immediate.

READ:

ESTH 7:1–8:17

OBSERVATION POINT

The servants in the room at this banquet obviously had been watching Haman's moves closely since they knew he had recently set up the sharpened pole. They were glad to follow through on the king's order to execute Haman since Haman's pompous acts and self-centered administration had created many enemies within the royal courts.

EXPLORATION POINT

Once again we see that God exalts the humble and weak (the Jews) and humbles the pompous and mighty (Haman). Ever since God

selected Abraham to be the father of his chosen nation, he had been saving his people: from famine in Canaan, from slavery in Egypt, from starvation in the wilderness, from enemy nations in Canaan, and now from a plot of annihilation. God always protects his people. He is working through history, culture, and time to preserve and fulfill his promises.

NEXT STOP

REBUILDING THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

THE VICTORY OF THE JEWS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A DECREE TO HELP THE JEWS

THE VICTORY OF THE JEWS

Mordecai exits the palace in royal attire. The Jewish people rejoice. Mordecai's rise to the position of prime minister to the king helps strengthen the Jews' position throughout the Persian Empire. They are now, by the king's new decree, authorized to fight off their enemies. Their plan to save themselves is a violent one, but it will spare the Jews—God's chosen people—from extinction.

ESTH 9:1–10:3

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OBSERVATION POINT

The Festival of Purim was named after Haman's use of the *purim* (a

method of casting lots) to determine the exact date of execution (March 7, 473 BC). The *purim* became symbolic of the fact that God is in control, even if people don't realize it. The festival was decreed by Esther and Mordecai and was added to the festivals already listed in the law of Moses. This celebration was and is commemorated annually with feasting, giving gifts, sharing with the poor, and giving thanks to God for salvation.

EXPLORATION POINT

God will do anything to preserve and protect his people. No law or nation can harm, kill, or capture God's chosen ones apart from his plan. God made it clear that *he* was in control, allowing Assyria and Babylon to capture his people and overrun their land. He allowed his people to fight for their lives against their enemies. God is sovereign over all that happens, both good and evil, in the past, the present, and the future.

NEXT STOP

EZRA ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE VICTORY OF THE JEWS

EZRA ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM

Ezra—a qualified scribe, interpreter of the law, priest, and teacher—is able to trace his family tree back to Aaron, Moses' brother and the original high priest of God's people. This is a badge of honor for a Jewish person of this time period. It proves Ezra's identity as an authentic Israelite and provides authority to lead. As an important official to the Persian king, he visits Jerusalem in 458 BC.

READ:

EZRA 7:1-10; 8:15-36

OBSERVATION POINT

Ezra's group of 5,000 people traveled from Babylon to Jerusalem—almost 900 miles—in four months. A more direct route of only 500 miles was impossible since it went straight through the desert. Instead, Ezra's group went northwest along the Euphrates River, then south into Judah. The trip was slow because the group consisted of women, children, and the elderly. It was treacherous because robbers would be tempted by their gold and silver. God spared the group from other obstacles as well: sickness, danger in fording rivers, and wild-animal attacks.

EXPLORATION POINT

The preparation for the journey to Jerusalem consisted of physical, practical, and spiritual readiness. Ezra knew that even the best plans were insufficient; the group needed to rely on God for safe travels. He understood that power came from God working through his people. On our own, we are weak; supplied with God's power, we can accomplish great things. The group's practice of fasting and praying before a journey is an excellent example for us to follow.

NEXT STOP

NEHEMIAH'S CONCERN FOR JERUSALEM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

EZRA ARRIVES IN JERUSALEM

NEHEMIAH'S CONCERN FOR JERUSALEM

While Ezra counsels the returned Jewish exiles in Jerusalem, Nehemiah remains in Susa serving King Artaxerxes of Persia as a cup-bearer. Although far away, Nehemiah is concerned about the Jews who have returned to their homeland. He is greatly disturbed by a report from Judah that Jerusalem is unprotected and vulnerable to attack. In 445 BC (thirteen years after Ezra's return to Jerusalem), Nehemiah receives the king's permission to return to his home country with another group of Jewish exiles. They are given instructions to rebuild Jerusalem's city wall.

READ:

NEH 1:1–2:10

OBSERVATION POINT

Nehemiah knew he would need large timbers to construct and fortify the gates of Jerusalem, so he asked the king for a letter to secure wood from the king's forest. Some scholars believe this refers to the great forests of Lebanon, known for tall cedars and evergreen trees. But it more likely referred to Solomon's gardens in Etham, six miles south of Jerusalem. Local oak, terebinth, or poplar wood would be used for constructing the city gates.

EXPLORATION POINT

Nehemiah appealed to God for help, knowing that only God could

orchestrate the details needed to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. Nehemiah used his position and power to move his plan forward, but he knew he needed more than the permission and influence of an earthly king to make progress. He prayed and humbly asked the King of heaven and earth to make his plans successful. We can accomplish very little on our own. We need to constantly rely on God.

NEXT STOP

REBUILDING THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A DECREE TO HELP THE JEWS

NEHEMIAH'S CONCERN FOR JERUSALEM

REBUILDING THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

Just a few days after arriving in Jerusalem, Nehemiah secretly makes a circuit around the city. Under cover of darkness, he inspects the crumbled walls and studies the burned city gates. No one knows what he is planning or thinking about on this mysterious venture. In spite of various obstacles, he continues to make a plan for the walls' reconstruction.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Nehemiah relied on God to rebuild Jerusalem's wall. He prayed and planned; he recruited a variety of workers and organized them; he accepted various levels of involvement; and he recorded the names of the participants. God's amazing power was at work in the people; 42 groups of workers completed the immense project in 52 days. However, we are not sure how high and wide the new wall was, since Herod the Great's renovations in 20 BC obscured what was done in Nehemiah's time.

EXPLORATION POINT

The wall around Jerusalem was more than protection from enemies, robbers, and vagabonds; it held great religious, political, and social significance for the residents. The ruined walls were a constant reminder of past sins, God's wrath, and the punishment of exile. Rebuilding the wall would symbolically take away the shame of the past and identify the returned exiles as God's chosen ones. Today we don't need symbols like a strong city wall to assure us that God takes away our shame and forgives our sins. Jesus has taken away our sin and guilt once and for all.

NEXT STOP

NEHEMIAH'S VARIOUS REFORMS

EZRA READS THE LAW

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

REBUILDING THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

EZRA READS THE LAW

Nehemiah addresses the civil needs of the city: He rebuilds the wall, registers the people, and increases the treasury. With Ezra's help, Nehemiah also addresses the spiritual needs of the people. Reading the law of Moses unifies the Jews in Jerusalem and starts a spiritual revival that transforms their society.

NEH 8:1-18

OBSERVATION POINT

The leaders set aside six hours for reading the Law because it was far more than a reading. Gathering in small groups, the people listened to the words in Hebrew first, then to a Levite who translated the Law into Aramaic, the common language acquired in Babylon. Jewish leaders eventually translated large portions of the Law from Hebrew into Aramaic so the people could read and study the Law in their own language.

EXPLORATION POINT

Ezra's reading of the Law changed everything. The people gathered in Jerusalem in the fall to celebrate the Festival of Trumpets, according to custom. But hearing God's law before and after the festival dramatically reminded them that God was central to their lives and their nation. Religious revivals throughout history have one thing in common: people reading and studying God's Holy Word. Knowing God's Word is one of the best steps we can take toward changing ourselves, our communities, and our world.

NEXT STOP

NEHEMIAH'S VARIOUS REFORMS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

REBUILDING THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

EZRA READS THE LAW

NEHEMIAH'S VARIOUS REFORMS

Now that the Jews have heard the exact words of the law of Moses, Nehemiah seizes the opportunity to provide instructions for living it out. Over the years, the people have forgotten many of the rules for living as a holy people in the presence of God. With their new awareness, they enthusiastically support the idea of following the law. But they soon realize that obedience will result in some unpleasant adjustments.

READ:

NEH 13:1-31

OBSERVATION POINT

Eliashib the priest had gotten lax about the laws of God and had done a favor for Tobiah, an enemy of the Jews. The priest allowed Tobiah to take over an area of the Temple, using valuable space allocated for Temple treasures, general storage, tithes to support the Levites, and gifts. An enemy was actually living in the house of God! He was violating sacred space. Once Nehemiah knew of the situation, he immediately took action and threw Tobiah out of the Temple.

EXPLORATION POINT

The returned exiles were falling into the same trap as their ancestors, including King Solomon—they married foreign women from among the enemies of the Jewish community. The outsiders worshiped other gods and merely included Israel's God with the rest. Nehemiah corrected this sin and reinstituted Sabbath observance, which also had been neglected. While an emphasis on rules can quickly become too legalistic, we should occasionally

review how our lives measure up to the instructions God has given us for holy living.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD'S LOVE AND UNWORTHY SACRIFICES

ZION'S COMING KING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NEHEMIAH'S VARIOUS REFORMS

ZION'S COMING KING

Zechariah's words about the future strengthen the Jews for the life they are facing in the present. They had been in exile, away from their homeland for seventy years. When they returned, they found the prospects of settling back into their land and rebuilding Jerusalem to be daunting. Zechariah's message of a great king, a restored people, and lasting peace gives them hope for the future.

ZECH 9:9–10:12

OBSERVATION POINT

The description of a king riding on a donkey recalls the days of King David and foreshadows the coming Messiah. David and his sons would often ride a mule (2 Samuel 18:9; 1 Kings 1:33). The donkey contrasts sharply with the warhorses and chariots that characterized the power that other Israelite kings sought after (Zechariah 9:10). Jesus, the greatest King of all, fulfilled this prophecy when he entered Jerusalem at the Triumphal Entry.

EXPLORATION POINT

God had promised his people hope for the future and restoration for their land. Now that those promises had developed into reality, God gave his people another vision for the future—a king who would bring peace. Zechariah acknowledged the growing threat of the Greeks but reminded the Jews that the Lord would fight for his people to protect them. God does the same for us. He does not leave us alone in our ongoing battle with evil.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD WILL RULE THE EARTH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ZION'S COMING KING

THE LORD WILL RULE THE EARTH

Zechariah's final prophecy is a vision of a distant day of judgment and salvation. On this mysterious day, many will be frightened because they will face judgment for their sins, and others will rejoice that their salvation is being fulfilled. In the end, everyone will worship the Lord. On that day God will establish his ultimate Kingdom on earth!

READ:

ZECH 14:1-21

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OBSERVATION POINT

The Festival of Shelters was a seven-day festival during which the people gave thanks for the harvest and commemorated Israel's wandering in the wilderness. The Israelites had lived in tents (*sukkot*) as they traveled through the wilderness. Today, devout Jews commemorate this day by "dwelling in tents" outside their home. They build a *sukkah* for their community or family and eat at least one meal together in it to remember their agricultural roots and their ancestors' wandering in the wilderness.

EXPLORATION POINT

On the day of the Lord, the Lord will rule triumphantly and reverse all the suffering his people have experienced. Nations will provide gold and silver for the Lord's Temple (14:14), and Jerusalem will become a great and glorious city again. After the time of judgment, God will gather the nations for celebration and praise in Jerusalem. The Lord's holiness will permeate all things and all people; common things will become holy to the Lord.

NEXT STOP

THE LORD KEEPS WATCH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD WILL RULE THE EARTH

THE LORD KEEPS WATCH

After seventy years of exile in Babylon, some of the people of Israel returned to the land of Judah. This psalm is a good example of how they might have expressed their faith in the Lord. It is a testimony of God's compassion and care for his people, even when they have experienced hardships like a forced exile.

PS 121:1-8

OBSERVATION POINT

The people sang psalms on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They would have to look up and see the hills of Judea as they approached the city because Jerusalem itself was built on a series of hills, 2,500 feet above sea level. Once rebuilt, the Temple was at the highest point inside the city. Wide staircases led to the Temple courtyards that surrounded the sanctuary.

EXPLORATION POINT

The answer to the question “Where does our help come from?” is a statement of faith. A person’s reply to the question would indicate their faith in the Lord or their faith in the idols worshiped in the hills. This question challenges us as we contemplate the answer. Does our help come from our bank accounts, our power, our jobs, other people, or God? Other things are insignificant without God. He is the ultimate source of our help and strength.

NEXT STOP

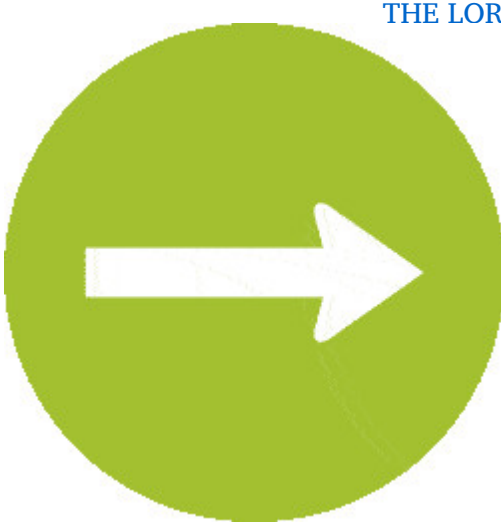
THE LORD’S LOVE AND UNWORTHY SACRIFICES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NEHEMIAH'S VARIOUS REFORMS

THE LORD KEEPS WATCH



THE LORD'S LOVE AND UNWORTHY SACRIFICES

Malachi preaches about the day of judgment in the tradition of the prophet Zechariah. The Temple in Jerusalem has been rebuilt, but the priests and Levites are apathetic. They ignore the requirements of the law for sacrifices. Worship has become merely a mechanical ritual and obligation, and the people are cynical and disillusioned.

MAL 1:1-14

OBSERVATION POINT

God called his people to remember their roots—the very beginning of the covenant made with their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God chose Jacob to be the father of the twelve men whose descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel. In doing so, God rejected Jacob's brother Esau, whose descendants became the enemy nation of Edom.

EXPLORATION POINT

God has always loved his people, but his people have not always loved and respected him. In postexilic Jerusalem, the people were going through the motions of worship. But instead of bringing the best of their flocks and herds to offer to God, they were sacrificing sick and injured animals. By their actions they revealed what was in their hearts: a lack of proper respect for God.

NEXT STOP

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS: WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

THE COMING DAY OF JUDGMENT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LORD'S LOVE AND UNWORTHY SACRIFICES

THE COMING DAY OF JUDGMENT

Malachi's style is direct and urgent. The people have been in exile and are now home again, but that does not mean everything is okay with God. Malachi declares that all people—Israel as well as other nations—will eventually face the day of the Lord's judgment. But there is great hope for those who love the Lord and are in a right relationship with him.

READ:

MAL 3:1–4:6

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OBSERVATION POINT

A “scroll of remembrance” that listed names and events would have been similar to the records kept by the kings of the Persian Empire. Each king kept detailed records of who did something special for the king or the kingdom. Mordecai’s name was listed in such a record because he had revealed a plot to assassinate the king (Esther 6:2).

EXPLORATION POINT

The day of the Lord will be harsh. It will be like fire to the wicked but like warm sunshine to the righteous. Before this day would

come, however, God promised that the prophet Elijah would return. Over four hundred years after this pronouncement, John the Baptist appeared as the Elijah-like messenger who readied the people for Christ's ministry. He was the next prophet after Malachi to further God's plan of salvation for his people.

NEXT STOP

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS: WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

THE LORD'S LOVE AND UNWORTHY SACRIFICES

THE COMING DAY OF JUDGMENT

YEAR:
6 BC
CURRENT WORLD POWER:
Rome
STATUS OF GOD'S PEOPLE:
Roman Subjects

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS: WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH
Since the beginning of time God has desired to have a relationship with his creation. He chose to share the joys of his created world with humans made in his likeness. He has been present with humans since he made them: He walked and talked with them in

the Garden of Eden; appeared to them in dreams and visions; and revealed himself in clouds, a fiery pillar, and laws written in stone. He demonstrated his presence with them through the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. His Spirit worked through their leaders, judges, priests, prophets, and kings, who all represented him on earth. God's presence and blessing continued through the Exile as he protected his people.

At the end of the Old Testament, God's people have become a scattered people, living in Egypt, Judea, Syria, and Persia. In a world pervaded by Greek thought and culture, they preserve their own history and zealously fight for independence. For four hundred years, they hold faithfully to the messages of the prophets, the laws of Moses, and the rituals of the Temple. The Jews wait with great anticipation for God's promise to come true, for the great king of David's line to arrive.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

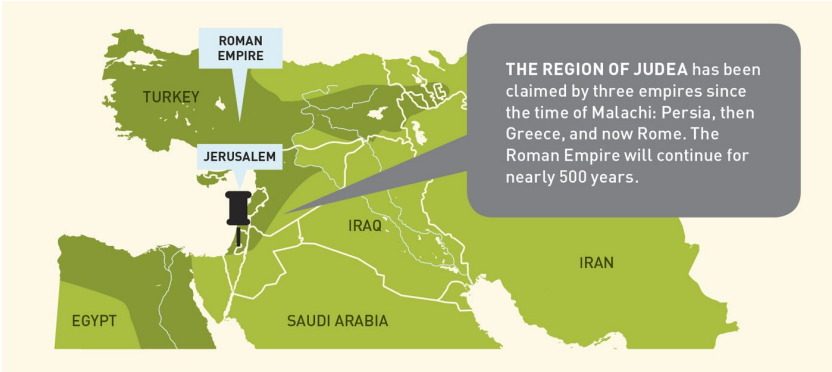
The whole Old Testament has prepared us for this moment. We are reaching a major turning point in the history of the world. Soon God will come to earth as a man. He will be Immanuel, which means "God with us." For thousands of years, the Tabernacle, the Temple, the priesthood, the prophets, and the kings all foreshadowed God's ultimate goal. Now he will physically be *with* his people. Jesus Christ will be born as a human.

But even as God's plans culminate in Jesus, many of the Jews who have been waiting for this very moment will completely disregard him as the king they have yearned for. They will miss the King of kings and Lord of lords who walks and talks with them during everyday tasks: working in the fields, raising families, baking bread, drawing water. Some will have their eyes opened and will believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Others will keep looking elsewhere, hoping for a powerful ruler who will liberate their people through military force.

JESUS AS TRUE NORTH

Very soon now, Jesus will come. After the end of the Old Testament era the Jewish people faced tumultuous times, being conquered and oppressed first by the Greeks and then by the Romans. They endured persecution and even rebelled against their oppressors for a time, but they still awaited the Messiah—the one God promised who would free them from tyranny and fulfill the righteous hopes of the people. Jesus will be that Messiah. But he will not be the warrior-king they're expecting, but rather a humble infant. Nonetheless, he will change the world. He will show the world who God is—nothing will ever be the same.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?



NEXT STOP

TWO BIRTHS FORETOLD

TWO BIRTHS FORETOLD

TWO BIRTHS FORETOLD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS: WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS: WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS: WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

TWO BIRTHS FORETOLD

Thousands of years of waiting are about to end. In the big story, God promised to restore his relationship with his people. He continued to remind his people of his promise over and over again. Now it is about to be fulfilled in a matter of months. At first only a few individuals know what is coming. The angel Gabriel first brings great news to Elizabeth and Zechariah—they will have a son whose name will be John. Gabriel then visits Mary, declaring that she also will have a son, who will be called the Son of the Most High.

LUKE 1:5-56

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OBSERVATION POINT

Although Mary was probably in her early teens, she revealed her maturity and faith in God through her song of praise. This psalm came to be known as the Magnificat, from the first word in the Latin translation of this passage. Some English translations render the opening line as “My soul magnifies the Lord,” reflecting this Latin root. This poem expresses Mary’s great joy at being chosen as the mother of the Messiah and celebrates God’s faithfulness and mercy to his people.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus’ conception was miraculous. We know no details of how this occurred, only that the power of the Most High came upon Mary and she became pregnant, carrying Jesus in her womb in an otherwise normal pregnancy. The Virgin Birth is a critical belief of the Christian faith. We believe that Jesus is completely human and yet fully God. Mary conceived and gave birth to the Son of God so that God could truly become one of us and restore his relationship with his people. The virgin birth remains a mystery in some ways, but there is no mystery about its importance.

NEXT STOP

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

JOSEPH'S DREAM

JOSEPH'S DREAM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

TWO BIRTHS FORETOLD

TWO BIRTHS FORETOLD

JOSEPH'S DREAM

Joseph, Mary's fiancé, wonders what he should do now that Mary is pregnant. He knows that their relationship has been pure and has no reason to doubt Mary's faithfulness to him, but a pregnancy naturally raises questions! During the night he has a dream that

explains everything and reveals how he should handle the situation.

MATT 1:18-25

OBSERVATION POINT

In Jewish society, an engagement was more than a pledge to be married. It actually required a legal process to terminate it, very similar to the requirements for a divorce. When Mary became pregnant, she would have been found guilty of adultery if Joseph had proceeded with a divorce. This could have resulted in Mary's death according to Jewish law (Deuteronomy 22:23-27).

EXPLORATION POINT

Joseph played an important role in the life of Mary's son. He was the boy's earthly father and the one who named him Jesus, thus accepting the baby as his own. His ancestry provided this child with a place in the royal line of David. Because he believed the message from the angel, Joseph lovingly supported Mary and her son.

NEXT STOP

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOSEPH'S DREAM

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

The birth of John, the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah, is an occasion for celebration. Everyone rejoices with them for several reasons: It is their first child, it is a son, and the baby and mother are healthy. Elizabeth had thought that she was barren, so the blessing of a son in her old age is even more reason to praise God. This child will become a mighty prophet, preparing the way for the long-awaited Messiah.

READ:

LUKE 1:57-80

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OBSERVATION POINT

Traditionally, a firstborn son was named after his father. Although Elizabeth announced that the child's name would be John, the people turned to Zechariah for his opinion. Since he had been stricken mute, Zechariah confirmed his son's name in writing. Zechariah's obedience to the angel Gabriel (see 1:13) confirmed his faith, and his voice was restored. The circumstances of John's birth and his unusual name gave the people throughout the region something to talk about!

EXPLORATION POINT

This story again shows that God is faithful to his promises and answers prayers. As a faithful priest, Zechariah probably prayed for the Messiah of Israel to come; as a faithful husband he would have prayed for a child for his family. Zechariah's song of praise explained the significance of John's birth and the role he would play in announcing the Lord's coming. In a few months another baby would be born: Jesus Christ, who would bring "light to those who sit in darkness."

NEXT STOP

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

TWO BIRTHS FORETOLD

JOSEPH'S DREAM

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Every event so far in the big story has been leading up to the greatest event in history. The moment that millions waited for is here. These people lived their entire lives waiting for God's promise to come true, but they died still hoping that the Promised One would come. Now the time is right for the birth of a King who will save the world. Yet there are no trumpets, no fanfares, no feasts to mark the occasion. The King of kings is born in an ordinary place when everyone is too busy to notice. Only some shepherds know that something special has occurred.

LUKE 2:1-52

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OBSERVATION POINT

Natural and man-made caves are common in the Holy Land because of the deposits of limestone, chalk, and sandstone found in the hills of the region. These minerals are relatively soft, making it easy to enlarge existing caves and carve out new ones. Throughout biblical history, caves were used as living quarters for humans and animals, places of refuge during war, or final resting places for the dead. It is possible that the stable used for shelter for Mary, Joseph, and Jesus was a cave located behind the inn, used to shelter animals.

EXPLORATION POINT

Determined to restore his relationship with his creation and show his love for his people, God sent his Son to earth. Jesus Christ was the King of kings, but he did not enter on a charging white stallion or in a chariot preceded by a hundred foot soldiers. He came as a lowly, dependent infant. From these humble beginnings he grew to become part of the everyday world, building a relationship with others on love, not fear; on fellowship, not power.

NEXT STOP

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

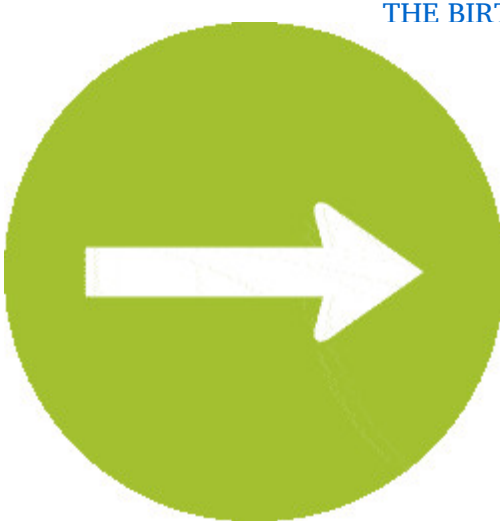
VISITORS FROM THE EAST

VISITORS FROM THE EAST

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE BIRTH OF JESUS



VISITORS FROM THE EAST

While Mary and Joseph rejoice at the birth of a healthy son, wise men from a land far to the east of Judea begin a journey to meet the child who was born to be king of the Jews. These men have studied the stars, and they have seen a spectacular star in the sky

that signifies the birth of a king. After a journey that lasts many months, these men arrive at the home of Joseph and Mary to worship King Jesus and present him with gifts.

MATT 2:1-23

OBSERVATION POINT

The star that attracted the wise men's attention and brought them to Bethlehem may have been a unique phenomenon, or it may have been a conjunction of planets in the constellation of Pisces, which occurred around 7 BC and would have given off the light and brightness of a great star. After the time of Christ, Pisces came to have a reputation among some astrologers as the constellation of the Jews.

EXPLORATION POINT

The wise men, who were from a far-off eastern country, acknowledged the greatness of Jesus. They knew this child was born a king and was already worthy of their worship and extravagant royal gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They were willing to travel hundreds of miles to kneel down and worship a baby who did not belong to their ethnic group, religion, or nationality. We should try to see the Christ child through the eyes of these wise men who worshiped the new king in wonder and awe.

NEXT STOP

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

VISITORS FROM THE EAST

VISITORS FROM THE EAST

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD

The apostle John introduces Christ not by stating the facts of his birth, but by giving a beautiful theological account of his relationship with God. He introduces and explains the mystery of Jesus Christ being the Word of God. The Word gave life to everything, and it has now come to earth to live as a human among the people God loves. Jesus is the Word, giving light and life to everyone.

JOHN 1:1-34

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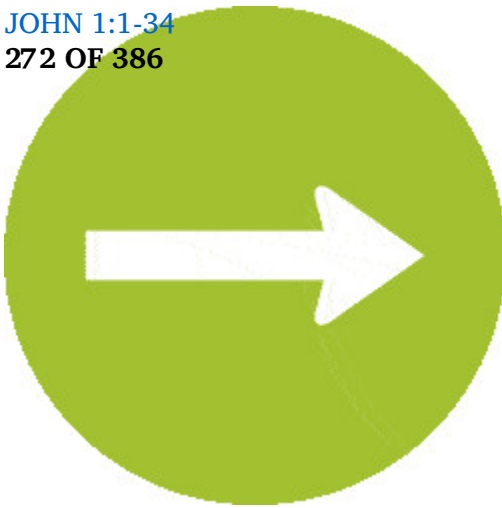

JOHN 1:1-34

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OBSERVATION POINT

Many Jews were stuck in a certain way of thinking. They wanted to force Jesus into their own preconceptions. For hundreds of years they had believed that the Messiah would bring political redemption as well as spiritual leadership to Israel. Many couldn't let go of their traditions to embrace the reality that Jesus was the Messiah. Their stubbornness made them miss the joys of seeing God's promise fulfilled and of having a relationship with the Son of God.

EXPLORATION POINT

Because Jesus is the Word and sent from the Father, he is fully divine and yet fully human. This concept is foundational to the Christian understanding of who Jesus is. He needed to be fully human to represent us. He needed to be fully divine in order to forgive our sins. Because he is both, he restores our relationship with God. Understanding this great mystery comes through faith. But it is important to know that Jesus was real—a real human who was rooted in a real time and a real place.

NEXT STOP

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD

CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

John lives a solitary life in the wilderness before he begins his ministry as a prophet. He calls the people to repent of their sins and turn back to God, just as the Old Testament prophets had done for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah long ago. He announces that the Lord is coming soon.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

John wore clothes made from coarse camel hair gathered around his waist with a leather belt. He survived by eating locusts and wild honey. His clothes were reminiscent of the garments that the prophet Elijah wore (2 Kings 1:8), and his practice of baptizing his followers may have originated with Old Testament purification rites (Leviticus 8:6).

EXPLORATION POINT

John's preaching and call to repentance prepared the hearts and minds of the Jews to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Many Jews

relied on their traditions and ancestry to save them. They needed time to change their thinking and prepare themselves for the way of salvation. Today the Holy Spirit does this preparatory work, opening people's hearts and minds to receive faith and to believe in Jesus and his holy Word.

NEXT STOP

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

In the big story, God spoke through the prophets, sometimes revealing details about the coming King of the Jews. In the birth of Jesus, many of those prophecies were fulfilled. Now, after living in a small town and working at Joseph's trade for about thirty years, the King steps out into the world to begin the work he has been sent from God to do. Jesus is ready to preach, teach, heal, and declare the good news—God is present with his people!

MATT 3:13-17

[illegible]

OBSERVATION POINT

At Jesus' baptism all three persons of the Trinity were actively present: the Father (the voice from heaven), the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit (the descending dove). The Christian doctrine of the Trinity declares that God is one essence but at the same time is three persons. This great mystery of the faith is worth thinking about deeply, even if we can't fully understand it. The eternal unity of God in loving relationship with himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a beautiful image to ponder.

EXPLORATION POINT

In his usual humble way, Jesus sought the appropriate sanction before beginning his ministry. He went to John the Baptist, a well-known preacher of that time, to be baptized. Jesus' approval for ministry came not from John but from God the Father and the Holy Spirit. He was now ready and ordained for his life's calling to minister God's love to his people, and to tell them that God's promise to restore his Kingdom was being fulfilled.

NEXT STOP

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

The glorious experience of witnessing the dove and the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism is quickly over. After this great event, Jesus and John part ways. John continues his prophetic ministry of calling people to repentance and pointing them toward the Lamb of God. Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the Judean wilderness for a time of testing.

READ:

LUKE 4:1-13

OBSERVATION POINT

Jesus' temptation began after he had been in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. Satan tested him first in the wilderness; then in Jerusalem, miles to the west; and finally on a mountain near Jericho that was roughly ten miles northeast of Jerusalem. The mountain from which Satan and Jesus could see "all the kingdoms of the world" might be Mount Quarantania, a steep wall of rock 1,500 feet above the plain.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus' character was being tested during his time in the wilderness.

Satan tried his best to lure Jesus into sin by tempting him to submit to Satan's will instead of God's will. Jesus rejected the traditional perks of leadership—power, influence, and conquest—in favor of the nontraditional role of being a servant-leader. Jesus could not sin, but he had to endure the devil's power and taunting.

NEXT STOP

THE WEDDING AT CANA

THE WEDDING AT CANA

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

THE WEDDING AT CANA

Shortly after the start of his ministry, Jesus and his disciples accompany his mother to a wedding celebration in the Galilean village of Cana. While the celebration is still in full swing, Mary approaches Jesus with the news that the supply of wine has already

been completely depleted. Although most people at the wedding don't realize what is happening, Jesus begins to reveal his life-giving power by turning water into wine.

JOHN 2:1-11

OBSERVATION POINT

In Roman times, the master of ceremonies at a feast may not have been a party guest but a hired servant. He was responsible for a variety of tasks to ensure the celebration's success. He supervised the other servants, maintained liveliness among the guests while preserving order, arranged the proper guest seating, tasted the wine, and controlled the amount of wine served. By resupplying the wine without the other guests' knowledge, Jesus saved him from embarrassment.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus performed his first miracle reluctantly and privately—only the servants knew what happened—but it clearly displayed God's

presence and power in him. This miracle was a sign that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah who would bring forth a Kingdom whose "mountains will drip with sweet wine" (Joel 3:18). As with all of Jesus' miracles, this one displayed God's glory and character to all observers.

NEXT STOP

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE WEDDING AT CANA

THE WEDDING AT CANA

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

After the wedding celebration, Jesus travels to Jerusalem. He joins thousands of other pilgrims from Galilee who are heading south to the Holy City to celebrate the Jewish festival of Passover. News of Jesus' miracles spreads, and people start believing in him. While

Jesus is in the city, Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader, approaches him after dark to speak with him.

JOHN 3:1-21

OBSERVATION POINT

Nicodemus belonged to an influential group of religious leaders called Pharisees. This Jewish group was extremely strict about following the rules for living as a pious Jew, which they drew not only from the law of Moses but also from oral traditions gathered over the centuries. The Pharisees in general did not approve of Jesus because they saw him as lenient about observing the law. Nicodemus met Jesus secretly because he feared the disapproval of other Pharisees.

EXPLORATION POINT

Nicodemus did not understand that Jesus' talk of being born again referred to a spiritual, not a physical, rebirth. Jesus used the analogy of wind to describe the work of the Spirit: You cannot see the Spirit; you can only see the effects of its work. Born-again Christians will still battle sin, but if we yield to the Spirit, his gifts will be obvious in our lives.

NEXT STOP

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

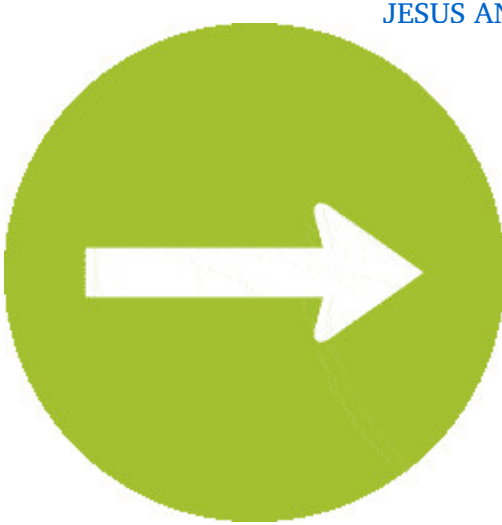
JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

JESUS AND NICODEMUS



JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

After leaving Jerusalem, Jesus heads north to Galilee, traveling directly through the region of Samaria. Usually the Jews took a much longer route to avoid this area, often by crossing the Jordan River to travel on a road to the east. But Jesus is not prejudiced. He takes the shorter route and even stops to rest and speak to a woman at Jacob's well.

JOHN 4:1-54

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JOHN 4:4-42

150 OF 215

OBSERVATION POINT

People in ancient Israel made clear distinctions between “dead” water—standing water that was stored in cisterns from winter rains—and “living” water, which came from streams, rivers, springs, and fresh rain. Jesus used a common term—“living water”—and filled it with special meaning. He offered more than high-quality well water—he offered the Holy Spirit, who would quench spiritual thirst and give eternal life.

EXPLORATION POINT

The response to Jesus’ announcement, “I AM the Messiah,” was astounding. The villagers listened to this outcast woman’s news and came streaming out of their homes to see Jesus. Many believed that the Messiah had come and that he was in the village with them! What a contrast to the skeptical Jews in Jerusalem who were unable to believe that the long-promised Messiah had finally come to save them.

NEXT STOP

FOUR FISHERMEN FOLLOW JESUS

FOUR FISHERMEN FOLLOW JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

FOUR FISHERMEN

FOLLOW JESUS

Shortly after John the Baptist is arrested, Jesus moves his ministry hub from Nazareth to the town of Capernaum. Although he travels often and has no permanent home, Jesus spends a good deal of time in this busy town on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. While there,

he spends time with some local fishermen whose lives are about to be changed forever. Peter is one of those men.

LUKE 5:1-11, 27-32

OBSERVATION POINT

Fishing was a common trade for someone living near the Sea of Galilee. Fishermen usually fished at night from small wooden boats. In the morning they were busy drying, salting, and packing the fish for sale; and they would clean, repair, and hang up their large nets to dry in preparation for the next fishing excursion. Fish met the food requirements of Jewish law, but much of what was caught in the Sea of Galilee was exported rather than eaten locally.

EXPLORATION POINT

Following Jesus came at a cost. Peter himself was a working fisherman, yet he hauled up his boat and put down his nets to give his attention to this amazing teacher. For the twelve men closest to Jesus, discipleship required them to sacrifice their careers and their families. They left their homes and followed Jesus all over the countryside and into Jerusalem. They were now completely focused on learning from Jesus—a very different kind of life. Would we be willing to make radical lifestyle changes in order to follow Jesus?

NEXT STOP

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

FOUR FISHERMEN FOLLOW JESUS

FOUR FISHERMEN FOLLOW JESUS

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

Jesus quickly becomes quite famous in Capernaum. Word gets around that he is in town, and soon a huge group fills the house

where he is preaching. Several men arrive with their paralyzed friend, desperate to get Jesus' attention because they are sure that he will heal their friend if given the chance. They creatively find a way to reach Jesus in the overly crowded house.

MARK 2:1–12

OBSERVATION POINT

Homes in Galilee and the surrounding areas had flat rooftops, often accessible by an exterior staircase. These roofs provided shade and shelter from the elements, but they were also used as an extension of the living space or for storage and drying items. The roof would have been flat, constructed of layers of mud, thatch, and branches. By digging through the various layers, the men created an opening in the roof to gain access to the room below.

EXPLORATION POINT

The people crowded into the house knew of Jesus' ability to heal the sick and cast out demons. But this time they were in for an additional surprise. This time Jesus took care of the man's greatest need—forgiveness. The teachers of religious law silently objected. Only God can forgive sins; Jesus' claim to forgive this man's sins was an implicit claim of divinity. The teachers were shocked, but it was true—Jesus was divine, he was the Son of God.

NEXT STOP

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The big story culminates in the life of Jesus. The Messiah the Jews have been waiting for walks and talks among the common people. He chooses disciples, faces the devil in the wilderness, and performs miracles. And when he preaches, people pour out of their towns and come to hear him. Jesus' preaching is full of God's wisdom. Now he presents his most famous sermon with images of common objects and everyday events. Large crowds gather from all over the region to experience Jesus' healing touch and to hear him speak.

READ:

MATT 5:1-16, 38-48

OBSERVATION POINT

The nine opening statements that begin with “God blesses” are called the Beatitudes. The word “beatitude” is taken from the Latin word *beatus*, meaning “blessed” or “fortunate.” The rhetorical device of giving a blessing as encouragement was common in Greek and Jewish literature of the first century. Although the sermon’s structure would have been familiar to the disciples, its message challenged their long-standing attitudes and values.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus’ sermon advocates new values for his followers, and his words

of two thousand years ago are as relevant today as they were then. Although his standards for ethical and moral living are very high, we are not expected to achieve them on our own. When we are filled with God's powerful Spirit, we will be able to cultivate these Christ-like characteristics and further God's Kingdom.

NEXT STOP

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

JESUS CALMS THE STORM
TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER AND FASTING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER AND FASTING

Jesus' most famous sermon covers many topics. He speaks challenging words to his disciples and to the crowds from surrounding towns about topics as wide-ranging as hypocrisy, prayer, fasting, money, and worry. His teaching on the subject of prayer is clear and succinct. He even provides an example of prayer that continues to be recited by Christians around the world today.

READ:

MATT 6:1-34

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OBSERVATION POINT

Many Jews of this time prayed regularly at 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., frequently in public. Some even made sure they put on a show by praying out in the street to display how pious they were. Additionally, many of these people would ramble on for a long time, repeating a name or a phrase as though it were magical. Jesus warned against this kind of hypocrisy, stressing sincerity over showing off or magical thinking.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus' prayer in verses 9-13 is a gift from God, presented to all

believers by his Son. The opening phrase clearly indicates that God is our Father. We are blessed with that intimate relationship because of our relationship with Christ, the Son. This passage serves as a simple and clear example of a quality prayer that we can easily follow.

NEXT STOP

JESUS' TEACHINGS ON GOD'S KINGDOM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

TEACHING ABOUT PRAYER AND FASTING

JESUS' TEACHINGS ON GOD'S KINGDOM

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has been talking about God's Kingdom. In the Beatitudes, he tells us what kind of people will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, and in his model prayer he teaches us to ask for God's Kingdom to come. Now he instructs his disciples in proper behavior for servants of God. As Jesus concludes his sermon, he also indirectly provides information about the characteristics of God's Kingdom and how a person enters into it.

MATT 7:1-29

OBSERVATION POINT

Jesus preached differently than the Jewish leaders who regularly spoke in the synagogues. Those teachers relied heavily on the authority of earlier teachers, often quoting rabbis and Jewish leaders from earlier generations. Jesus' material was obviously original and authentic, infused with divine wisdom. The crowds were in awe. They recognized the uniqueness and authority of Jesus' presentation and content.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus warned against false prophets who appear to be followers of the faith. These prophets cause problems because their evil intentions mislead "the sheep" or destroy them. The way to tell true prophets from false ones is by paying careful attention to what they do and say. Their behavior should be pleasing to God, and nothing they say should contradict God's holy Word.

NEXT STOP

JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS' TEACHINGS ON GOD'S KINGDOM

JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES

One of Jesus' favorite methods for revealing the secrets of God's Kingdom to his followers is by telling stories called parables. He uses various illustrations from everyday life to communicate spiritual truths to this diverse audience. Jesus refers to farmers, fishermen, and merchants as he draws ideas from their occupations. Not everyone understands what he's teaching, and sometimes even his closest followers need Jesus to explain the meaning of his parables.

READ: Matthew 13:1-58

OBSERVATION POINT

Indirect teaching using illustrations from everyday life is a more gentle method of instruction than direct, fact-based discourse. Memorable stories are also easier to reflect on later; the images help to make abstract concepts more accessible. The meaning of Christ's parables, however, was not clear to everyone. Jesus said that understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven comes from God, not from our own intelligence, ability, or willpower.

EXPLORATION POINT

The parables of Jesus are memorable and impactful, but we need to be careful when attempting to extract meaning from them. Jesus himself explained many of the parables to his disciples, and we should pay close attention to these explanations when we interpret what Jesus is teaching us through his other parables. Look for one central point; don't try to find significance under every rock!

NEXT STOP

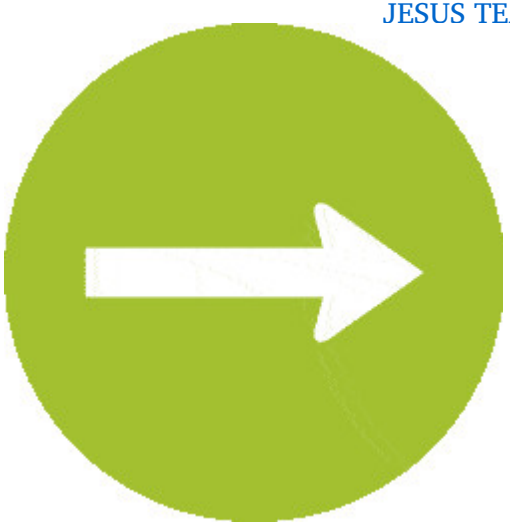
JESUS CALMS THE STORM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES



JESUS CALMS THE STORM

After a long day of preaching, Jesus and his disciples get into a boat to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus, exhausted, falls asleep while his disciples navigate the waters to reach the region of the Gerasenes on the southeast side of the lake.

MARK 4:35-41

OBSERVATION POINT

In 1986, a fishing boat dating back to the first century was discovered buried in the mud on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It measured about 27 feet long, 7.5 feet wide, and 3.9 feet deep. It had an elevated stern and could have accommodated up to fifteen people. It's likely that the boat Jesus and his disciples used in this story was similar.

EXPLORATION POINT

Severe storms can be terrifying while on land, but even more so out on the water. The disciples' fear was a typical human reaction to a life-threatening moment. Although they believed Jesus was the Messiah, they still didn't understand that the scope of his power included control over nature. This story proves Christ's divinity. Only the Creator of the world can control the powers of nature.

NEXT STOP

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

Jesus and his disciples make their way safely across the Sea of Galilee in spite of the sudden, violent storm. The next morning they arrive in the region of the Gerasenes. After beaching the boat and coming ashore, Jesus immediately has the opportunity to heal a man and transform his life.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

In Jesus' time, almost everyone believed that evil spirits could possess a person and cause physical and mental distress. The man in this story is an extreme case, afflicted by many demons. He suffered terribly; he was an outcast from society who had lived a torturous existence. The host of demons did not deter Jesus; he had compassion on this man.

EXPLORATION POINT

Evil spirits were no match for Jesus. He had confronted and defeated Satan, the ruler of demons, during his wilderness

temptation. During his ministry Jesus demonstrated his divine power over sickness, death, nature, and demonic forces. He is the creator and controller of all powers in heaven and on earth. Nothing can harm us without his permission. Nothing will ever separate us from him.

NEXT STOP

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND
JESUS HEALS IN RESPONSE TO FAITH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

JESUS HEALS IN RESPONSE TO FAITH

Jesus continues to teach with authority and heal the sick with compassion. News of his amazing abilities spreads throughout Galilee. Droves of people come to him believing he can help them, including people as diverse as a prominent Jewish leader and a chronically ill woman from the fringes of society.

MATT 9:14-34

OBSERVATION POINT

We learn from Mark and Luke that the leader of the synagogue was named Jairus. The synagogue leader was not a priest but a person appointed from the community to ensure that the local house of worship would be effective and influential in that town. Jairus was a highly respected and beloved man in the area.

EXPLORATION POINT

The woman's chronic bleeding was a tremendous burden for her. She would have been physically weak, and because she was considered ceremonially unclean, she was socially and religiously isolated. But she believed that if she merely touched the tassels dangling from Jesus' robe, she would be healed! The faith she showed in the midst of such dire circumstances can give us strength to face our own trials.

NEXT STOP

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN

JESUS HEALS IN RESPONSE TO FAITH

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

In the big story, God always fulfills his promises to his people. He sent his Son, Jesus, to be with his people, not only to love them and save them but also to teach them more about the Father and his Kingdom. Crowds follow Jesus to hear his words of hope or see his hands heal. They gather in the marketplaces and follow Jesus to remote regions. Excitement fills the air wherever Jesus travels as the crowds expect to witness wonders in his words or actions.

JOHN 6:1-59

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OBSERVATION POINT

The loaves of bread were small flat barley loaves, similar to pita bread. They were inexpensive and most often eaten by the poor. The fish would have been dried and salted; two fish and five loaves would have made an average-sized meal for one person. The baskets for the leftovers were readily available because many Jews carried small baskets containing food for the day so they would not have to eat the food of the Gentiles. Late in the day, those baskets would have been empty.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus had compassion for the crowd. He wanted to take care of them before sending them home. Creating food out of thin air was possible but not his style. He worked with something that was available and made it more than enough. The disciples gathered what they could—five loaves, two fish—and Jesus turned it into enough supper for everyone. The miracle demonstrates that if we are willing to give even a little, Jesus can bless it and make it go a long way.

NEXT STOP

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

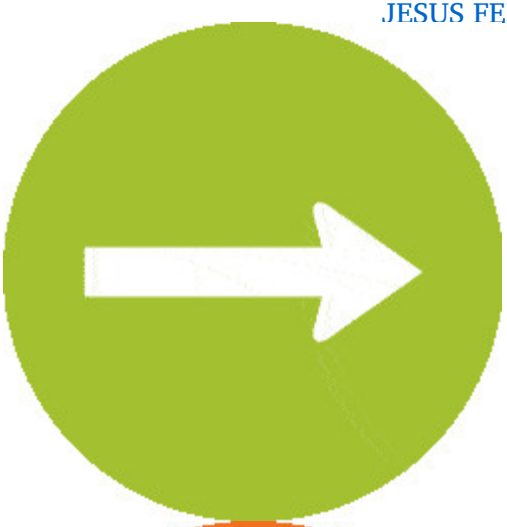
JESUS WALKS ON WATER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND



JESUS WALKS ON WATER

Crowds of people are following Jesus, which is both exciting and exhausting for the popular teacher. After a busy day that included feeding thousands of hungry people in a remote area, Jesus seeks some quiet time and goes off alone to pray. The disciples,

meanwhile, get back into the boat to sail across the lake, with no idea that Jesus will join them unexpectedly on the trip.

MATT 14:22-36

OBSERVATION POINT

Most people in the time of Christ—even some Jews—held the popular view that the spirits of dead people influenced the world of the living for good or evil. One popular belief was that if a ghost was seen in the middle of the night, disaster was imminent.

EXPLORATION POINT

Sometimes it seems like humans are pretty powerful when we consider our intelligence or our accomplishments. Science has increased our knowledge about nature—we can predict treacherous storms—but we don't have the slightest ability to control such forces. Only God can do that. Jesus' ability to walk on the lake rightly led the disciples to worship him.

NEXT STOP

PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

JESUS HEALS A DEAF MAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

JESUS HEALS A DEAF MAN

Shortly after a discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus leaves the regions of Judea and Galilee. Although Jews are heavily concentrated in those two regions, Jesus takes his ministry elsewhere. He goes into Gentile territory to the north, near the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. In this area he ministers to the Gentile people by healing the sick and teaching.

MARK 7:1-37

OBSERVATION POINT

Ephphatha is an Aramaic word meaning “be opened.” Aramaic was the common language of the region during the time of Jesus and was closely connected to Hebrew. Aramaic originated with the Arameans in northern Syria around the ninth century BC. Over time it became the universal language of the ancient Near East. The language continued to be used in various dialects for centuries, until the Arabs conquered the region in the seventh century AD. Jesus probably spoke a dialect of Western Aramaic.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus told people not to talk about him or tell others what he had done because he did not want to attract attention. Massive crowds already gathered when he showed up unannounced in a village or city; he didn’t want people to see him as simply launching a political revolution. But once they met Jesus and witnessed his ability to heal and preach, they were in awe. They could not help but talk about Jesus after they had witnessed what he could do. He was extraordinary!

NEXT STOP

PETER’S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

JESUS HEALS A DEAF MAN

PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

Jesus removes himself far from the teeming crowds who adore the teacher and healer. While traveling through the northern region of Caesarea Philippi, he takes the opportunity to have an important discussion with his disciples. He asks them a question that has great significance. He wants to know what everyone is saying about his identity and, more importantly, who do his disciples think he is? Peter's answer speaks volumes.

READ:

MATT 16:13-28

OBSERVATION POINT

Peter was the spokesperson for and leader of the apostles. The phrase “keys of the Kingdom” refers to the authority of the one holding the keys to open doors. Jesus was indicating that the knowledge about the Kingdom that Peter displayed permitted him to speak with great authority. Peter would later display this authority shortly after Pentecost, when he preached a stunning sermon.

EXPLORATION POINT

Many of Jesus’ followers weren’t yet aware that he was the long-

awaited Messiah. Some of the twelve disciples believed that he was the Messiah, but they didn't necessarily recognize him as God's Son. They were still thinking that the Messiah would lead the charge for Jewish independence from the Romans. Peter's answer was right on. He knew that Jesus was the Messiah, who would save people from sin and death because he was God's Son. The two-part answer was critical.

NEXT STOP

THE TRANSFIGURATION

THE TRANSFIGURATION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

PETER'S DECLARATION ABOUT JESUS

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Not long after Peter states his faith in Jesus, Jesus invites him, along with James and John, to come on a brief journey. The four of them ascend a mountain outside Caesarea Philippi in order to pray.

There they witness an amazing sight that confirms the glory of God and his Son. Jesus has just promised that some of his disciples would see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom, and Peter, James, and John get a glimpse right here.

MATT 17:1-20

OBSERVATION POINT

Jesus' appearance changed on the mountain: His full identity was revealed to his disciples, and they caught a glimpse of his glory. Moses and Elijah, two Old Testament figures, were witnesses to the transformed Jesus, who fulfilled everything written in the law and the prophets. Moses' presence signified the Old Testament covenant and law, and Elijah's symbolized all the words of the Old Testament prophets who told of the Messiah's coming.

EXPLORATION POINT

At Jesus' baptism, God proclaimed that Jesus was his Son. He identified Jesus as his Son again at the Transfiguration. The three disciples who witnessed this event would later testify that they heard the voice of God identifying Jesus. The disciples witnessed a glorious sight, heard and saw Moses and Elijah, and were alive to tell about it later. If any of them had ever had any doubts about Jesus' identity, they could now be certain that he was indeed God's Son. They had heavenly witnesses and had heard it from God the Father himself!

NEXT STOP

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

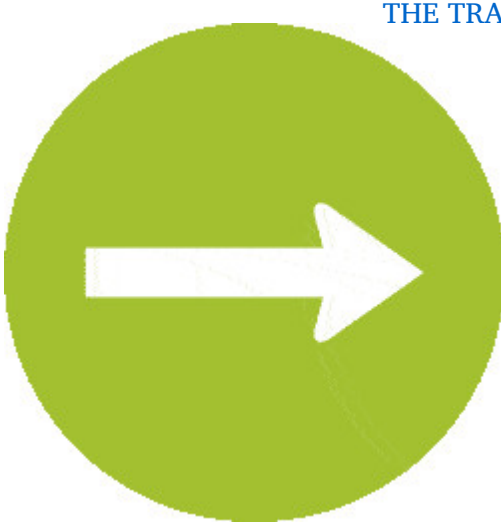
PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE TRANSFIGURATION

THE TRANSFIGURATION



PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Jesus finishes his time in Galilee and starts his journey back to Jerusalem, traveling through Samaria. As he travels he continues to preach and teach. He also sends a large group of disciples out ahead of him to the towns he plans to visit, involving his disciples in spreading the message of the Kingdom of God. Along the way, he seizes the opportunity to tell a story in reply to the question, “Who is my neighbor?”

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

The Jewish priest and the Temple assistant refused to help the wounded man. Because he was bloody or perhaps dead, touching him would make them ceremonially unclean and prevent them from performing their Temple duties. It was the Samaritan who helped, even though Samaritans were shunned and hated by the Jews. Jesus' audience would have been appalled to hear that the Samaritan was the good guy, the hero. The unexpected twist in the story would have made it stick in their minds.

EXPLORATION POINT

Being an expert in Jewish law, Jesus' questioner was asking for a definition of "neighbor." Instead of getting trapped in a war of words, Jesus told a story that clearly indicates that anyone in need is our neighbor. We are expected to drop any prejudices or differences and put our own agendas aside to care for anyone who needs us, regardless of race, religion, or color. If we all take Christ's command to love our neighbors as ourselves seriously, we can change our world.

NEXT STOP

JESUS VISITS MARTHA AND MARY

JESUS VISITS MARTHA AND MARY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

JESUS VISITS MARTHA AND MARY

Jesus and his disciples continue their journey back to Jerusalem. Before arriving in the great city, they make a stop in the small town of Bethany to visit Jesus' close friends Mary and Martha. Mary and Martha's hospitality is welcome, and Jesus and his disciples enjoy some time there, resting. While Jesus is with them, he uses a minor conflict as an opportunity to talk about priorities.

READ:

LUKE 10:38-42

OBSERVATION POINT

Since everyone was in her home, Martha felt responsible for showing hospitality to Jesus and his disciples. She generously opened her home to Jesus whenever he came that way. Preparing a meal for the group was a major undertaking, and Martha cannot be faulted for attending to her guests. Her mistake was that she was overly concerned about the preparations, rather than seizing the opportunity to learn from Jesus.

EXPLORATION POINT

Students of rabbis sat attentively at their teachers' feet to listen

closely to what they said. In Jewish culture at the time, women were not usually students of rabbis, so Mary's posture was highly unorthodox. Martha, on the other hand, played the traditional role of caring for the physical needs of her guests to ensure their comfort. Regardless of cultural norms, Jesus wanted women to be instructed in the Good News so they could be his disciples and share that news with others.

NEXT STOP

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND
TEACHING ABOUT MONEY AND POSSESSIONS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS VISITS MARTHA AND MARY

TEACHING ABOUT MONEY AND POSSESSIONS

Crowds gather around Jesus wherever he goes. With compassion, he sees their needs and seeks to care for them. He cares for their physical needs by healing their diseases and casting out oppressive demons. He cares for their spiritual needs both by preaching the Good News to them and by instructing them on how to live. Here, Jesus gives his disciples some timeless wisdom concerning money and possessions.

LUKE 12:1-59

OBSERVATION POINT

Jesus' message here is full of references to birds and flowers. He mentions ravens in verse 24 because the Jews classified them as unclean (Leviticus 11:15). Ravens had no status at all; they were the lowlifes of the avian world. Yet God cares for and feeds even them. Lilies were extremely common, the equivalent of wildflowers; yet God dresses them more magnificently than the wealthiest king in Jewish history—King Solomon.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus' statement "Sell your possessions and give to those in need" is a radical teaching about how we should handle our wealth. It is not wrong to be wealthy; wealth is a gift from God. But it is wrong to be obsessed with gaining more and holding on to it for selfish reasons. Everything we have is a gift from God and should be used to serve him and his people.

NEXT STOP

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

JESUS VISITS MARTHA AND MARY

TEACHING ABOUT MONEY AND POSSESSIONS

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

God created people in his own image in order to have a relationship with them. One of the purposes of the big story is God's revealing himself to his people, a little at a time. The greatest revelation is through Jesus. During his ministry, Jesus performs many miracles, including miraculous healings. The primary purpose of these miracles is to reveal that Jesus is the divine Son of God. Miracles aren't magic; rather, they demonstrate the power of the Almighty God working through the Son. Jesus' miraculous healing of a blind man combined a significant spiritual teaching with physical reality.

JOHN 9:1-41

OBSERVATION POINT

Roman writers and Jewish rabbis of this time period considered saliva an effective medicinal treatment. Jesus was more than capable of healing the man's blindness without the saliva-and-mud mixture, but he incorporated the use of the simple materials on hand. One possible explanation for this is that Jesus used dirt to heal this man as a reminder that God originally created humans from the dust. In the end the man's spiritual sight increased as his physical sight was restored.

EXPLORATION POINT

We cannot assume that a handicap or illness is punishment from God. This belief was common in Jesus' day and has persisted to some extent in modern times. The complaint "What did I do to deserve this?" is similar to the question the disciples asked in verse 2. Sometimes innocent people suffer because we live in a sinful world. If God relieved his followers of all suffering, some would become Christians just for the guarantee of comfort, convenience, and opportunity, not out of love for and obedience to God. Jesus provides us with a new perspective from which to view our difficulties.

NEXT STOP

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER
THE PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP, LOST COIN, AND LOST SON

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP

Jesus stays in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Dedication (Hanukkah), a Jewish festival that originated during the time between the Old and New Testaments. While in Jerusalem, he continues to teach the crowds. He often uses familiar images to illustrate deeper truths about his identity. Sometimes his teaching creates controversy and division among the Jews. But he always makes an impression.

OBSERVATION POINT

Sheep were important domesticated animals in this society. They were used as sacrifices, and they also provided milk, meat, fat, wool, hides, and horns for various uses. Many people tended sheep on a part-time or full-time basis. Good shepherds cared for their sheep and could account for each one in the flock. Shepherds were willing to sacrifice their own comfort, but they were never expected to die for their sheep.

EXPLORATION POINT

In the Psalms, God was called "Shepherd" (Psalms 23, 80). Throughout the Old Testament, Israel's leaders and kings were referred to as shepherds. Good leaders loved and cared for God's people and kept them focused on God and his Word. Bad leaders abandoned the people when tough times came, or else they led the people away from God and forgot God's Word.

NEXT STOP

THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP

THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE

Jesus moves around the city of Jerusalem, encountering many different groups of people and engaging with them. He even eats at the home of a prominent Pharisee. Although he is aware of the Pharisees' religious customs, he does not let them get in the way of showing compassion to all sinners. He is not afraid of offending sensibilities or scaring people off with the radical nature of his message; he responds with love and truth in every circumstance. When a large crowd gathers around him, he addresses them with a teaching about costly discipleship.

READ:

LUKE 14:1-35

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OBSERVATION POINT

Jesus' popularity was at an all-time high. He healed sick people, he told entertaining and enlightening stories, and he accepted you as you were. He could cast out demons and even bring someone back to life! There was no reason not to be attracted to this highly unusual teacher. It might have seemed easy to be a disciple, but that was all about to change. Jesus wanted to be sure that his disciples knew the cost of being true to him.

EXPLORATION POINT

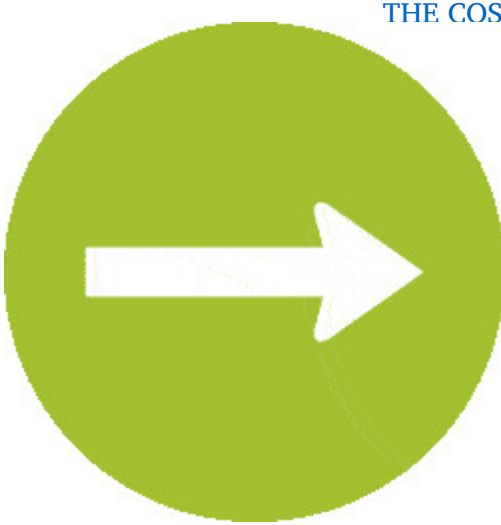
Jesus openly offered the Good News to anyone who would hear—Pharisees and social outcasts, Jews and Gentiles. It was completely free, but it came at a price. Believing in and following Jesus requires the discipline to put him first in every aspect of life. Devotion to him must come before our love for anyone or anything else, including our own lives. Jesus doesn't always mandate that we give up everything, but we must be willing to do so if following him requires it.

NEXT STOP
THE PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP, LOST COIN, AND LOST SON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE



THE PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP, LOST COIN, AND LOST SON

Jesus welcomes anyone and everyone to stop and listen to his preaching. He never turns anyone away. Along with religious leaders and upstanding citizens, he welcomes prostitutes, shady tax collectors, and individuals who have been classified as unacceptable. Those whom society rejects, Jesus seeks out. When some religious leaders comment on his undiscriminating taste in company, Jesus tells three stories that reveal God's heart for anyone who is lost.

LUKE 15:1-32

OBSERVATION POINT

The lost-son story is full of social taboos. Sons never insulted their fathers by asking for their inheritance while their fathers were still alive. To squander the family inheritance among Gentiles was unspeakable, and to be reduced to living with pigs was the lowest possible existence for a Jew. The father running out to meet his son was unimaginable; typically, an older Jewish man would never behave in such an undignified way. The extreme actions of the story's characters would have shocked Jesus' audience yet also grabbed their attention.

EXPLORATION POINT

These stories clearly emphasize that God's salvation is not just for insiders—it's for all the lost people of the world, including those who are in danger, who are considered useless, who are outcasts. Christ came to save the lost souls of the world. He rejoices when each one of them has been found and brought back within the fold, the purse, the family. No one is ever too far gone for God. God will continue to seek out the lost, call them back to himself, and celebrate their return.

NEXT STOP

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS
TEN HEALED OF LEPROSY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP, LOST COIN, AND LOST SON

TEN HEALED OF LEPROSY

Jesus continues ministering to people throughout the areas of Galilee and Samaria even though he knows his final destination is in Jerusalem. As he enters a village close to Samaria, he hears the cries of ten men who are suffering with leprosy. They respectfully

keep their distance from Jesus as required by law, but in desperation they call out to the one who they believe can heal them.

LUKE 17:1-19

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OBSERVATION POINT

The skin disease these men had is called leprosy, but it was probably a different disease than modern-day leprosy (Hansen's disease). This ailment was thought to be an awful punishment from God that caused the person to be an outcast from social and religious communities. The afflicted were required to keep their distance from people and towns, to cry out, "Unclean," and to cover their faces. They could not formally greet anyone since the cultural custom was to greet others by embracing them.

EXPLORATION POINT

This episode shows that God can do more than we can ask or imagine. One grateful man returned to thank Jesus for physically healing him. But then Jesus did so much more for him—he healed the man spiritually. The physical healing was apparent on an outward level, restoring this man to a new life on earth; but he was also spiritually healed, which restored his soul to life as well.

NEXT STOP

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP, LOST COIN, AND LOST SON

TEN HEALED OF LEPROSY

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Jesus crosses to the east side of the Jordan River, staying at a place near where John the Baptist had conducted his ministry. Many people come to see Jesus there and believe in him. During his stay, he hears that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, is sick. He

waits two days before traveling back to Bethany, where he will dramatically display the power of God.

JOHN 11:1-44

OBSERVATION POINT

According to a popular Jewish belief, the spirit of a person lingered near the burial site for three days hoping to be restored to the body. On the fourth day, the spirit would depart. Friends and relatives visited the burial site for the first three days in order to be close to the deceased person's soul. Therefore, it was very significant that Jesus didn't arrive until the fourth day after Lazarus was in the tomb. There could be no doubt that God was powerfully at work.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus knew that his friend Lazarus had been dead for days, so he chose to display God's glory through a miracle. Jesus had the power to bring people back to life. He had done it before (Matthew 9:23-25), but this was the first time the person had been buried and in a tomb for three full days. Divine authority can overcome any earthly circumstance. Nothing is beyond the power of God.

NEXT STOP

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

During his travels around Jerusalem, Jesus is approached by a group of parents with many children. They eagerly present their children to this great rabbi so that he can bless them. The disciples think that Jesus should not be bothered by these little ones, but Jesus had a different attitude. He uses this situation to teach his disciples about the kind of faith he wants his followers to have.

MARK 10:13-21

OBSERVATION POINT

We don't know how many children came to Jesus or what their ages were. The Greek word *paidia*, translated as "children," can refer to a child ranging in age from eight days to around twelve years. In any case, it was customary for rabbis to bless children and pray for them. Laying hands on them was part of the blessing ritual begun early in the Old Testament. The children's fathers and mothers were almost certainly present at this event.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus taught that we should have childlike characteristics in order to belong to the Kingdom. Children are very dependent on others for care. They are humble and accepting and think simply. This group of children immediately had a warm relationship with Jesus, trusting that he had their best interests in mind. It's a good reminder for us that entrance into God's Kingdom is wide open if we keep it simple.

NEXT STOP

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

On his final journey to Jerusalem, Jesus travels through the ancient city of Jericho. He knows that he is only days away from the end of his life on earth, but he continues to fulfill his mission of proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven wherever he goes. He still shows great compassion for others, without regard for the suffering he will face soon. On this occasion he zeroes in on a little man named Zacchaeus, who is ostracized and hated by his fellow Jews.

READ:

LUKE 19:1-10

OBSERVATION POINT

Tax collectors were generally disliked throughout the Roman world. But the Jews especially hated them because they mingled with Gentiles and worked for Rome. They were hired to collect taxes for the government and had to be sure to pass on the required amount of money to the Romans, but they were allowed to collect a little more for themselves to make a profit. Many men abused the system to become very wealthy. They lived on the fringes of Jewish society since no one wanted to associate with them.

EXPLORATION POINT

God sent his Son into the world to save sinners. Even when Jesus knew he was facing the worst week of his life, he continued to be faithful to his ministry. He sought out and cared for people who needed a way out of their sinful lives. Jesus stayed focused on his purpose in life even when others shook their heads in disbelief as he broke the social taboos of the day. Saving sinners was his focus and his passion; nothing was going to stop him from doing his Father's work.

NEXT STOP

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

Each day Jesus travels closer to Jerusalem. Passover is only a few days away, so he and his disciples encounter thousands of pilgrims who are journeying to the Holy City for the Jewish celebration. Jesus stops in Bethany at the home of his close friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Their home will be his headquarters during the week of Passover. His friends' gracious hospitality includes a banquet to honor him.

JOHN 12:1-19

OBSERVATION POINT

Mary's actions were dramatic. She poured an expensive perfume on Jesus that cost as much as a year's wages. Nard, a fragrant oil taken from the stems and roots of herbs, was imported from what would become Nepal. It was kept in an alabaster jar or box until a very special occasion. Mary then dried Jesus' feet with her loose long hair, an extravagant gesture that startled the disciples. Jewish women only let their hair down in front of their husbands, never in public.

EXPLORATION POINT

While the disciples saw Mary breaking several social taboos, only Jesus saw the love that motivated Mary to stay focused on her Master and Lord. She showered him with love in the way she knew best. Jesus did not judge her actions, although the other men in the room did. He knew her motivation was sincere and her love for him was pure. Mary gave her most precious possession to honor Jesus. She is a shining example for us of how to give thanks to the One who has given us so much.

NEXT STOP

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

A week before his crucifixion, Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey. The people interpret this as a symbol of his kingly status, and they hail him as King with great fanfare. They seem to be ready to recognize Jesus as the Messiah who was promised in the Old Testament. Their shouts echo the words of Psalm 118—but the joyful cheering won't last long.

READ:

MATT 21:1-11

OBSERVATION POINT

By riding into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, Jesus was fulfilling a clear messianic prophecy from the book of Zechariah. In doing so, he identified himself as the long-awaited Messiah. Some of the people along the road might have recognized this, but many were probably just caught up in the excitement of the crowd. Jesus, the famous prophet from Galilee, had arrived for the Passover celebrations!

EXPLORATION POINT

The crowds in Jerusalem celebrated Jesus' arrival with real

excitement, laying down their coats and palm branches to acclaim him as King. But their enthusiasm for him soon evaporated. Just because some people consider Jesus a great teacher or get excited about what he might be able to do for them doesn't mean they are truly Christians. Being a follower of Jesus goes beyond the initial excitement. It requires a lifelong commitment that permeates every aspect of your life.

NEXT STOP

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

PARABLE OF THE THREE SERVANTS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

PARABLE OF THE THREE SERVANTS

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the Kingdom of Heaven through parables. There are many things that Jesus wants his disciples to understand about living faithfully as ambassadors for the Kingdom while they wait for his return. It is the week before Jesus' crucifixion, and he teaches them with urgency.

MATT 25:14-30

OBSERVATION POINT

The word translated here as “bags of silver” has traditionally been transliterated as “talents.” A talent was originally a unit of weight; in Roman times it was equivalent to about seventy-five pounds. When measuring silver, a talent represented a huge sum of money, roughly equivalent to twenty years’ labor for an average person. The modern English word “talent,” meaning ability or skill, has its roots in this parable.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus expects his followers to be faithful to the tasks they have been given, until he comes again. While we wait, we must be diligent in using all the resources he has given us—time, abilities, and money—as best we can. Those who fail to use what the Master has given them will be judged for their failure to build the Kingdom with their gifts.

NEXT STOP

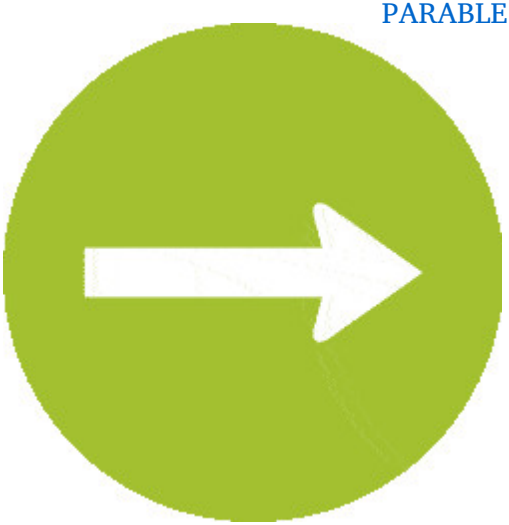
JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES’ FEET

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

PARABLE OF THE THREE SERVANTS



JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

The city of Jerusalem overflows with Jewish pilgrims from all over the region. Inns and homes are packed with guests. Tents fill the areas outside the city to accommodate the influx of over 150,000 visitors. Finding a gathering place is difficult, but Jesus has a precise plan. On Thursday evening, Jesus gathers his disciples in an upper room for their Passover meal. He begins the evening in a very unexpected way, showing his disciples once again that he is no ordinary rabbi.

JOHN 13:1-38

OBSERVATION POINT

In Greek and Jewish culture it was necessary to wash one's feet often, since everyone wore open sandals without socks and the streets were dirty. A good host showed honor and hospitality by providing a servant to wash the feet of his guests when they came in from the dusty streets. This was a lowly and humbling task, assigned only to a slave. Foot washing was part of the daily routine in every household. A wife would sometimes wash her husband's feet, and children might wash their parents' feet; but most often each individual did it themselves.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus knew that showing his disciples how they had to serve others would make a deeper impression than words alone could. Jesus set an example: If we believe and follow him, we must serve and love one another as he did during his time on earth. We will never be greater than Christ, our Teacher and Lord, and yet he humbled himself and took on the role of a lowly servant. His gesture provides us with an example of Christian leadership. We who serve Christ must also serve one another.

NEXT STOP

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

God's revelation of himself to humans through Jesus the Son continues in the big story. As his ministry progresses, Jesus reveals more and more about God through his actions and words. Jesus performs miracles to demonstrate God's power, and he relates to people in ways that clearly display God's love. His disciples, however, do not fully grasp the fact that Jesus is in fact God himself, the second person of the Trinity. In this farewell speech, Jesus clearly and emphatically states this astonishing fact: Anyone who has seen him has seen the Father.

READ:

JOHN 14:1-31

OBSERVATION POINT

Jesus' statement that he was one with the Father (10:30) declared that he, a human, was also God. This would have rattled his Jewish audience, who out of respect never allowed themselves even to pronounce God's name. To hear that Jesus, obviously a human being, claimed to be God would have been outrageous! Jesus' claim is one big reason why some people have opposed Christianity throughout history. The incarnation of God is not feasible to them. The early Christian church wrestled with how to understand this mystery for over four hundred years.

EXPLORATION POINT

Since the beginning of time, God has been revealing himself to his people little by little. Throughout the Old Testament he showed himself to his people in visions, dreams, miracles, angelic sightings, and visible manifestations of his glory at the Tabernacle and the Temple. When the time was right, he came to earth as a human to openly reveal himself to his creation, to walk with and teach his people, and to build an intimate relationship with them. He had become what he had long ago promised through the prophets: Immanuel, “God with us.”

NEXT STOP

THE DEATH OF JESUS

THE LAST SUPPER

THE LAST SUPPER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

THE LAST SUPPER

Jesus gathers with his disciples around a table to eat the Passover meal. During supper he shocks some of his disciples with the news that one from among their group will betray him, though they all deny that they would ever do such a thing. He also startles them by offering them some bread and wine with a message about his body and blood that they don't quite understand.

MATT 26:17-30

OBSERVATION POINT

The Passover was a special supper commemorating deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Each type of food symbolized an event: The unleavened bread symbolized the hasty departure from Egypt; the bitter herbs represented living in slavery; salt water was a reminder of the tears shed and of the Red Sea crossing; and the roasted lamb was a reminder of the lamb's blood smeared on the doorposts. Wine mixed with water was drunk to celebrate God's blessing recorded in Exodus 6:6-8.

EXPLORATION POINT

During the Last Supper Jesus discussed the new covenant. It replaced the old covenant God had made with his people, signified by the lamb's blood on oorposts, which saved their firstborn from death. Through Christ's blood shed on the cross, the new covenant would free all people from sin and death. The disciples did not fully understand what Jesus was saying. After Jesus' resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they understood more clearly.

NEXT STOP

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LAST SUPPER

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

Following the tradition for celebrating Passover, Jesus and his disciples closed the meal by singing a hymn. The hymn that they sang may have been Psalm 118, or other parts of the Hallel Psalms (Psalms 113–118). *Hallel* is a Hebrew word that means “praise.” It refers to a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to God for his love, faithfulness, and deliverance.

READ:

PS 118:1-29

310 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

The Hallel Psalms were chanted or sung before and after the Passover meal in a private setting. Psalms 113–114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115–118 after the meal. These psalms were called “the Egyptian Hallel” because they were chanted in the Temple while the Passover lambs were slaughtered, recalling the flight from Egypt. The Levites, standing in front of the altar, would chant it verse by verse, and the people would respond by repeating the verse or by shouting hallelujah.

EXPLORATION POINT

God is faithful. In this psalm, the people of Israel are recalling the many times God saved them from their enemies throughout their history. As a community and individually the people recall all the wonderful things God has done. As you read this psalm, try to recall all the things God has done for you; then read the words of Psalm 118:6-7, 17-18, 22-24 again, keeping in mind their great significance for Jesus as he was about to face his trial and death.

NEXT STOP

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE LAST SUPPER

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

After nightfall, Jesus and his disciples leave the house where they celebrated the Passover meal, and they travel outside the city. They cross a brook and head into a garden on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives. There they separate into groups, and Jesus goes off by himself to pray.

READ:

MARK 14:27-52

OBSERVATION POINT

Christ's humanness is evident in this account of his anguish. Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen. Judas would betray him. He would be accused falsely, humiliated, tortured, and killed. While he prayed he was in agony. His suffering was so great that Luke states that his "sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood." Finally, Jesus sought reassurance and comfort from his dearest disciples but found them asleep.

EXPLORATION POINT

Christ's experience in Gethsemane is brimming with anguish,

abandonment, and rejection—the very worst of human feelings. He pushed through the agony and submitted completely to the Father's will. As a human he struggled with reality; as God he knew it was good. Christ models for us how to submit to God's will. We know that no matter what we must face or endure, our Father has a good plan for us.

NEXT STOP

PETER DENIES JESUS

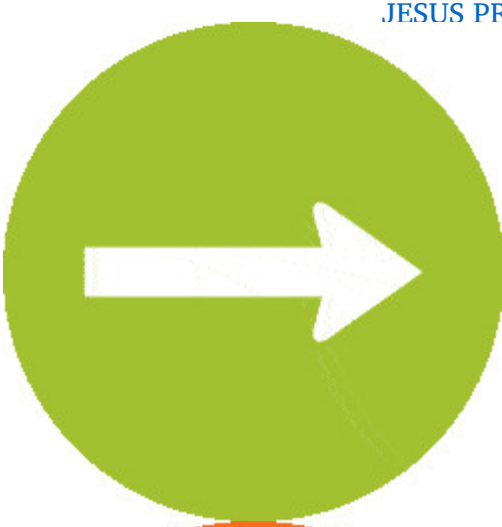
PETER DENIES JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE



PETER DENIES JESUS

Jesus is arrested; the disciples flee from the scene and scatter. Nine go into hiding. Judas has already gone off by himself. John and Peter cautiously follow Jesus and the soldiers at a safe distance all the way into Jerusalem, where Jesus stands trial before the Jewish

leaders at the high priest's home. Peter remains in the courtyard to stay warm by a fire while Jesus is questioned by the high priest.

LUKE 22:54-65

OBSERVATION POINT

The Jewish high council, or Sanhedrin, was a powerful group that had its own armed guards with which to arrest Jesus. A crowd of priests, captains of the guard, and synagogue elders gathered at the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, for a trial. The Sanhedrin gathered to handle "the Jesus issue" even though it was the middle of the night. According to Jewish law, they should have conducted this hearing during the day, but they were afraid that the daytime crowds would create a problem.

EXPLORATION POINT

Peter was curious enough to want to see what happened to Jesus, but he was not bold enough to defend him. In fact, even mild questioning about his being with Jesus set him off. he denied knowing Jesus; he cursed his name and swore an oath that he did not know Jesus. he was deathly afraid of the consequences of admitting that he was one of Jesus' disciples. It's easy for us to judge Peter, but we often behave similarly when we are ashamed of our faith.

NEXT STOP

THE DEATH OF JESUS

THE DEATH OF JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

PETER DENIES JESUS

PETER DENIES JESUS

THE DEATH OF JESUS

The climax of the big story has come. God's plan to bring his people back to himself is about to unfold. After three years of ministry, Jesus knows he is about to give the world the greatest gift of all—himself. His body will be the sacrifice, once and forever, to save people from their sins. He has come to earth as a human in order to be among his people and restore a right relationship with them. His life and ministry has drawn them close and built their understanding and faith in God. But his death begins to reveal his ultimate purpose in becoming human.

MARK 15:1-47

[illegible]

OBSERVATION POINT

Crucifixion was a widespread Roman punishment for military and political offenders, particularly slaves, rebels, and insurrectionists. The sheer cruelty and public spectacle of crucifixion worked as a powerful social deterrent. Victims were flogged and then crucified naked, adding to the humiliation. It was seen as the most painful of possible deaths, involving intense suffering, exposure to weather and insects, and suffocation. The cross consisted of a vertical post in the ground, with a horizontal crossbeam often attached. A person was either affixed to the beams with ropes or, as with Jesus, nails between the bones of the wrists.

EXPLORATION POINT

We can hardly comprehend the agony Christ endured on the cross for us—rejection, mockery, harassment, torture, humiliation, isolation. In addition to the physical and mental anguish, Jesus also suffered the unimaginable pain of taking on our sin. We all have experienced suffering, but Christ's suffering for the entire world was infinitely greater. He knows every aspect of suffering. He has endured it himself. Through his death, Jesus not only secured forgiveness for our sins, he also demonstrated decisively that he shares in our suffering—regardless of what it may be.

NEXT STOP

THE RESURRECTION

THE RESURRECTION

THE RESURRECTION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE DEATH OF JESUS

THE DEATH OF JESUS

THE DEATH OF JESUS

THE RESURRECTION

Three agonizing days pass (Friday evening, all day Saturday, and early Sunday morning). For three days Satan thinks he is victorious. Jesus is dead and out of the way. Then the most spectacular event takes place—Jesus shows up alive! The big story is not over. God's plan ends in victory, not death. Jesus has conquered the powers of death and hell, not just for himself but for everyone! The barrier between God and his people has been shattered; sin is defeated!

READ:

LUKE 24:1-12

OBSERVATION POINT

The four Gospel writers concur that at least one figure appeared in or near Jesus' tomb. Matthew mentions an angel (Matthew 28:2); Mark mentions a young man (Mark 16:5); Luke describes two men in dazzling robes, whereas John refers to them as angels (Luke 24:4; John 20:12). Angels sometimes appeared on earth as male figures in white robes, but the Bible never mentions wings or halos, despite popular modern depictions. One common responsibility of angels was to bring good news.

EXPLORATION POINT

Shortly after Adam and Eve sinned, God graciously promised that he would send someone to crush Satan (Genesis 3:15). That promise was fulfilled in Christ's resurrection. Satan "struck" Jesus with suffering and a torturous death. But the true victory was God's—Jesus was alive! He had conquered death, the powers of hell, and Satan himself. God's plan worked, and he freely shares the victory with all of us.

NEXT STOP

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES
JESUS APPEARS TO OTHERS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE RESURRECTION

JESUS APPEARS TO OTHERS

After his bodily resurrection, Jesus selectively shows himself to groups of believers. He appears first to some women. Later in the day, he appears to two followers walking home along the road to Emmaus. That night he appears to a gathering of his disciples back in Jerusalem. He proves to them that he has a real, living body; he is not a ghost or a bodiless spirit.

LUKE 24:13-53

OBSERVATION POINT

It was not surprising that the disciples did not believe the women's story that the tomb was empty. Although Jesus always thought highly of women and included them in his ministry, the society of the time did not regard women highly at all. Women did not have the right to testify in a court of law—their testimony was not considered trustworthy, so it was logical that the eleven disciples would doubt their story.

EXPLORATION POINT

Although the disciples were still stunned that their Lord had had to suffer and die, Jesus shared an amazing insight with them. He pointed out to them that this was truly God's plan. It occurred just as the prophets hundreds of years earlier had said it would. His death fulfilled the words of the Old Testament prophets from the time of Moses on. The message of the prophets—and the entire Old Testament—points to Jesus.

NEXT STOP

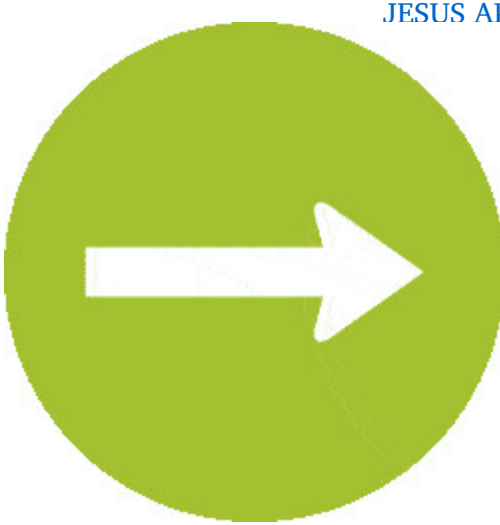
JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE RESURRECTION

JESUS APPEARS TO OTHERS



JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES

After his resurrection, Jesus remains on earth for forty days. We get only a few glimpses from the Gospel writers of what he was doing during this time. Paul tells us that Jesus appeared to over five hundred people after his resurrection, so we know there are more stories that aren't recorded in the Gospels. Before Jesus ascends into heaven, he appears specifically to seven of his disciples on the shores of the Sea of Galilee and shares breakfast on the beach with them.

JOHN 20:19–21:25

OBSERVATION POINT

Fishing on the Sea of Galilee was often most successful before dawn, but the disciples' excursion was a complete failure until Jesus appeared and called out his strange instructions. Although several of the disciples in the boat were seasoned fishermen, Jesus' miracle immediately accomplished what their skill and experience had not. The catch of "153 large fish" was extraordinary and profitable.

EXPLORATION POINT

The story of Peter and Jesus on the beach reassures us that God will forgive and restore us when we fail him. God loves us. He knows that we are weak and continue to sin despite our faith and our desire to follow him. Peter had vehemently denied Jesus three times; he now affirmed three times that he loved Jesus. With the help of the Holy Spirit, he went on to faithfully follow Jesus' commands. Christ calls us to do his work on earth. Through the power of the Spirit we, too, are capable of doing great things!

NEXT STOP

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE RESURRECTION

JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES

JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

After the resurrection, Jesus continues his ministry for another forty days, appearing to his disciples and clarifying all that has happened. Jesus' time on earth is about to end, but the big story continues. Jesus sends the disciples to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the world. Jesus is returning to the Father and the Holy Spirit will come to be with his disciples. But the disciples do not want to lose him. They don't realize that the indwelling Holy Spirit is far more powerful than they can imagine.

ACTS 1:1-26

OBSERVATION POINT

Throughout Israel's history, clouds often indicated the presence of God. A pillar of cloud led the Hebrews out of Egypt and through the wilderness. A cloud appeared on Mount Sinai when God gave Moses the law; it filled the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple. A bright cloud appeared at Jesus' transfiguration, and God spoke from within it. At Jesus' ascension the location (a high mountain), the upward movement, and the cloud all indicated that Jesus was ascending into God's presence in heaven, where he would sit at his right hand.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus' ascension into heaven concluded his time on earth. By restoring God's relationship with his creation, he had accomplished all that the Father had sent him to do; now it was time for him to return to the Father and sit in a position of honor at his right side in heaven. In no way was Jesus abandoning his followers; the Holy Spirit would come to give them the power and ability to establish the church and spread the Good News throughout the world. The Spirit continues to be present with us today.

NEXT STOP

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

After Jesus ascends into heaven, his disciples gather in a room in Jerusalem. Not knowing what to expect, they follow Jesus' last instructions and wait. They are about to experience another high point of the big story. God came in human form to live among humans. Now he sends his Spirit to remain with us forever. The Spirit's presence will be a comfort and a strength to every believer throughout the world until Christ comes again.

ACTS 2:1-47

OBSERVATION POINT

Pentecost was an annual Jewish festival that was established during the time of Moses. Originally it was an agricultural celebration called the Festival of Harvest, falling on the fiftieth day after Passover. During the Hellenistic period (300 BC–AD 300), the Jews dropped the agricultural association of Pentecost and viewed it instead as a day to give thanks for the law of Moses (the Torah). After the coming of the Holy Spirit on this day, Christians designated it as the start of the church. Both Jews and Christians continue to celebrate Pentecost today.

EXPLORATION POINT

Jesus came to earth to restore God's relationship with his people. Adam and Eve had destroyed their relationship with God in the Garden; subsequently, everyone continued to reject God through sinful living. But no one and nothing can ever stop God from fulfilling his plan for the human race. By sending the Holy Spirit to fill believers, God made it possible for us to have fellowship with him until Christ comes again. Living in the Spirit is a precious gift that enables us to be in close relationship with the King of kings and Lord of lords.

NEXT STOP

THE CHURCH BEGINS

THE CHURCH BEGINS

THE CHURCH BEGINS

ITINERARY
PREVIOUS STOP

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

YEAR:
AD 30
CURRENT WORLD POWER:
Rome
STATUS OF GOD'S PEOPLE:
Free in Christ
THE CHURCH BEGINS
God sent his Son to restore his relationship with his people, which was lost long ago when Adam and Eve disobeyed his command. He came to save the world and to fulfill the promise that all people would be blessed through Abraham's descendants. Jesus was present in a human body, and he chose to minister primarily to

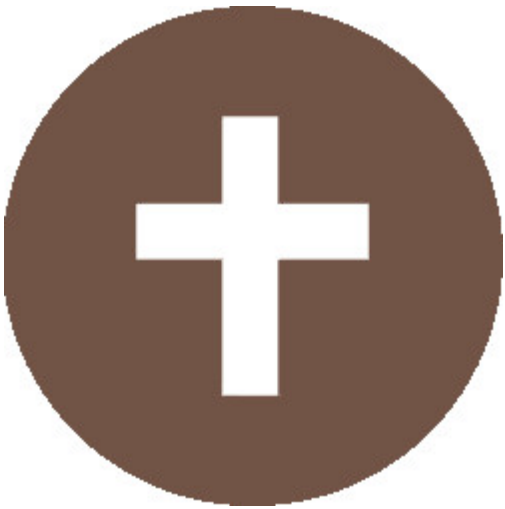
people whom he could make direct, often physical, contact with. After his ministry and purpose for coming to earth came to an end, he victoriously returned to his Father in heaven.

Jesus' disciples—witnesses to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—take up Jesus' commission to "go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." They believe in Jesus; they have seen his miracles and heard his teachings. As soon as God's Spirit fills them at Pentecost, they are prepared to go out and share the Good News with others.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

God's people, now equipped with God's Spirit and called the church, preach boldly, heal the sick, and cast out demons in the name of Jesus. God is present with them, and membership in the new church explodes. Thousands believe. Both Jews and Gentiles believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, whose death and resurrection have saved them. The church will grow: first in Judea and Samaria, next into Asia Minor and Greece, and then into Italy, Spain, and other parts of Europe. But challenges will come as the church grows and the Good News spreads.

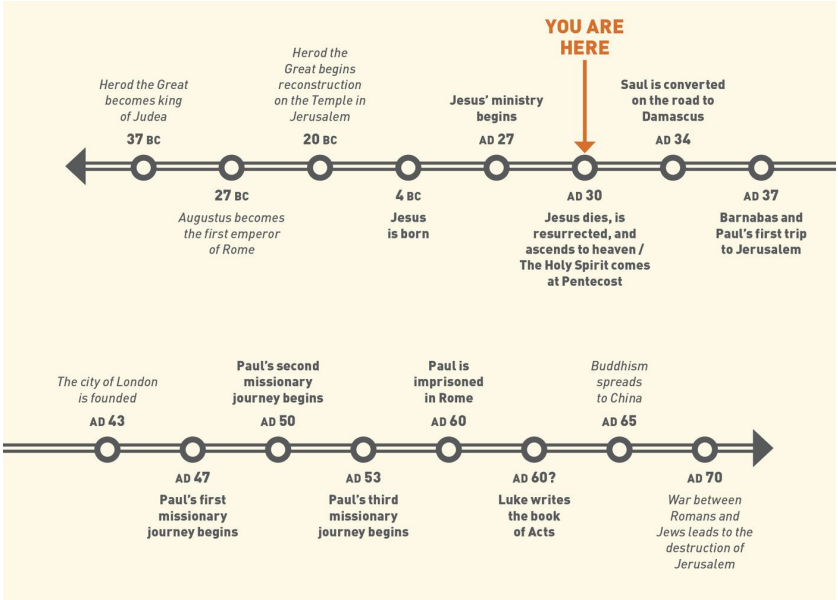
Wherever Christianity goes, it begins to uproot long-standing cultural traditions and practices. People fear and resist these changes. Many Jews hold firmly to the law and the old ways, and many Gentiles violently resist giving up their old lifestyles. But God's church will prevail, and Christianity will be firmly established.



JESUS AS TRUE NORTH

The Spirit of God is the heart of the new church. Christ's followers take on his name and are called Christians. Because of his work—coming to earth, preaching, healing, dying, and rising again—the apostles' message is one of hope. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles proclaim that Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not. When Saul begins killing Christians for corrupting Judaism, Jesus appears to him and sets him on a new course. Transformed, this man will explain to the world just how Jesus fulfilled God's laws and set the world free from slavery to sin.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?



NEXT STOP

PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE CHURCH BEGINS

THE CHURCH BEGINS

THE CHURCH BEGINS

PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

Throughout the big story God has revealed his power through miracles. He showed his control over nature through the ten plagues in Egypt and by dividing the waters of the Red Sea. He provided food and water for his people while they wandered in the wilderness. He displayed his power through the Old Testament prophets and, most clearly, in his Son Jesus. Now that same power is with the apostles. The apostle Peter, one of Jesus' original twelve disciples, continues the tradition of performing miracles, displaying God's power in Christ's name. He then boldly preaches in the Temple about Jesus' life and death.

READ:

ACTS 3:1-26

OBSERVATION POINT

In Jewish society, imperfection of any kind made a person an outcast. In the Old Testament, God commanded his people to sacrifice only animals that “have no defect of any kind” (Leviticus 22:21). God also required priests to be without blemish. God’s law held other people to a high standard as well, but over the centuries Jewish culture had generalized these rules in a way that was harsh and unrealistic. A person had to be practically perfect to be part of the Jewish community. Peter’s healing was a great gift. It restored this man physically and socially.

EXPLORATION POINT

Peter and John had been empowered by the Holy Spirit and were energized to see God working through them to spread the Good News. God's power flowed through them so that Peter even healed a lame man in the name of Jesus Christ. This is a wonderful example of how God can do more than we can ask or imagine. The beggar was merely hoping for a coin or two to help him survive one more day. The possibility of being whole again and walking out of the Temple didn't even enter his mind. But it happened. God can, will, and does do what we perceive as impossible.

NEXT STOP

SAUL'S CONVERSION
PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

In its early days, the church is a unified group of believers who share their time, their energy, and even their money and possessions. They generously take care of one another and provide for the apostles, who are focused on preaching and prayer. This ideal community structure, however, doesn't work out perfectly for long. The early church still consists of sinful people who can be distracted from the work of Christ because of their own desires.

READ: Acts 4:32–5:42

OBSERVATION POINT

Barnabas's contribution to the church was an example of how we should give—generously, willingly and from the heart. The story of Ananias and Sapphira illustrates the opposite. They were not forced to sell their property or to share the proceeds with the church. It was their choice to do so, but they did it with the wrong attitude. Ananias and Sapphira intentionally lied to the church to make themselves look good in the eyes of other believers, but they could not hide their intentions from God.

EXPLORATION POINT

Although extreme, Ananias and Sapphira's punishment was necessary to emphasize that God would not tolerate dishonesty, hypocrisy, and deceit within the church. As shocking as this instantaneous punishment was, it made the current believers realize that they had to be forthright and pure, and it declared to others that this new group was held to very high standards. Giving to the church—whether we give our time, our talents, or our income—must be sincere and motivated by love.

NEXT STOP

STEPHEN IS ARRESTED

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

STEPHEN IS ARRESTED

The church is growing. The core group of believers shares the Good News of Jesus in the Temple, in homes, and everywhere they go. Many people believe and join the group, but the Jewish leaders oppose this new teaching. They bring the apostles to trial, flog them, and throw them in jail. Some particularly zealous Jews, fearful that hundreds of years of traditions could be wiped out by

this message about Jesus, take extreme measures to preserve their Jewish identity and way of thinking.

ACTS 6:8–8:3

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OBSERVATION POINT

Under Roman rule, the Jewish authorities (the Sanhedrin) did not have the right to execute anyone. The violent mob interrupted Stephen's trial, dragged him through the city streets, and illegally stoned him to death outside the city. They followed only a portion of the Old Testament law regarding the consequence for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:11-16). Stoning had to take place outside the city, but only after a careful judicial examination, which they failed to conduct. In their blind rage they failed to carefully uphold their own traditions.

EXPLORATION POINT

God calls prophets, apostles, teachers, and ministers to preach his Word truthfully and sincerely. As representatives of God himself, they are required to say what God wants them to say rather than what the crowd desires to hear. This is exactly what Stephen knew he was called to do. He was not about to tell these people what they wanted to hear. He was telling them what God inspired him to say. The consequences were great, but Stephen was happy to sacrifice his life for the name of Christ.

NEXT STOP

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

STEPHEN IS ARRESTED

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

Philip and Stephen were selected as two of the first seven deacons in the early church. Their primary role is to take care of widows, orphans, and the poor. Whatever they do, they do in Christ's name,

bringing the Good News with them. After Stephen's death, the believers scatter across Judea and Samaria. Philip goes to Samaria, where he teaches and performs miracles. Many people believe the Good News and are baptized. When an angel of the Lord tells Philip to travel south, he obeys.

ACTS 8:26-40

OBSERVATION POINT

When the Assyrians and later the Babylonians invaded their homeland hundreds of years earlier, the Jews scattered to other countries. Some fled to Africa, settling in Egypt and possibly farther south in the Upper Nile region (then part of Ethiopia). The Ethiopian in this story may have been familiar with the writings of Isaiah because of the Jews in his country. He might have gone to Jerusalem to bring the Lord gifts, just as Isaiah had prophesied (Isaiah 18:2, 7). On his journey home, he encountered Philip on the road to Gaza.

EXPLORATION POINT

Every Christian is called to share the gospel with others, just as Philip did. The great commission calls us to preach and teach anyone, at any time, and in any place. Philip made a special trip, even though he did not know where he was headed. He was open to the call. We must be just as willing as Philip to share Jesus' name and salvation wherever we are and with whomever we encounter. A person's race, religion, or sexual orientation should not stop us.

NEXT STOP

SAUL'S CONVERSION

SAUL'S CONVERSION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

SAUL'S CONVERSION

In the big story, God revealed himself to Abraham and formed a great nation to be his holy, chosen people. When God sent his Son to earth, he sent him to his chosen people. Many of the Jews rejected Jesus, but others believed in him. After Jesus' return to heaven, Saul, a devoted Jew, vehemently opposes anyone who believes in Jesus. But God transforms this strong and forceful leader. He turns Saul's energies away from evil and toward spreading the Good News throughout the world, first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

READ:

ACTS 9:1-31

OBSERVATION POINT

Light of any kind illuminates and makes sight possible. The bright light that initially blinded Saul did exactly that in a spectacular fashion. This was no ordinary phenomenon. Unlike a bright ray of sun or a flash of lightning, it was supernaturally brilliant and seems to have been localized around only Saul. It was a unique heavenly light, created for this particular event. And while it temporarily blinded Saul physically, it allowed him to finally see Jesus for who he really was: the Son of God.

EXPLORATION POINT

Most conversions to Christianity are not as dramatic as Saul's. A conversion can come as a sudden and radical change or as a gradual coming to faith over years. There is no single "right" way to come to know Christ. The method of receiving Christ may vary, but the result is the same: true faith in Christ as our Lord and Savior. This kind of faith will inevitably change our perspective on the world, and the indwelling Holy Spirit will change the way that we live as a result.

NEXT STOP

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

SAUL'S CONVERSION

SAUL'S CONVERSION

SAUL'S CONVERSION

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

As God guided each chapter of the big story through the centuries, he commanded his chosen people to set themselves apart from other peoples of the world. When Jesus came to earth, everything changed. God's gift of salvation is for everyone. The early church struggles with this concept. To help clarify this issue, God sends a vision to the apostle Peter while he is in Joppa. At about the same time God also sends a vision to Cornelius in Caesarea. God wants to be certain that people of every race and religious background hear of his great gift.

READ:

ACTS 10:1-48

OBSERVATION POINT

The law of Moses clearly stated which animals were impure or unclean (Leviticus 11). For centuries the Jews had carefully followed these laws, eating only certain animals and not even touching some birds, reptiles, and animals. The instructions given in Peter's vision represented a radical new way of thinking, not just about food but about the Jewish laws in general. Peter now realized that he should no longer consider anyone impure or unclean. Everyone is saved by God's grace, not by adherence to the law.

EXPLORATION POINT

In the vision he gave to Peter, God made it very clear that he showed no favoritism. Jesus was Lord of all. He saw no differences between the Jews—God's chosen people—and the Gentiles who were outside the Jewish heritage. Jews and Gentiles were equally welcome to the message of salvation and to the church. Christ had fulfilled all the obligations of the law of Moses, so the new believers did not have to follow those requirements. The Good News was for everyone who believed in Jesus.

NEXT STOP

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM: CONFLICT OVER GENTILES

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY
PETER'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM PRISON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

PETER'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM PRISON

Peter returns to Jerusalem and continues to preach the Good News there. Meanwhile, King Herod Agrippa begins persecuting the Christians to please the Jewish population. First, he has the apostle James put to death. Then, during the annual festival of Passover, when Jews from all over stream to Jerusalem to celebrate, Herod imprisons Peter, who must await a public trial. In the middle of the night, God does what appears to be impossible.

READ:

ACTS 12:1-19

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OBSERVATION POINT

God released Peter from prison for reasons besides keeping him safe from King Herod's injustice. God displayed his power over the Roman guards and chains and declared Peter "not guilty" of any government charges. By freeing Peter from prison, God also demonstrated that his will could not be hindered by human powers. When Peter preached and healed in Jesus' name, he was being obedient to the divine authority of God; the commands of King Herod did not discourage him.

EXPLORATION POINT

The church was being persecuted—James had been killed, and Peter was in prison. It was a dangerous time to be together, but the church members gathered and prayed. They believed in the power of prayer and held firm to Jesus' promise: "Ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!" (John 14:14). Their earnest prayers were answered, but the answer surprised them. When we pray earnestly and sincerely in Christ's name, we too may be surprised with the way God answers.

NEXT STOP

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

PETER'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM PRISON

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

The Holy Spirit urges the church in Antioch of Syria to commission Saul (now named Paul) and Barnabas to preach the gospel in Cyprus and Pisidia. They preach in the synagogues of towns all over the island of Cyprus. Then they sail to the mainland and stop in Pisidia, a district of the Roman province of Galatia. They travel inland to Antioch of Pisidia and preach the Good News in the Jewish synagogue. This is Paul's first missionary journey.

READ:

ACTS 13:4-52

OBSERVATION POINT

Devout converts to Judaism were called proselytes. These were Gentiles who chose to follow the laws of Moses and serve God as revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures. The men also submitted to the rite of circumcision to become full members of the Jewish community. The Jews were jealous when Paul's message in their synagogue drew large crowds; they recognized that he was preaching a different message and possibly "stealing" their converts.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Jews embraced much of what Paul said: the summary of their

history as God's chosen ones, and the idea of being made right with God. But they clung fiercely to their traditions and didn't like the idea that Gentiles could be included among God's people without converting to Judaism. Just as the Jews had to realize that the Good News was for all people, not just those of the Jewish tradition, so too must modern Christians remain open to welcoming others into our churches and communities of faith.

NEXT STOP

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER
PAUL'S MESSAGE COMES FROM CHRIST

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

PAUL'S MESSAGE COMES FROM CHRIST

A short time after establishing churches in the Galatian towns of Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, and Antioch, Paul writes a letter to these churches to address some controversies. Some teachers have come behind him, calling the authority of his preaching into question and asking believers to take a few more steps—following the law of Moses in addition to having faith in Christ. Paul proves that he is a true apostle of Christ and that his message is the true Good News. He emphasizes that Gentiles do not have to become Jews before they become Christians.

READ:

GAL 1:1–2:10

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OBSERVATION POINT

Paul was directly called by God on the road to Damascus. The Bible doesn't mention what occurred in Arabia. We assume that Paul grew in knowledge and understanding of the Good News during his time in the desert. He knew the Old Testament Scriptures because he had been educated as a Pharisee (Acts 26:5). He also knew the claims of the first Christians, but he never was commissioned by the church in Jerusalem, nor did he initially consult with other apostles. God called him to believe and the Holy Spirit, through the church of Antioch, commissioned him to preach.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul's example shows that there are various roads to ministry. Some people follow a traditional route of training and commission through an established church. Others, like Paul, are called by God, set apart and gifted as ministers to proclaim the Good News. Paul's time with Peter in Jerusalem proved that his message was the true gospel, in sync with the established Jerusalem church and with the apostles who had been with Jesus. Paul's calling was exceptional, but his message was compatible with others'. God calls and uses different people in different ways to grow the church.

NEXT STOP

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

PAUL'S MESSAGE COMES FROM CHRIST

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER

As Paul continues his letter, he explains to the churches what it really means to live in Christ, free from the law. The burden of

following the Jewish law has been lifted by Christ, who fulfilled the law entirely. This is the joy of Christianity. Paul writes that we are free to live out the love of God through the power of the Spirit, experiencing joy and peace as we trust in Christ completely for our salvation.

GAL 5:16–26

OBSERVATION POINT

The Galatians thought they would please God more if they followed the law while believing in Christ. They had it all wrong. Christ had freed them from the obligations of the law. By his grace, his free gift, they were saved. Salvation is free. God gives it to us out of love for us, not because of what he gets out of us in return. In response to his generosity, we live a life of gratitude and thanksgiving to glorify him.

EXPLORATION POINT

Christians are free from the law, but we do not have a license to keep on sinning. We have a choice, either to rely on the Holy Spirit or to yield to our sinful nature. The power of the Spirit within us will guide us to a life filled with peace, love, and joy. If we allow our sinful nature to dominate us, we will live in chaos, strife, and bitterness. We don't have to battle sin on our own. We have the Spirit's power to fight our sinful desires and to change our hearts to follow God's will.

NEXT STOP

FAITH AND ENDURANCE

FAITH AND ENDURANCE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER

LIVING BY THE SPIRIT'S POWER

FAITH AND ENDURANCE

Around the same time that Paul writes his letter to the churches in Galatia, James, the brother of Jesus, writes to the “twelve tribes.” Although James did not follow Jesus before the Resurrection, he quickly became a leader in the early church and was apparently the head of the Jerusalem church. He writes this letter of exhortation to Jewish Christians who are scattered throughout the Roman world.

OBSERVATION POINT

Many Jewish Christians left Jerusalem shortly after Stephen was stoned for his faith. As persecution intensified, these believers scattered to established Jewish communities in Judea, Samaria, Phoenicia, Syria, Cyprus, and beyond. The people of Israel had been dispersed throughout the world during the Exile, and only a portion of the exiles returned to live in Judea. Some Jewish Christians fleeing persecution in Jerusalem settled in those distant Jewish communities.

EXPLORATION POINT

Early Christians needed to know what an active faith looked like. James's letter placed a strong emphasis on the importance of practicing personal virtue. Every aspect of our lives should testify that we are followers of Christ: what we say, how we treat others, how we spend money, how we exhibit humility. Look at your life; others should easily be able to see Jesus living in you.

NEXT STOP

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM: CONFLICT OVER GENTILES

CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

FAITH AND ENDURANCE

CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

One of the key points in James's letter is that what Christians say matters. Controlling the tongue is critical to putting faith into action. What comes out of a Christian's mouth in tone and word choice reveals what's inside his or her heart. James reminds his readers again and again that faith and actions are intricately connected. The way a person speaks provides a clear window into that person's inner life.

READ:

JAS 3:1-18

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OBSERVATION POINT

James uses six different images to illustrate his point about the danger of the tongue. These diverse images allow everyone to connect with the idea in some way: the bit in a horse's mouth, the rudder of a ship, a spark that starts a forest fire, a water spring, and a fruit tree. Used correctly and wisely, the tongue can do great things; but unrestrained and tainted by evil, it will destroy and wreak havoc.

EXPLORATION POINT

Just as we need to maintain our health with regular checkups, we

should also “check up” on what comes out of our mouths. Often our language gets careless, we begin to use God’s name casually, and our kidding turns into hurtful comments. Nobody is shocked because “everyone is doing it.” Backbiting, gossip, and rumors are the norm. But Christians are called to be different. We carry Christ’s name, and everything we do and say reflects on him.

NEXT STOP

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM: CONFLICT OVER GENTILES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

FAITH AND ENDURANCE

CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM: CONFLICT OVER GENTILES

The successful missionary work of Paul and others among the Gentiles is a cause for the new church to rejoice! The Good News is spreading all over the world, just as God had always planned in the big story. But for some early Jewish Christians, this raises some difficult questions. God had always worked through his chosen people, the Jews. Many believe that Gentiles, in addition to believing in Jesus, should be required to convert to a Jewish lifestyle in order to be saved. This is a significant issue for the leaders of the early church, and they gather in Jerusalem to address it.

READ: Acts 15:1-35

ACTS 15:1-35

OBSERVATION POINT

Circumcision had religious significance for Jews as the sign of the covenant that God had established with the people of Israel. It was normally performed on the eighth day of a male infant's life, but adult converts to Judaism were required to get circumcised, too. Circumcision became a metaphor for the renewal of a person's relationship with God. But after Jesus' resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit, faith in Jesus was all that would be required to be in right relationship with God. Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the Jewish law, and now all people everywhere relate to God through him.

EXPLORATION POINT

Ethnic background has no impact on how a person relates to God. Faith in Jesus is the only way to have a right relationship with God, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's life is clear evidence of that relationship. During their missionary travels, Paul and Barnabas gave clear testimony of the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Gentiles. Peter reminded everyone in Jerusalem that, years earlier, he had been sent by God to preach to a Gentile, Cornelius. No matter where you come from, trust in Jesus! He is the only way to God.

NEXT STOP

LOVE IS THE GREATEST
PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM: CONFLICT OVER GENTILES

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM: CONFLICT OVER GENTILES

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

After spending some time at his home church in Antioch, Paul sets out on his second missionary journey. He travels with his friend Silas to the churches in Galatia that he established on his first journey, and a young man named Timothy joins them there. The Spirit then instructs Paul to go to Macedonia (northern Greece) to preach the Good News. He travels by boat from Troas to the port of Neapolis, then hikes ten miles over mountain roads to Philippi.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

During his missionary travels to new places, Paul usually began by preaching in the local synagogue. In Philippi, he couldn't do this. A city was only able to have a synagogue if ten Jewish men lived there, and the Jewish population in Philippi was too small. Without a synagogue, those who worshiped God gathered outside near running water to pray. Paul located a group down at the river on the Sabbath and preached to them there.

EXPLORATION POINT

God needs all kinds of people to build his church. The church in

Philippi was founded on three unlikely individuals: a woman (Lydia), a jailer, and a slave girl. Societies may have different criteria for who best can establish their institutions, but God uses everyone—the rich and influential as well as the weak and the outcasts. Christianity in the first century was for everyone; it's the same today. It is not limited by gender, ethnicity, or social boundaries.

NEXT STOP

PAUL PREACHES IN THESSALONICA

PAUL PREACHES IN THESSALONICA

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

PAUL PREACHES IN THESSALONICA

Paul and Silas leave Philippi and travel through the mountains, moving southwest. Their destination is the city of Thessalonica,

where there is a synagogue that they plan to preach in. Although there is a paved Roman road, the Egnatian Way, connecting the cities, their journey is long and difficult, especially by modern standards. Arriving in the city of Thessalonica, Paul locates the synagogue and begins to preach the Good News of Jesus to all who will listen to him.

ACTS 17:1-35

OBSERVATION POINT

Roman rule both helped and hindered the spread of the gospel. The world was at peace and the Romans had constructed roads on which Paul could easily travel. But the influence of the imperial cult was problematic. Everyone was expected to submit to Roman authority and even worship the emperor, who was considered divine. Paul's preaching about "another king, named Jesus" aroused the suspicion of the Roman citizens, who did not want their benefits and privileges threatened in any way.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul met resistance to the gospel message because it would change everything. This was a scary thought to the Jews who prided themselves on thousands of years of tradition as God's chosen people. They were also jealous that some Greeks who had been drawn to Judaism were now drawn to Paul's message. Even today, change is difficult. Resistance to change is inevitable. Our discernment of the truth according to Scripture should temper any emotional reaction to a different way of thinking or to a change in tradition.

NEXT STOP

PAUL MEETS PRISCILLA AND AQUILA IN CORINTH

PAUL MEETS PRISCILLA AND AQUILA IN CORINTH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL PREACHES IN THESSALONICA

PAUL PREACHES IN THESSALONICA

PAUL MEETS PRISCILLA AND AQUILA IN CORINTH

Paul and Silas escape from an angry mob in Thessalonica and hurry to Berea, about nineteen miles away. After sharing the Good News there with great success, Paul is pursued by some enemies from Thessalonica, so he decides to move on again. He sails south to Athens to avoid the twelve-day overland trip. Finally he journeys west to Corinth to preach. He remains in that city for the next eighteen months.

ACTS 18:1-17

OBSERVATION POINT

The Jews were so hostile to Paul and his message that God comforted and encouraged him through a special vision. God appeared to Paul on at least two other occasions: on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6), and in the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-18). As a result of God's direct encouragement, Paul persevered in his ministry at Corinth and established a strong church in that city.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul often experienced open hostility to his message. Repeatedly he had to flee a city to protect himself, but his message always stuck with a few people to create a solid foundation for the church. God assured Paul that he didn't preach the Good News alone—God's Spirit was working in and through him, and in other people as well. Sharing the gospel message can be as challenging today as it was for Paul. But we too can be assured that we don't do God's work alone. His Spirit will provide comfort and strength.

NEXT STOP

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL MEETS PRISCILLA AND AQUILA IN CORINTH

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

While Paul is preaching and planting a church in Corinth, Timothy brings him an encouraging report about the church in Thessalonica, where Paul had been run out of town by the synagogue leaders after a brief time of ministry. In response Paul writes a letter to the Thessalonian Christians to encourage them and provide some new teaching.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Paul praises the Thessalonians for their actions that testify to their new Christian beliefs: They have stopped worshiping idols; they serve and worship the true God; and they look forward to Christ's return (1:9-10). These three characteristics are clear indications that the Thessalonians were truly converted and believed in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Thessalonians had eagerly accepted the Good News, but ridicule, doubt, and persecution soon made their lives difficult. We

sometimes doubt our faith when we encounter hostility or injustice. We might find ourselves thinking, “Where’s God in all this mess?” The Thessalonians were able to remain faithful to God even in such difficult circumstances because they knew that the Good News was true and that God was at work in them.

NEXT STOP

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL MEETS PRISCILLA AND AQUILA IN CORINTH

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

After greeting the Thessalonians and giving them words of encouragement, Paul spends the second half of his letter writing about proper conduct and answering some of their questions. He encourages the Thessalonians to live holy lives for Christ and instructs them about the promise of Christ's return, explaining the right way to look forward to that great day.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Paul tells the Thessalonians about Christ's coming again as a way of encouraging them during their time of trial and persecution. He knew that their conversion to Christ had a radical effect on their lifestyle. It left them open to ridicule and contempt. He assures them that their suffering on earth is not the end. The important thing is encouraging them in the present, not providing details about future events.

EXPLORATION POINT

The end times and Christ's second coming are popular discussion

topics. Many authors provide detailed speculations that are more fictional than biblical. We should find comfort and joy in knowing that Christ will come again to rule victoriously. We shouldn't speculate or argue about the details. Instead we should rejoice that we will be raised from the dead and will reign with Jesus.

NEXT STOP

BELIEVERS SHOULD STAND FIRM

BELIEVERS SHOULD STAND FIRM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

BELIEVERS SHOULD STAND FIRM

A few months after writing his first letter to the believers in Thessalonica, Paul writes another one to this young church. The church is facing intense persecution, so he encourages them to

demonstrate a strong Christian faith in the midst of their difficulties. He also addresses some problems that have come up as a result of false teachers who are saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Paul gives the believers instructions on how to live until Christ comes again.

2THES 2:13–3:18

OBSERVATION POINT

Paul told the Thessalonians about Christ's second coming to encourage them during their suffering and persecution. Some believers twisted this teaching into an excuse to stop working and "wait it out." Paul corrected them, reminding them that he had always worked when he was with them. He pointed out that idleness leads to other problems: meddling in other people's affairs, laziness, and dependence on the generosity of the church. Even though Jesus could have returned at any time, Paul encouraged the Thessalonian believers to work hard and hold on to their belief in

Christ.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Thessalonians lived in a city of diverse cultures and ungodly beliefs. They were tempted to throw away their new faith and revert to their old traditions. We are tempted by a similar culture that invites us to live for ourselves and to focus on money, power, or prestige rather than God. The world's conflict and unrest threaten to shatter our lives. Paul's words encouraged the Thessalonians to stand firm in the faith. Those words can encourage us as well. Paul's blessing calms us and gives us hope that we will experience the Lord's peace "at all times and in every situation."

NEXT STOP

PAUL MINISTERS IN EPHESUS

PAUL MINISTERS IN EPHESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

BELIEVERS SHOULD STAND FIRM

BELIEVERS SHOULD STAND FIRM

PAUL MINISTERS IN EPHESUS

After his lengthy stay in Corinth, Paul completes his second missionary journey by sailing to Ephesus, then to Caesarea, and finally to Antioch of Syria. He begins his third missionary journey

by traveling the northern interior road through the region of Phrygia, eventually arriving back in Ephesus. During his three-year stay there, Paul establishes a strong Christian church in a city known for its pagan superstitions and magical practices.

ACTS 19:1-41

OBSERVATION POINT

The Greek goddess Artemis (also known as Diana) was the patron deity of Ephesus. The Ephesians prided themselves on being the temple keepers for this goddess. The temple in her honor was exceptionally large and was known as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Paul's gospel preaching threatened the Ephesians' traditions, the status and prestige of their city, and a substantial part of their economy.

EXPLORATION POINT

Humans are more valuable than money. When he drove demons into a herd of pigs at the region of the Gerasenes, Jesus destroyed two thousand valuable animals (Mark 5:11-13) but restored the life of a demon-possessed man. In Philippi, Paul relieved a slave girl of her demonic spirit, infuriating her owners (Acts 16:16-19). Now in Ephesus, Paul's preaching threatened the income of silversmiths and encouraged sorcerers to burn their magic books. Even in the ancient world, some individuals desired to make a profit at the expense of others. Christianity challenges that perspective.

NEXT STOP

LOVE IS THE GREATEST

INSTRUCTION ON MARRIAGE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL MINISTERS IN EPHESUS

INSTRUCTION ON MARRIAGE

During his three-year stay in Ephesus, Paul writes letters to the Corinthian Christians on the other side of the Aegean Sea. He has heard that they are having a number of specific problems in their community and addresses those issues directly. He also answers a number of questions from them, providing guidance on Christian living. His timeless approach to these practical issues has instructed Christians for centuries.

READ:

1COR 7:1-40

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OBSERVATION POINT

As a major city between two active ports, Corinth hosted many travelers and was infamous for prostitution and other vices. The sins of this city were so well known throughout the Greek world that a special Greek verb meaning “to act like a Corinthian” (*korinthiazomai*) was used to refer to sexual immorality. The influences of the general population filtered into the church, creating problems that required Paul to provide instruction on appropriate sexual conduct for Christians.

EXPLORATION POINT

Throughout its history, the church has struggled with issues related to sexual immorality. Societies often take a liberal stand or else look the other way. The practice of marriage comes under attack as either old fashioned and confining or as simply a social contract signifying commitment. For the church, this passage serves as more than just a handful of suggestions. They are God's words, his principles, given through Paul on how we should live.

NEXT STOP

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

INSTRUCTION ON MARRIAGE

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The church in Corinth had a great interest in spiritual gifts—the special abilities for serving the church that are given to believers by the Holy Spirit. However, they apparently placed too much emphasis on the more spectacular gifts, such as prophecy and speaking in tongues. Paul corrects that type of thinking, clearly explaining that the Spirit unites us all but gives different abilities to each individual. One type of gift is not above another; all gifts are required to serve the body of Christ, and they all must be grounded in love.

1COR 12:1-31

OBSERVATION POINT

Each gift from the Spirit comprises a broad array of abilities. The gift of prophecy, for example, encompasses more than the ability to predict future events. It can involve receiving a spontaneous message from God and sharing it with other believers, preaching the gospel and sharing the Good News, or delivering a sermon that is carefully prepared and Spirit-inspired. Paul lists nine gifts to represent the variety of abilities the Spirit provides and uses within the church.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Spirit empowers every member of Christ's body with some gift to build up the church and expand God's Kingdom. No believer has the right to say, "I don't have a gift." If we are Christians, Christ lives in us, and the Spirit provides the gifts to display God's work. To function the church needs all of its members with their different gifts, so don't let your gift be wasted. If we all recognize and use our gifts, no matter how great or small, God will do great things through us.

NEXT STOP

LOVE IS THE GREATEST

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM: CONFLICT OVER GENTILES

PAUL MINISTERS IN EPHESUS

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

LOVE IS THE GREATEST

After his conversion, Paul brings the Good News to Asia Minor and Europe. He establishes churches in many cities and later stays in touch with the new believers by writing letters. This section of the letter he writes to the Corinthian church contains the great message that God has been conveying throughout the big story: He is a God of love. Everything he has done and continues to do for his people comes from his love for us. When God loves us and his Spirit lives in us, we naturally should display love to others.

1COR 13:1-13

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OBSERVATION POINT

Mirrors in Paul's day were usually made from hammered and highly polished bronze. These metal mirrors were round with handles carved from wood, ivory, or bone. They resembled contemporary handheld mirrors but did not give a clear image of the viewer as glass mirrors do today. Because they were never perfectly flat and reflective, they provided a reflection that was distorted and unclear.

EXPLORATION POINT

Love is at the core of God's commandments for living: first, to "love the LORD your God"; and second, to "love your neighbor as yourself." Love is central to Christianity. God loves us, forgives us, and cares deeply for us. Because of God's love for us, he sent his Son to be with us, take on the punishment we deserve for our sins, and conquer death. Out of gratitude and love for all that he has done for us, we who bear the name of Christ must willingly and openly love God, ourselves, and others.

NEXT STOP

HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST

GOD OFFERS COMFORT TO ALL

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LOVE IS THE GREATEST

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Some members of the Corinthian church had doubts about a future resurrection of the dead. Paul addresses this concern by providing detailed information about the importance of believing in Christ's resurrection. That event is the first sign of what is to come for all believers—a future resurrection of the body.

1COR 15:1-58

OBSERVATION POINT

Many people in the early church were skeptical about the concept of the bodily resurrection because it didn't match their way of thinking. The resurrection of the body contradicted the Greek philosophy that the body was unimportant and only the soul had value. The Greeks believed in the immortality of only the soul. Paul, however, preached that Christ's bodily resurrection was the beginning of what was in store for all believers.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul doesn't tell us how our dead bodies will be transformed and resurrected. But he does tell us that they will be spiritual bodies raised in glory. These new bodies will never die and will inherit the Kingdom of God. When life is difficult and living for Christ brings stress, conflict, and suffering, we can take comfort in knowing that Christ will give us the victory and that we will rise transformed to live and reign with him forever.

NEXT STOP

GOD OFFERS COMFORT TO ALL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LOVE IS THE GREATEST

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

GOD OFFERS COMFORT TO ALL

About a year after writing his first letter to the Corinthian church, Paul writes another one to this troubled community. In addition to the problems Paul addressed in his previous letter, now he has a strained relationship with this church as a result of some questions about his authority as an apostle. In spite of all those troubles, Paul is able to give thanks and praise to God, who provides comfort and

endurance for the suffering apostle.

2COR 1:1-11

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OBSERVATION POINT

The exact nature of the hardships that Paul mentions is uncertain. He faced opposition in Ephesus, which caused a riot and obliged him to leave the city. He may have been referring to a physical ailment that occasionally bothered him, or even to the conflict between him and the Corinthians. No matter what kind of trouble or suffering we face, the comfort and encouragement Paul refers to is available to us as well.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul was strong and independent. But when things got so bad in his ministry that he “expected to die,” he knew to rely completely on God. When we have such moments in our lives, we must place our confidence in God as Paul did. We need to hand over our troubles, problems, and impossible situations to God, then rest in the confidence that he will work it out for our good.

NEXT STOP

FAITH BRINGS JOY

TREASURE IN FRAGILE CLAY JARS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD OFFERS COMFORT TO ALL

TREASURE IN FRAGILE CLAY JARS

Paul continues to challenge the Corinthian church by reminding them that it is God's power that works in and through them. Christians are called to share the news of salvation and speak as God's representatives. But appearances can be deceiving; even a person who appears weak and troubled, as Paul sometimes did, bears a precious message. The power of God is displayed through the message of the Good News, not the impressiveness of the person delivering it.

READ:

2COR 4:1-18

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OBSERVATION POINT

Clay pots, jars, and vessels were common objects in ancient times. People stored grain, wine, oil, and water in large clay jars. They also hid their jewels and coins in such containers. Even the precious Dead Sea Scrolls were stored in clay jars. These ancient biblical scrolls, found in the mid-twentieth century, were stored in jars and buried in desert caves.

EXPLORATION POINT

God has entrusted the message of salvation to people who are the equivalents of fragile clay containers. The important thing is not the

container but the contents. Salvation is a glorious and gracious gift from God. The individuals who proclaim the Good News do so through God's power, not their own. The focus should not be on themselves but on God, who works and lives in them.

NEXT STOP

THE COLLECTION FOR CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

TREASURE IN FRAGILE CLAY JARS

THE COLLECTION FOR

CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers of their pledge to help other Christians in need—particularly the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, who were suffering because of drought and famine. Without being legalistic about their giving, he reminds them of their original enthusiasm and their obligation to fulfill their commitment.

2COR 9:1-15

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OBSERVATION POINT

Collecting money for the suffering Christians in Jerusalem set a precedent for the church to help fellow believers despite differences. Some Jewish Christians were strongly opposed to Paul and the message he preached to Gentiles. The collection put into practice several biblical truths: (1) Do good to those who persecute you; (2) both Jew and Gentile are one in Christ; and (3) the unity of Jewish and Gentile believers promotes the Kingdom of God.

EXPLORATION POINT

As the church grew and encompassed different cultures and ethnic groups, differences and disputes arose. The same is true today. The church still faces divisions and controversy, but Christ calls us to put our differences aside and help our fellow Christians in need, regardless of race, denomination, or nationality. God also wants us to give generously and joyfully, knowing that all we have comes from him.

NEXT STOP

PAUL'S MANY TRIALS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE COLLECTION FOR CHRISTIANS IN JERUSALEM

PAUL'S MANY TRIALS

Paul continues his letter to the church in Corinth, reminding them to be careful of false teachers and those who distort the truth. Many of these false teachers have been calling Paul's apostleship into question because he seems to be so weak. But Paul turns this on its head: He claims that he has suffered more than anyone else in his efforts to preach the Good News throughout the world, and that this shows clearly that God is working through his ministry.

2COR 11:16–12:10

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OBSERVATION POINT

Paul's life as a missionary was difficult. Roman roads connected

many cities and made travel somewhat easier, but the terrain was still mountainous. Rough seas were the norm, and the winter cold arrived at the usual time. Paul was beaten in Philippi and stoned in Lystra. According to the church father Clement of Rome, Paul was imprisoned seven times. The shipwrecks Paul mentions here are not mentioned in Acts. The shipwreck on the journey to Rome was still in the future.

EXPLORATION POINT

God truly loved Paul. When God called Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles and to take the Good News far beyond the areas where Jesus preached, he did not guarantee him an easy life. The challenges Paul faced forced him to rely on God's strength as he traveled and established churches. Paul had his suffering; we have our own. No matter what difficulties and trials we face, we can count on God's strength to keep us going.

NEXT STOP

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL'S MANY TRIALS

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUES

After creating an uproar in Ephesus, Paul says goodbye to the believers in that city and travels to Macedonia, preaching to and encouraging people throughout Greece. He visits the churches that he established on his second missionary journey and travels south to stay in Corinth for three months. Then he starts on his journey back to Jerusalem to deliver the offering from the Gentile churches to the suffering Christians there.

READ:

ACTS 20:1-38

OBSERVATION POINT

We are given few details about Eutychus, who is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. Eutychus was a common name among freed slaves. The primary focus of the story is the miracle itself—this is the only person Paul raised from the dead. Eutychus might have fallen asleep for several reasons: Paul's preaching went on for hours, it was midnight, and the lamps in the room (20:8) might have given off fumes and heat that caused drowsiness.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul, the greatest missionary of all time, makes a profound

statement: “My life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me.” He had a passion for sharing the Good News. He was convinced that this was his only purpose in life. Most of us will not be world-traveling missionaries like Paul, but God has called each of us to be a witness, wherever we live and whatever we do. He calls us to share the Good News, pass on his love, and be his ambassadors until he comes again.

NEXT STOP

ALL PEOPLE ARE SINNERS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL’S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUES

ALL PEOPLE ARE SINNERS

While Paul is in Corinth near the end of his third missionary journey, he writes a letter to the Christians in Rome. Though he has not yet been to Rome, he plans to visit them soon and wants to

explain the Good News clearly. Among other things, Paul addresses the major problem the church is facing: the division between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians.

ROM 3:1-31

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OBSERVATION POINT

God's rules and regulations, given to Moses and collected in the first five books of the Bible, were the core of Jewish law. Over the centuries the law expanded to include oral laws created by Jewish teachers (rabbis) to explain and interpret the laws of Moses. The law came to include hundreds of rules about religious and social living that formed the heart of Jewish life; it was difficult for them to understand that faith in Christ completely fulfilled God's requirements.

EXPLORATION POINT

Many people today believe that humanity is basically good, not evil. We prefer to focus on great technological advances, scientific progress, and humanitarian efforts rather than on the evil that lies deep within us. But the reason we need a Savior is that not one of us is good. We all have rebelled against God and are separated from him. We all need Jesus to “clean us up” so we can be united with God and live forever in his Kingdom.

NEXT STOP

FAITH BRINGS JOY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD OFFERS COMFORT TO ALL

ALL PEOPLE ARE SINNERS

FAITH BRINGS JOY

Paul continues instructing the Romans on the basics of faith and the benefits of being a believer. Here he describes the many blessings that are poured out on believers as a result of being made right with God through faith in Jesus. These are not merely interesting ideas; they are life-changing realities that lead to lasting hope and joy.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Suffering was the status quo for many first-century Christians. They believed in the one true God in spite of a society that was full of superstitions, mythical gods and goddesses, and emperor worship. The Roman emperor Nero used Christianity as a scapegoat for the problems in the empire. They imprisoned, tortured, and killed Christians for sport. Paul acknowledges the difficulties faced by the church, but he assures the believers that God will use the evil of others for good.

EXPLORATION POINT

Life is hard. No one goes through life unscathed by hardship, sorrow, guilt, or pain. But for Christians there is hope in every difficulty. We can find comfort in the fact that God sends these experiences our way to strengthen our character, which in turn strengthens our faith. We do not face these trials alone, no matter what form they may take. The Holy Spirit protects and strengthens us in all times, places, and situations.

NEXT STOP

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

FAITH BRINGS JOY

FAITH BRINGS JOY

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

Paul certainly doesn't hold back on the topic of sin and its consequences, but he doesn't leave the Romans to despair over their sinfulness either. He reminds them that, through Christ, God has dealt decisively with sin. Paul brings them to a point of celebration by focusing on the joy that comes with faith and the peace that comes with life in the Holy Spirit.

READ:

ROM 8:1-39

OBSERVATION POINT

When Paul talks about our sinful nature, he is referring to the inclination of our natural desires toward sin. All humans are born with a sinful nature. God, however, did not create people this way. He created them perfect, without sin; but sin came into the world through Adam and Eve, who disobeyed God. Humans are sinful and God is perfect; we need Jesus to make us sinless again in God's eyes.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul's message to the Romans contains one of the most comforting passages in the Bible. He clearly states, in different ways, that nothing can separate us from God's love. He gives us comfort and assurance that no matter what we do, where we go, or what happens to us, absolutely nothing will come between us and God's love for us. We are superglued to God, and nothing can rip us out of his loving arms.

NEXT STOP

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

Paul's third journey concludes in Jerusalem. There he visits the Temple, where some Jews become furious because they think he preaches against the law of Moses. They start a riot, causing officials to seize Paul and throw him in prison. That night, the Lord appears to Paul and tells him that he will preach the Good News in Rome. His journey to Rome begins with several hearings in front of Jewish and Roman officials. But Paul continues to preach the Good News whether he's in the high courts or on the high seas.

READ:

ACTS 27:1~~7~~28:10

OBSERVATION POINT

The people on Malta believed that justice was a personified deity who judged and punished the guilty. When a snake bit Paul, the locals thought he was a murderer who was being punished for his crime. Paul's survival after the bite made the islanders think he was some kind of god. He continued to demonstrate God's power by healing the sick people on the island. In gratitude, the islanders met the missionary's needs and provided supplies.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul was determined to preach in Rome. The unexpected shipwreck

caused a slight detour and a three-month delay, but Paul remained focused on his life's mission by demonstrating God's love and care to the islanders. Every life is filled with detours and delays. In our results-oriented society we often perceive such things as a waste of time. Paul's sojourn in Malta shows us how best to use an unplanned delay in our lives for God's glory. God has a plan for us. Not one "detour" or "delay" will be wasted.

NEXT STOP

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

PAUL PREACHES IN ROME

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

PAUL PREACHES IN ROME

Paul and his companions spend three months on the island of Malta, waiting for the winter to pass. When the weather is conducive to sailing, they board a ship heading to Rome. After his long and arduous journey, Paul finally arrives in the capital city. Even though Paul is under house arrest and awaiting trial, God's promise to bring him safely to Rome is fulfilled.

ACTS 28:11-31

OBSERVATION POINT

The Christians in Rome knew that Paul was coming, though the Jews did not. They traveled long distances to greet him outside the city. Although they knew he was a prisoner, they welcomed him like a dignitary and gathered around him to lead him into Rome on the main highway, the Appian Way.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul did not let his status as a prisoner distract him from his mission of sharing the gospel. For two years while he was under house arrest, he boldly preached and wrote letters to churches he had established. Too often we come up with excuses for why we can't share the gospel or demonstrate Christ's love. Paul had many possible excuses—illness, persecution, imprisonment, disaster, and open opposition—but he never used any of them. We shouldn't either.

NEXT STOP

UNITY IN THE BODY

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL PREACHES IN ROME

UNITY IN THE BODY

While under house arrest in Rome for two years, Paul corresponds with some of the Christian churches that he established on his missionary journeys. He writes a letter to the church in Ephesus, where he spent nearly three years during his third missionary journey, to encourage them in their faith. In addition to a clear understanding of the Good News, he gives them instructions for living distinctively Christian lives in a pagan society.

READ:

EPH 4:1-32

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OBSERVATION POINT

The city of Ephesus had many different religious communities. Many people worshiped the pagan goddess Artemis, were highly superstitious, believed in the occult, and practiced magic to communicate with evil spirits. In ancient Roman society, husbands ordinarily mistreated their wives and abused their slaves. People were highly immoral, lewd, and sexually promiscuous. Paul's instructions to Christians would contrast sharply with the lifestyles of the majority of the population.

EXPLORATION POINT

Today the church is highly diverse. In spite of all its variety and personalities, the church must remain focused and united on Paul's statement: "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all." If we focus on that, we will see the church unified in spite of its diverse denominations, personalities, and worship styles.

NEXT STOP

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME

UNITY IN THE BODY

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul includes detailed instructions for Christian living. He encourages the Christians there to be a shining example in a society that is extremely tolerant of evil. He writes of God's great power and authority, above all other powers, to encourage them in the midst of great spiritual warfare. Paul provides them with insights on how to honor God in everyday relationships by relying on the Holy Spirit to transform their behaviors and attitudes.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Evil was alive and conspicuous on the streets of Ephesus. Magicians and exorcists practiced their techniques in the marketplace. Pagan worship and communicating with evil spirits were common. At festivals the people paraded an oversized statue of Artemis through the streets. Marble statues that honored emperors and dignitaries lined the avenues of the city. The Christian lifestyle appeared as a beacon of light in the darkness of this city. The Christian converts, however, needed Paul's encouragement to live out their Christianity within their culture.

EXPLORATION POINT

Ephesus was a highly cultured and sophisticated city that was consumed by the dark traditions of worshiping idols and human leaders, especially the Roman emperor. A small but strong church existed in the midst of this darkness. Many of us live in similar surroundings today. We can be the light in a dark world, or we can allow the darkness to engulf us. Paul's instructions for Christian

living are as important today as they were centuries ago in Ephesus. Our faith must shine through our words and actions for everyone to see.

NEXT STOP

HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST

HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LOVE IS THE GREATEST

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST

While traveling throughout the Mediterranean world, Paul continues to write letters in order to teach the churches he started. He writes to the church in Philippi while he is under house arrest in Rome. Out of concern and love for the members of this church, Paul encourages them in their Christian life. In the big story, God continually wants to be in close relationship with his people. In humility, he became human in the person of Jesus and even suffered death for our sins. Paul calls Christians to follow Christ's example of humility as we live in the power of the Spirit.

READ:

PHIL 2:1-18; 2:1-18

OBSERVATION POINT

The Greeks had a high regard for competitive sports, particularly chariot-, horse-, and footraces. Paul used sports as a metaphor for the Christian life, describing it as a strenuous contest or even combat against evil and former practices. He often used athletic language (“I did not run the race in vain”) as a way of illustrating the concepts he was teaching. Because athletic analogies would have been familiar to the new believers, Paul used them to make his teaching about Christian living more vivid and memorable.

EXPLORATION POINT

Philippians 2:6-11 is often called the Christ Hymn because most scholars think Paul is actually quoting something widely used in the worship of the early church. It reveals the early church's belief in Christ's nature: fully human yet fully divine. It declares that although he was God, Jesus humbled himself, became human, and died for the sins of all human beings so that we could be restored to relationship with God. The church remains unified in these beliefs and waits with eager anticipation for the day when Jesus will come again. On that day, every knee should bow at the name of Jesus.

NEXT STOP

GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST

HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

Paul writes letters to real people who are dealing with real issues. Sometimes this entails giving specific instructions directed at individuals in a specific church. Paul obviously cares about them and wants them to live the way God calls them to live in every situation. Even though he is addressing specific issues, Paul's advice on Christian living is as applicable in a modern context as it was for the people named in the Bible text.

PHIL 3:12–4:23

OBSERVATION POINT

The Book of Life (4:3) is mentioned only eight times in the Bible: once in Psalm 69:28, here in Philippians, and six times in Revelation. This book contains the names of those who will survive God's wrath on the day of the Lord and will have citizenship in the Kingdom of God. It includes true believers of all times and ages. According to Revelation 21:27, only people named in this book will enter the new Jerusalem.

EXPLORATION POINT

We are saved by God's grace, not by what we do or don't do. But in gratitude to God, we should strive to live godly lives. As we grow spiritually and become mature in our faith, we trust and obey God more. Doing good deeds does not perfect us because we are already declared perfect in God's eyes through Christ. God refines and transforms us as we strive to do good deeds. Our ultimate perfection will come when Christ returns.

NEXT STOP

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

CHRIST IS SUPREME

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

CHRIST IS SUPREME

The churches that Paul established on his journeys need Paul's instructions and encouragement, but Paul's influence goes beyond just the cities that he has visited. He never visited Colosse, but while Paul is imprisoned in Rome, a friend named Epaphras visits him and describes the difficulties that Christians in Colosse are facing. Paul writes a letter to teach and encourage this young

Gentile church, which is being led astray by false teachings about Jesus and the Christian life.

COL 1:1–2:5

OBSERVATION POINT

The “well-crafted arguments” that Paul spoke against were similar to a belief system that became known as Gnosticism (from *gnosis*, a Greek word for “knowledge”). This heresy valued knowledge but stated that knowledge about God was a secret accessible to only a few believers. Gnostics considered the body evil, arguing that Christ could not have been human but only seemed as if he were. Paul clearly states who Christ is: the supreme ruler of creation who came to earth in a physical body.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul provides an excellent model of how to pray for others (1:3-11). We can follow Paul's method of praying for the Colossians when we pray for friends, church workers, pastors, and missionaries: (1) Thank God for them; (2) pray that they discern God's will; (3) ask God to provide them with wisdom; (4) pray that they honor and please God; (5) pray that they come to know God better; (6) pray for their endurance and patience; and (7) ask that they be filled with joy and thankfulness.

NEXT STOP

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

CHRIST IS SUPREME

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Paul provides the new Colossian church with more than merely corrections to combat the “well-crafted arguments” of that day. He also gives instructions for living holy, Christian lives. Paul’s practical teachings range from basic principles about the source of Christian ethics to very specific instructions for Christian families. There is no part of human life that remains unaffected by the transforming power of the gospel.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

False teachers in Colosse believed that a person could experience the spiritual world apart from God and his Word. These teachers supposedly had visions and contacted angels who would be messengers to God on their behalf. This attitude might have sounded humble ("We are not worthy to approach God on our own"), but it was false and dangerous, leaving people vulnerable to Satan's influence. Paul reminded the church to stay focused on Christ.

EXPLORATION POINT

We live in a world that bombards us with new ideas, theories, and religions. Paul's cautionary words help us discern what is the truth and what is mere human thinking. By looking to God's Word and the life of Christ rather than human words and actions, we can discern whether or not popular trends are truly Christian. Instead of living by human wisdom, we must be faithful to the truth as revealed in Scripture.

NEXT STOP

PAUL'S APPEAL FOR ONESIMUS

PAUL'S APPEAL FOR ONESIMUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

PAUL'S APPEAL FOR ONESIMUS

While under arrest in Rome, Paul comes to know Onesimus, a runaway slave. Paul knows Onesimus's master, Philemon, a Christian from the town of Colosse. Paul writes this very personal

and convincing letter to ensure that Philemon will welcome Onesimus home.

PHLM 1:1-25

OBSERVATION POINT

Slavery was common throughout the Roman Empire. Although Onesimus was a Christian, he was still Philemon's slave. Paul didn't demand that Philemon free his slave; he requested that Philemon treat him with kindness. Runaway slaves who were captured and returned to their masters usually faced cruel treatment: branding, whipping, or death.

EXPLORATION POINT

This letter to Philemon emphasizes that Christians should view fellow believers as equals. Paul's request was astonishing for that time period; slaves were positioned far below their masters in the social hierarchy, with little or no rights. His letter is an excellent reminder for us today to treat everyone with love and respect.

NEXT STOP

A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS
INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT WORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL'S APPEAL FOR ONESIMUS

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT WORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

After Paul is released from his initial imprisonment in Rome, he writes a personal letter to Timothy, his friend and trusted colleague. The young church leader has been in Ephesus dealing with the challenges of the growing Christian community that was established there on Paul's second missionary journey. False teaching is threatening the church, and Paul discusses many important issues that Timothy needs to address with the people in his care.

READ:

1TIM 2:1–3:16

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OBSERVATION POINT

The direct advice for conduct in relationships found here and in Ephesians, Colossians, Titus, and 1 Peter are called the household codes of the New Testament. These lists of responsibilities for men, women, children, slaves, and masters were similar in many ways to the social customs of Greco-Roman culture. Paul did, however, encourage a transformed attitude for people in any social situation: respect, gentleness, and servanthood. These attitudes would clearly set Christians apart from the rest of society.

EXPLORATION POINT

Issues of church structure can be contentious among Christians, and finding good leaders requires wisdom. Paul's timeless advice on the issues that Timothy faced in the first century is still valuable to us in the twenty-first century. The places and people have changed, but the issues of prayer, personal conduct, and leadership remain the same. The character of church leaders either strengthens or hinders the growth and influence of Christianity.

NEXT STOP

A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

PAUL'S APPEAL FOR ONESIMUS

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT WORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS

In addition to providing instructions on the practical matter of selecting proper leaders for the church, Paul addresses several issues of Christian conduct in his first letter to Timothy. In this section of his letter, Paul warns Timothy that Satan will influence people to act, speak, and teach the opposite of God's truth. Discerning God's truth is critical for Christians who are seeking to know God's will for their lives.

READ:

1TIM 4:1-16

OBSERVATION POINT

Paul speaks against some teachers who advocated excessive self-denial. This teaching grew in popularity and shared much in common with Gnosticism, which included the belief that matter was evil and the spirit was good. It suggested that the body's desires for sex and delicious food were bad, and that those who abstained from both would be at a higher spiritual level than those who didn't. Paul corrected this false teaching with the reminder, "Everything God created is good."

EXPLORATION POINT

Christians today often “waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives’ tales” as much as the church in the first century did. Petty arguments, judgmental opinions, and virulent disagreements frequently dominate our conversations, especially with people from different denominations. Such discussions have no place in the Christian community. If we focus on Christ and heavenly things, we won’t be distracted by human personalities or bogged down in pettiness.

NEXT STOP

DO WHAT IS GOOD

THE JOY OF CONTENTMENT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS

THE JOY OF CONTENTMENT

As in several of his other letters, Paul gives Timothy some specific instructions for how different groups of people should relate to one another. Here, Paul directly addresses the ways that people should respond to wealth within the church. He has clear advice for the rich—and for those who want to be rich—that needs to be heard.

READ 1 TIM 6:2-21

OBSERVATION POINT

The early Christian church was plagued by individuals who viewed preaching and teaching as a profitable way to promote their own ideas. The Greco-Roman world prided itself on intellectualism and philosophy, and some teachers used their rhetorical skill to cause great confusion within the church. They would combine their personal beliefs with Christian truth and distort the clear teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

EXPLORATION POINT

As Christianity has spread through the world, individuals have often shared their interpretations of Scripture. Some ideas have moved the church forward and been a great blessing, but others have distorted the true teachings of God's Word. False teachers are still with us. Each of us must carefully discern whom to listen to. We must evaluate new ideas by testing them against Scripture with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

NEXT STOP

DO WHAT IS GOOD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A GOOD SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS

THE JOY OF CONTENTMENT

DO WHAT IS GOOD

Around the time that Paul writes his first letter to Timothy, he also writes to Titus. Titus is one of Paul's trusted missionary partners, and he is currently on the island of Crete ministering to the churches there. Paul's letter encourages Titus and the church to stand firm against the challenges of false teachers and Greek culture.

READ:

OBSERVATION POINT

Crete was saturated in Greek mythology. The Cretans believed the god Zeus was once a human who lived and died on Crete. He achieved divine status through his great deeds. The Christian teaching that God humbled himself and became human in Jesus Christ was a radical new way of thinking. Salvation based on God's mercy and grace was also an entirely new concept.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul stresses the importance of proper Christian behavior in his letter to Titus. Our actions and attitudes show others that we are

followers of Christ. We should treat others as God has treated us—with love, mercy, and kindness. The signature characteristic of Christianity is that we imitate God in our love for one another. Doing so is a testament to our faith.

NEXT STOP

ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE FAITHFUL

ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE FAITHFUL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

DO WHAT IS GOOD

DO WHAT IS GOOD

ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE FAITHFUL

Paul writes a second letter to Timothy, but this one is very different in tone. Paul is once again in prison, and this time it seems very clear that he will not be released. Instead, he faces martyrdom. Paul senses that he is nearing the end of his life, so he gives Timothy a direct charge to continue the work of spreading the Good News.

READ:

2TIM 1:1–2:14

OBSERVATION POINT

Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and mother, Eunice, were Jews who had converted to Christianity. They had raised Timothy in the Jewish faith, so he was well versed in Old Testament teaching, but he had not been circumcised because his father was Greek. Timothy joined Paul's missionary team while Paul was ministering in the province of Galatia during his second missionary journey. Timothy was a "young disciple" from Lystra who was highly regarded by the Christian believers in that city and in Iconium.

EXPLORATION POINT

Paul encourages Timothy to "never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord." This commission is for every Christian in all times. We have a tremendous gift from God that is absolutely free. It revolutionizes and revitalizes our lives. Yet we frequently keep it to ourselves. Whether we have grown up following Jesus or have just recently come to know him, we need to share him and his news with others.

NEXT STOP

A CALL TO HOLY LIVING
LIVE FOR GOD'S APPROVAL

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE FAITHFUL

LIVE FOR GOD'S APPROVAL

The tone of the last part of his letter indicates that Paul is aware he is sharing his last words with his faithful disciple Timothy. Paul's work as a missionary has come to a close, but the work of spreading

the Good News must continue. Paul provides practical, timeless advice to all Christians everywhere. He encourages strong Christian behavior and thoughtful speech.

2TIM 2:15–4:22

366 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

Paul faced persecution on many occasions. In Antioch the Jews slandered him, and then an angry mob ran him out of town. In Iconium a crowd planned to stone Paul and Barnabas, but they managed to escape before that happened. In Lystra the people stoned Paul after mistaking him for a god. Timothy was also from Lystra, so he was well aware of the persecution to which Paul referred.

EXPLORATION POINT

Much of Paul's advice in chapter 2 centers around the importance of constructive speech and discussion. In an increasingly divisive world, we would do well to heed Paul's words. He advises believers to avoid inflammatory speech and cautions us against becoming embroiled in "useless arguments." We must stand up for God's truth, but we should not forget to be loving and patient as we do so.

NEXT STOP

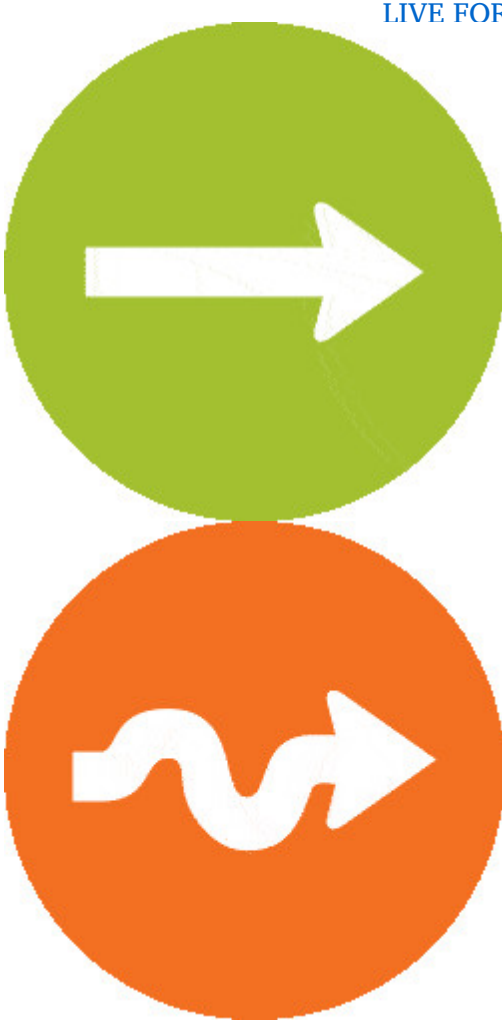
A CALL TO HOLY LIVING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

ENCOURAGEMENT TO BE FAITHFUL

LIVE FOR GOD'S APPROVAL



A CALL TO HOLY LIVING

The apostle Peter is in Rome when he writes this letter to the Christians living in the five Roman provinces of northern Asia Minor. The Christians in this area are being threatened by Romans who find Christianity to be at odds with the dominant Roman

culture and lifestyle. These Romans mistreat the Christians, hoping that they will deny their faith.

OBSERVATION POINT

The persecution that Peter refers to affected many aspects of a Christian's life. The general public, not the government, was the source of the opposition. Christians were falsely accused of misbehavior and were often brought to court. They were discriminated against and endured unfair treatment that affected their families, their employment, and their relationships with friends and acquaintances.

EXPLORATION POINT

Our Christian identity is secure. As believers we are a chosen people: a royal priesthood and a holy nation (2:9). We serve as priests before the King of kings and Lord of lords. And we are God's nation—a people chosen from among all the nations of the world. This identity should encourage rather than overwhelm us because God's Spirit enables us to live up to it.

NEXT STOP

GROWING IN FAITH

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL CHRISTIANS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CALL TO HOLY LIVING

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL CHRISTIANS

After encouraging his audience and addressing the subject of persecution, Peter changes his tone to instruct the people on how to live holy lives as Christians in general and as wives and husbands in particular. He advises them to do good, even if they must suffer to do so. In closing, he reminds them of Christ's triumph over death: their ultimate source of hope.

READ:

1PET 3:1-22

368 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

The hairstyles and clothing of Greco-Roman women in the first century were very elaborate. Sometimes the women wove gold threads through their braids. A wealthy Roman woman's slaves might spend the entire day perfecting her appearance prior to a social event. Peter advised against this excessive adornment because it was time consuming, expensive, and attracted the wrong kind of attention.

EXPLORATION POINT

Peter advises Christians, "Keep a humble attitude. Don't repay evil

for evil. Don't retaliate with insults." But many of us, even Christians, applaud the exact opposite behavior in other people. Drama, angst, and turmoil are inevitable in life, but we should not seek such things. God's desire is for us to live in harmony, love, and peace with others. We have the responsibility to promote peace and calm in a world that is enthralled by the opposite.

NEXT STOP

LIVING FOR GOD

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL CHRISTIANS

LIVING FOR GOD

Peter is keenly aware of the difficulties that his audience faces in their everyday lives. In the final part of his letter, Peter instructs the believers in Christian conduct. He then calls these churches to remain strong during their troubles. He reminds them that persecution is not a cause for shame but an opportunity to rejoice, because it proves that they are living for Jesus.

1PET 4:1–5:14

OBSERVATION POINT

Peter reminds his audience that the devil is very real. Throughout the Bible the devil is depicted as various vicious animals: a serpent (Genesis 3), a roaring lion (1 Peter 5), and a dragon (Revelation 20). These are dangerous, powerful, cunning creatures. We should keep these images in mind and be on guard against the presence of evil, which is crouching at our doors, eager to control us (Genesis 4:7).

EXPLORATION POINT

Peter acknowledges that Christians are vulnerable to slander from people who live the “old” way. Slander is probably the most common kind of suffering that Western Christians experience today. We may be mocked for being naïve, old fashioned, ridiculous, prudish, or narrow minded. Persevering may be difficult for us now, but Peter reminds us that all people will eventually face God and answer for their actions.

NEXT STOP

GROWING IN FAITH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CALL TO HOLY LIVING

LIVING FOR GOD

GROWING IN FAITH

Peter writes a second letter to the Christian churches in Asia Minor shortly after the first. He is still living in Rome. Seeing an increase in persecution against Christians, he seems to think he will be martyred soon. He offers a sharp warning to the believers about false teachers whose teachings are threatening the church. He also encourages Christians to grow in God's grace.

2PET 1:1-21

OBSERVATION POINT

Verses 12-15 are a good example of a popular Jewish literary genre called a “testament.” Near the end of his life, a highly respected Jewish leader would share his testament with others, which included blessings for family members, predictions of their futures, final instructions, and moral teachings. Other testaments in the Bible include Jacob’s blessing of his twelve sons (Genesis 48–49) and David’s instructions to Solomon (1 Kings 2).

EXPLORATION POINT

According to Peter, all Scripture is true. We can trust every part of the Old and New Testaments to be accurate and authentic. The Scriptures are not just a collection of myths and stories handed down from one generation to the next. They form a unique category of literature inspired by the Holy Spirit. Because the Bible is God's story conveyed from God to humans by the Holy Spirit, we know that it is completely true and reliable.

NEXT STOP

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GROWING IN FAITH

GROWING IN FAITH

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

Jude, the brother of James and half brother of Jesus, writes this very brief letter to the Christian church around AD 65. This letter has a single focus: to warn believers against succumbing to false

teaching. Jude encourages believers to stay true to the faith by painting a grim picture of these false teachers and their ultimate destiny. Jude's reminders of the dangers of false teaching are especially important in a culture that has so many distorted ideas about Christianity.

JUDE 1:1-25

OBSERVATION POINT

The prophecy of Enoch that Jude quotes in verses 14-15 refers to the book of 1 Enoch, which was written during the 400-year time period between the end of the Old Testament era and the birth of Jesus. This book belongs to a genre of Jewish apocalyptic literature that arose after the Old Testament era and that used the names of famous Old Testament figures as pseudonyms. Even though these books are not Scripture, they provide excellent insight into Jewish thinking.

EXPLORATION POINT

For centuries the teachings of Christianity have been analyzed, summarized, and clarified. Some thinkers have changed the church for the better. They have created unity and have kept the church's teachings true to Scripture. Others have created dissension, confusion, and division. False teachers are as prevalent today as in the first century. Christians need to know what they believe. A firm faith and knowledge of Scripture will protect us from being swayed by popular preachers who tell us what we want to hear or present a selective version of the Good News.

NEXT STOP

GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH
THE SON IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

THE SON IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS

Offering something between a sermon and a letter, the author of Hebrews addresses a community of Christians, probably living in Rome, who are very familiar with Jewish theology. These Christians seem to be struggling with uncertainty about the adequacy of faith in Jesus, so the author of Hebrews reminds them clearly that Jesus is the only way to have a relationship with God.

READ:

HEB 1:1-14

OBSERVATION POINT

Angels held a prominent place in Jewish theology. The Old Testament often mentions angels but provides little explanation about them. During the exile in Babylon, some Jews became more interested in angels, picking up ideas from other cultures. In popular thought, angels helped to bridge the huge gap between the human and the divine. By the first century, believing in angels was natural and taken for granted, though one Jewish group, the Sadducees, did not believe in angels at all.

EXPLORATION POINT

The writer of Hebrews clearly states Jesus' significance. Jesus is divine as well as human. He created the universe, radiates God's glory, reveals God's character, and sustains all things by his powerful command. We have the privilege of being in a personal relationship with him, the Son of God. We are friends with a caring God who controls the universe yet is also aware of every hair that falls from our heads.

NEXT STOP

A CALL TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE SON IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS

A CALL TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

As the letter to the Hebrews continues, its author calls Jewish Christians to faithfulness and reminds them of their history as a wandering people in the wilderness. The writer reassures them that God's promise of rest still holds true and that Christ is their High Priest. But these believers are in need of some reminders about even more fundamental things. The author addresses their current spiritual condition and calls on them to move toward spiritual maturity.

HEB 5:11–6:20

OBSERVATION POINT

The “baptisms” mentioned in chapter 6 probably refer to the various forms of baptism we see in the New Testament era: John the Baptist’s baptism, the baptism for new converts to Judaism, and the baptism that Jesus commanded. The laying on of hands also had several different purposes. The New Testament connects it with healing, receiving the Holy Spirit, blessing others, and commissioning someone for ministry. These were common and accepted practices within the church and did not require additional explanation and discussion.

EXPLORATION POINT

The writer calls the believers “spiritually dull” because they were being dimwitted and lazy in their approach to faith. The condition of these first-century Christians can befall us today. Sometimes our walk of faith becomes so routine to us that we get lulled into a state of spiritual apathy. If this happens, the answer is not to go looking for trendy new ideas, but to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the fundamental truths of our faith.

NEXT STOP

A CALL TO PERSEVERE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

A CALL TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A CALL TO PERSEVERE

After encouraging persecuted Christians to grow in their faith in order to endure hardships, the writer links the new way of life in Christ with the roots of Jewish culture and history. He provides many reasons why the way of Jesus is superior to the ways people related to God in the past. Jesus is a better High Priest, offering a more lasting sacrifice than the priests of the Old Testament law did.

Because Jesus is the only way forward, we must be careful not to go backwards.

HEB 10:19-39

374 OF 386

OBSERVATION POINT

This passage of Hebrews uses the Temple's Most Holy Place and the old requirements for offerings and sacrifices as illustrations of Christ's work. Water was necessary for purification rites. Sprinkling blood was necessary for the sacrifice for forgiving sin. The Most Holy Place was separated from the larger area of the Tabernacle by a curtain. Christ's coming changed everything. His death on the cross replaced the need for sacrifices. At his death, the curtain in front of the Most Holy Place ripped in half, indicating that all believers could now enter God's presence directly.

EXPLORATION POINT

It is possible that persecution led some believers to stop worshiping together for fear that their gathering would draw attention and cause problems. But worshiping as a community was vital. They needed to support and care for one another. Our circumstances today are quite different, but it is still vitally important for believers to worship together. We must make every effort to gather with other believers regularly to worship and to support one another in our faith. The church of Christ is one body with many members who need one another.

NEXT STOP

GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST

THE DANGER OF FALSE TEACHERS

A CALL TO PERSEVERE

GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH

In the big story, God has always wanted his people to rely on him and demonstrate their faith by the way they lived. There are many examples of these faithful people throughout the Bible. The writer of Hebrews regularly refers to Jewish history in order to connect with the audience and keep their attention. Now the writer focuses on the great heroes of Jewish history who remained strong in their faith. This passage expounds on the lives of well-known historical figures as examples of those who believed in God's promise.

READ:

HEB 11:1-40

OBSERVATION POINT

Many heroes are mentioned by name; others are not. The phrase “shut the mouths of lions, [and] quenched the flames of fire” probably refers, respectively, to Daniel in the lions’ den and to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. The prophets Elijah and Jeremiah both escaped death by the sword, and Elijah and Elisha brought people back from the dead. But faith doesn’t guarantee good outcomes. It is believed that Jeremiah was stoned to death and that Isaiah was sawed in half. Almost two centuries before Christ’s birth, many faithful Jews suffered and died in a struggle against Antiochus IV.

EXPLORATION POINT

These Old Testament heroes are examples of faith for Christians to follow. They were not perfect; they were flawed humans, and yet Hebrews holds them up as worthy of our recognition and emulation. They persevered as they clung to God's promise, even though they died long before the promise was fulfilled. We live knowing that God did keep his promise to send the Messiah and save the world. Knowing that God's promises are secure should help us endure any suffering or trying times we face in life.

NEXT STOP

THE NEW JERUSALEM

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

GOD'S DISCIPLINE PROVES HIS LOVE

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH

GOD'S DISCIPLINE PROVES HIS LOVE

In this section, the author gives Christians instructions for living holy, Christlike lives. Sometimes they will face difficulties as a result of God's discipline in their lives, but this discipline is always intended to direct them to greater holiness. As our loving Father, God corrects us because he cares for us, training us in his way of right living.

READ:

HEB 12:1-29

OBSERVATION POINT

Allusions to athletic activities were common in letter writing during the first century. Physical contests, particularly races, were very popular in Greco-Roman culture. Spectators would line the course and fill the stadium, but the runners would stay focused on the goal by fixing their eyes on the judges at the finish line. Athletes ran in races unhindered by excess clothing to avoid even the slightest encumbrance.

EXPLORATION POINT

The Christian life is a long-distance run rather than a sprint. To

keep our faith strong for an entire lifetime, we can follow these tips: (1) Run the race that God has for you, (2) focus on Jesus, (3) remember that “the LORD disciplines those he loves,” (4) mark out a straight path so you don’t stumble, (5) live in peace, (6) pursue holiness, (7) look after each other, (8) listen to God, (9) be thankful, and (10) worship God with fear and awe.

NEXT STOP

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GOD’S DISCIPLINE PROVES HIS LOVE

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

In the middle of the first century, the apostle John moved from Jerusalem to Ephesus and established a ministry there. His words in his first letter encourage the Christians in the region to hold firmly to their faith, live in God's light, demonstrate love toward God and other people, and resist those who oppose the teachings of the Christian faith.

1JN 1:1–2:27

OBSERVATION POINT

John declares that he has authority and is qualified to speak about Jesus because he really knew Jesus. John personally witnessed Jesus Christ's life—he traveled with him, saw his miracles, heard his teachings, observed his death, encountered the resurrected Christ, and watched his ascension to heaven. John wrote about matters he knew well, matters that changed his life forever.

EXPLORATION POINT

Just as it was in John's day, the church is bombarded with ideas and philosophies that alter or dismiss the basics of the Christian faith. Christ is the only way to the Father. Don't be distracted by other options. Live your life as Jesus did: in love and in the light. Don't wander toward the darkness to which the world beckons you.

NEXT STOP

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP
GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

John continues to instruct the Christians of the first-century church, calling on them to live lives marked by the love that Jesus has given

them. But he mixes the uplifting words with cautionary advice about the ongoing presence of antichrists, false prophets, and incorrect teachings. John reminds his audience that they must be diligent in both their theology and their love for one another.

1JN 3:18–4:21

OBSERVATION POINT

John refers to the story in Genesis 4. Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve, had different occupations: Cain was a farmer, Abel a shepherd. When they brought sacrifices to God, Cain brought just "some" of his crops while Abel brought the "best" of his flock. God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but rejected Cain's because of his attitude in bringing an inferior sacrifice. As a result Cain hated his brother and killed him.

EXPLORATION POINT

Christianity is more than just a philosophy—it's a way of life. We can't confess our faith in worship services and then set it aside when we leave the building. Our faith goes with us. It permeates our thoughts and actions every day of the week. This is a high standard to follow, but we aren't alone. Jesus "lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us." Through the Spirit's power we are able to confidently show our faith through our actions.

NEXT STOP

LIVE IN THE TRUTH

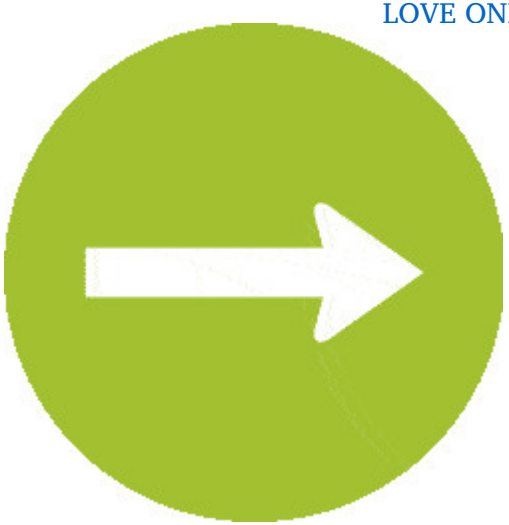
LIVE IN THE TRUTH

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

LOVE ONE ANOTHER



LIVE IN THE TRUTH

The apostle John writes these two short letters around the same time as the first one. Second John is addressed to a specific church and its members and cautions them to avoid those who spread false teachings about Jesus. Third John is a personal note to John's friend Gaius, and it highlights the importance of supporting those who preach the Good News. Both letters provide valuable advice and insights.

2JN 1:1—3JN 1:14

OBSERVATION POINT

Hospitality in the late first century was expected of believers. To welcome someone into your home indicated that you approved not only of the person but of the message that person proclaimed. Through the practice of hospitality, the church was established in homes where gracious hosts and hostesses received early missionaries and believed the gospel. But being hospitable to itinerant teachers and preachers also made church members vulnerable to false teachings. They needed to judge quickly if a new teaching fit with the basic truth of the Christian faith: Christ is God himself in the flesh.

EXPLORATION POINT

The importance of hospitality is evident throughout the New Testament. Although hosting overnight guests may not be as great a necessity now as it was in the first century, all Christians need to promote godly fellowship with one another by inviting one another into their homes. Being with other Christians makes us strong in our faith and less prone to wander from the truth. We shouldn't let pride get in the way of entertaining others. Sharing what we have, no matter how simple or elegant, will keep our faith and fellowship strong.

NEXT STOP

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON
JOHN'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LIVE IN THE TRUTH

JOHN'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

The apostle John, "the disciple Jesus loved," is being persecuted for his faith. He has been sent into exile on the desolate island of Patmos. While there, he receives strange and fantastic visions from the Lord. God instructs John to write letters to seven prominent churches in Asia (modern-day Turkey) to share his visions, give them hope, and call them to repentance.

REV 1:1–2:29

OBSERVATION POINT

Various heresies threatened the early Christian church. Not much is known about the Nicolaitans (2:6, 15), but they seemed to be linked with people who ate food sacrificed to idols and who were involved in sexual immorality. While the church in Ephesus strongly rejected the Nicolaitans, some believers in the church of Pergamum accepted their teaching and practices, and in Thyatira the followers of Jezebel might have also been Nicolaitans.

EXPLORATION POINT

The church in Ephesus faced a problem familiar to many of us. When they were new Christians, they enthusiastically received the faith. But after a time their fervor waned, and they became complacent. John reminds them and us that although we work hard and remain loyal to God, we do not always maintain the enthusiasm we had when we were new to the faith. We must continue to renew our faith and our devotion to God.

NEXT STOP

WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JOHN'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

After transcribing the messages for the seven churches in Asia, John changes his focus. Now he describes in detail the setting for the drama that he sees in his vision of heaven. The events that John describes are a heavenly drama that highlights the significance of God's agent (the Messiah) in world events. Heavenly realities are directly connected to the things that happen here on earth.

READ:

REV 4:1–5:14

OBSERVATION POINT

The drama that unfolds in Revelation takes place in God's heavenly throne room. The description here stretches our imaginations to help us envision God enthroned in power and majesty, surrounded by living creatures who continually worship him in awe. John does not describe God because no one can see him, but he gives us vivid images of precious gems and glistening light, radiance and splendor. These images help us visualize a throne that surpasses any royal seat on earth.

EXPLORATION POINT

Few of us will ever be in the presence of a monarch, president, or head of state. But we have the opportunity for a much greater encounter. Through God's Son Jesus, we have the privilege of direct access to the Almighty, the Creator of the universe. What a blessing and inspiration to know that we are his children and that he loves us. Knowing this and reading John's descriptions of God's throne room should empower us to persevere in faithfulness to God.

NEXT STOP

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

LIVE IN THE TRUTH

WORSHIP IN HEAVEN

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

The stage for the drama is set, and the action begins to heat up. John has described how the Lamb opens a scroll by breaking open the seven seals of judgment. Then seven angels sound the trumpets of judgment. These judgments make it clear that God does not take sin lightly. And now John's vision takes another dramatic turn: A great conflict begins with a confrontation between a woman and a large red dragon.

REV 12:1-18

OBSERVATION POINT

The images in this vision could represent the realities of what was occurring in history. The Roman government was promoting the divinity of the emperor and coercing its people into worshiping him. Participation in the imperial cult was required throughout the empire. Jews and Christians alike struggled against the norm and were persecuted for their beliefs. John's vision of conflict in heaven made first century believers aware of the spiritual realities underlying their struggles and reassured them of Christ's ultimate victory.

EXPLORATION POINT

For those who keep God's commands and continue to believe in Jesus, the battle will be fierce, but the faithful will win in the end. Chaos and power-hungry people may threaten us, but they will not win. God doesn't shield believers from suffering, persecution, or death, but he does provide strength to fight off spiritual attacks and endure suffering. God is on his throne. He is in control. Do not be afraid. Nothing is greater than our Creator.

NEXT STOP

THE NEW JERUSALEM

THE LAMB AND THE 144,000

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

THE LAMB AND THE 144,000

The conflict between the dragon and the woman ends, but new monsters appear: a beast from the sea and another from the earth. Both monsters are servants of the dragon. The beast from the sea brazenly blasphemes God and attacks believers, while the beast from the earth threatens to kill those who don't worship the first beast. But the Lamb from heaven will be victorious.

REV 14:1-20

OBSERVATION POINT

The number 144,000—the 12,000 individuals from each of the twelve tribes of Israel in chapter 7—represents all faithful Christians who belong to God. The original twelve tribes were scattered across the world after being conquered by the Assyrians and the Babylonians centuries earlier. Only a small remnant from the tribe of Judah returned to their homeland. The early Christian church viewed itself symbolically as the tribes of Israel—God's chosen people.

EXPLORATION POINT

The harvest of the earth and then of the grapes is symbolic of God gathering the people of the world to stand before him and be judged. The scene depicted here is tumultuous and frightening; perhaps it will be. But those who believe in Jesus have nothing to dread. We will stand before God to answer for our deeds, but we will be shielded from his wrath. Because Jesus has already taken upon himself the punishment we deserve, God will declare us innocent.

NEXT STOP

THE NEW JERUSALEM

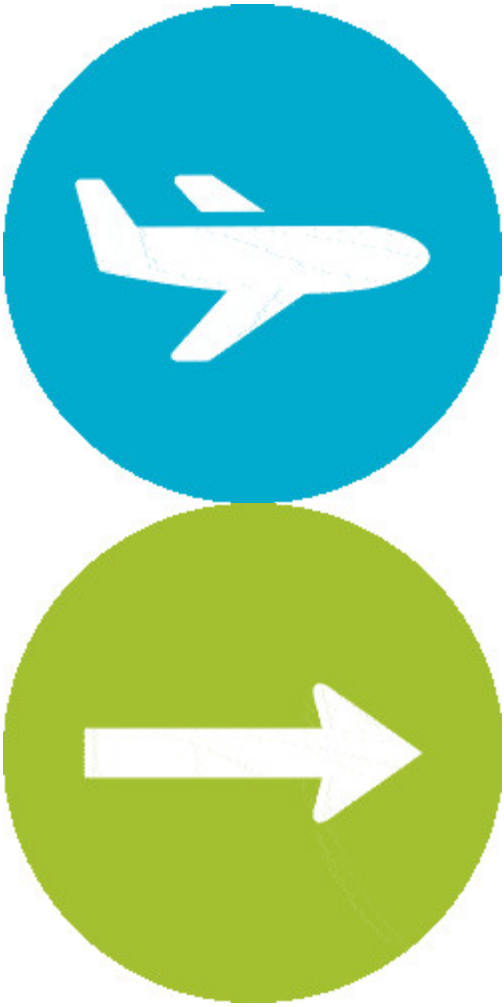
ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

GREAT EXAMPLES OF FAITH

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

THE LAMB AND THE 144,000



THE NEW JERUSALEM

While in exile on the island of Patmos, John experiences amazing visions. These visions give the early Christian church great hope that God will be victorious in all things. God's big story has always been a story of hope for the future. God made covenant promises with his people—for a son, a great nation, a homeland. He provided hope even in times of despair—hope for restoration, renewal, and a Messiah. God continues to promise a future of hope for his church. He shows John his plans through this vision, and God has preserved it to share with the world.

READ: Revelation 21:1–22:6

REV 21:1–22:6

OBSERVATION POINT

The description of the holy city contains imagery from the Garden of Eden, the city of Jerusalem, and the Temple. The Eden imagery is seen in God's dwelling among his people, the springs of the water of life, and the tree of life. The city of Jerusalem is depicted in the imagery of foundation stones, gates, and massive walls. And the shape of the city (a perfect square) corresponds with that of the Most Holy Place, the innermost sanctum of the Temple. An actual Temple is no longer needed because God's presence permeates the entire holy city.

EXPLORATION POINT

God created humans so that he could be in loving relationship with them. Ever since sin shattered that intended relationship, God has been working toward restoration. Covenants, promises, commandments, and the incarnate presence of his Son have all been steps in the process of showing humans his great love for them. The day will come when God will make all things new again. His creation will be restored, and his relationship with his children will be perfected. On that day, sin will be completely eradicated, and every human will bow before him and call him Lord!

NEXT STOP

JESUS IS COMING
JESUS IS COMING

JESUS IS COMING

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

THE NEW JERUSALEM

THE NEW JERUSALEM

THE NEW JERUSALEM

JESUS IS COMING

As the Christian church grew, so did opposition to the new Christian beliefs and their new way of living. The persecuted churches needed hope to persevere. The vision God gave to the apostle John provided great comfort for the early church, and it has continued to do so for the church through the centuries. That story of God's hope continues today. The big story that started at the beginning of time is not over yet. God will reveal himself in Christ the conquering King, and he will unite himself with his followers for all time.

READ:

REV 22:7-21

OBSERVATION POINT

In 22:16, Jesus clearly identifies himself and ties the past to the future. Long ago God promised his people that a star would come from Jacob (Numbers 24:17). To Isaiah he promised that a shoot would come from “the stump of David’s family” (Isaiah 11:1). When Jesus walked the earth, people knew he was the son of David (Matthew 22:42). What was promised so many centuries before has come true. In one statement, Jesus unites thousands of years of prophecies and history.

EXPLORATION POINT

What a triumphant ending! God promises to come again to earth to be with his people. We can rejoice—there's a happy ending to God's big story. And we are all going to be part of it!

NEXT STOP

WAITING FOR CHRIST

WAITING FOR CHRIST

WAITING FOR CHRIST

ITINERARY

PREVIOUS STOP

JESUS IS COMING

JESUS IS COMING

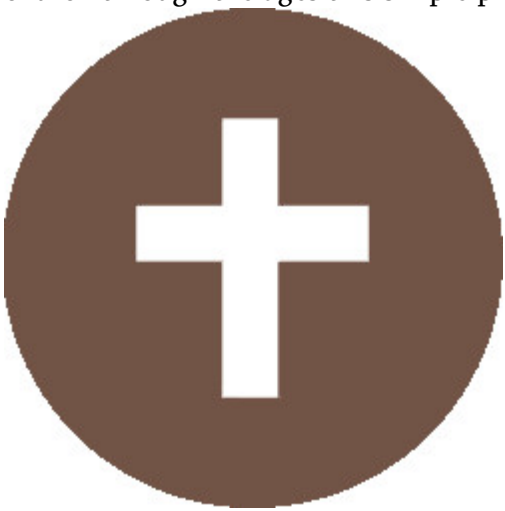
JESUS IS COMING

YEAR:
AD 100
CURRENT WORLD POWER:
Rome
STATUS OF GOD'S PEOPLE:
Filled with God's Spirit
WAITING FOR CHRIST
The story of God's chosen people did not end with the Revelation of John; it continued through the centuries to the present. Although the writings of the early church fathers are not included in the Bible, they contributed to the church's foundation and its beliefs. The beliefs established and recorded during the early centuries of

church history are expressed in the creeds and confessions that are based on the biblical canon and have guided the church for ages. In the two thousand years since Jesus came to earth, his followers have spread the Good News to every continent of the world. Christianity has greatly shaped Western civilization, influencing law, ethics, social practices, philosophy, the arts, and politics. Much of the modern West is steeped in Judeo-Christian beliefs, first formed in the Old Testament and renewed by Jesus Christ. Today, over two billion people call themselves Christians and are waiting for Christ's glorious return to earth.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Just as all believers in the past have waited, we too wait for God to fulfill his promise that Jesus will come again to reign in glory. We do not know when he will come, but we live in faithful anticipation of his triumphant return. As we wait, we live in faithful obedience to God, doing what he has called us to do in life to bring him glory and promote his Kingdom. With expectation, we pray with the church through the ages this simple prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus!"



JESUS AS TRUE NORTH

From the time of Creation, Jesus has been present in the world. He was present when the universe was set in place, and he was present with the chosen people of the Old Testament. He came to earth as a human baby and lived with his people for thirty-three years. He suffered and died for the sins of the world, then he conquered death when he rose again—all so that he could be with the people and creation he loved. After he ascended into heaven, he gave his Spirit to his people, comforting them and enabling them to boldly share

the Good News with others. Jesus' followers live for him, worship him, and bring him glory. At a time known only to God, Jesus will come again to earth and reign in glory over the new creation. He will be with us forever.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?

Gen 2:8-9

GARDEN OF EDEN

The exact location of the Garden of Eden remains a mystery, but we do know its general vicinity. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are the clearest landmarks. We also know that early civilization centered in the Fertile Crescent, the area sweeping through modern-day Kuwait, Iraq, Syria, and Israel. Eden was located either in the northern mountains around the source of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, or in the southern delta region, closer to the Persian Gulf.

Gen 4:17

THE CITY OF ENOCH

Cain might have built this city in order to defy God's punishment—the curse that Cain would always be wandering. Or God may have used the city to protect Cain as he promised. Walls surrounded the

city to protect its inhabitants. The city, named after Cain's firstborn son, Enoch, is the first city mentioned in the Bible. This Enoch is a completely different person than the one who walked with God and never died (Genesis 5:22-24).

Gen 8:3-4

THE MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT

The mountains of Ararat may be the same mountain range that today is located southeast of the Black Sea near Lake Van. This mountain range spreads across parts of modern-day Turkey, Armenia, and Iran. A Mount Ararat is located in eastern Turkey, but the Bible refers to a range of mountains, not one specific summit.

Gen 10:32

NATIONS OF THE WORLD

The descendants of Noah's three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—

became the great nations of the ancient Near East. Shem's descendants went to northern Arabia and Mesopotamia, Ham's descendants headed into Africa and southern Arabia, and Japheth's family scattered to Asia Minor and Europe. The stories of the Old Testament focus on Shem's descendants and the enemy nations that collided with them.

▸ *Djoser pyramid, Egypt*

Gen 11:4

TOWER OF BABEL

The tower was likely a much larger version of the ziggurats of ancient Mesopotamia. The ziggurat was a common temple structure

in ancient Babylonia, built in the center of a city to encourage deities to come down to earth. The people believed the deities would then enter the temple and bless those who worshiped them. This temple-tower did produce the expected result—God indeed came down from heaven, but he did not give them his blessing.

Gen 11:28

UR OF THE CHALDEANS

Ur was an important city in Mesopotamia, established centuries before Abram was born. It had a complex system of government and trade, as well as a writing system that was used for issuing receipts, making contracts, and drafting other legal documents. Sir Leonard Woolley's excavation of Ur in 1922–1934 disclosed that the civilization was highly developed. The city itself contained streets, drains, two-story houses, a temple tower, and roads linking it with other cities in the region.

Gen 13:1

THE NEGEV

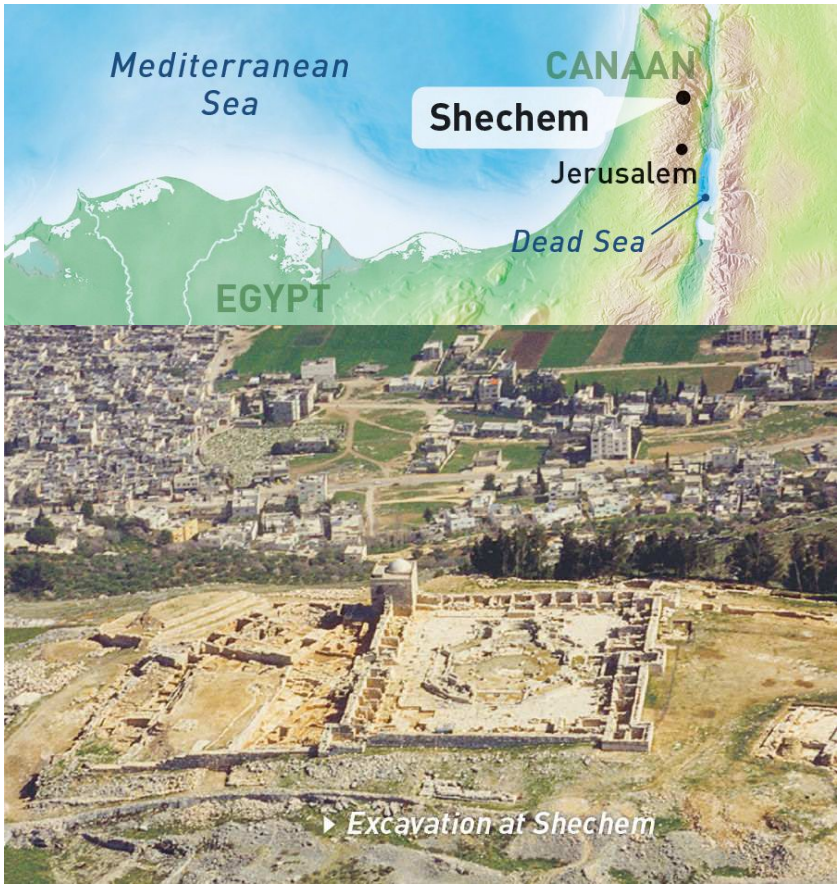
The Negev was the desert region southeast of the fertile area in Canaan. The region's economy depended primarily on herding sheep, goats, and camels. Major trade routes also ran through the Negev.

Gen 18:1–19:38

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Sodom and Gomorrah were located on the south end of the Dead Sea in the Jordan Valley. In Abraham's time, this area was densely populated and very fertile, with a major water source. The exact location of these cities is uncertain because the area became

desolate over time. Some believe that the ruins of the cities lie in the shallow waters of the Dead Sea.



Gen 34:1-31

SHECHEM

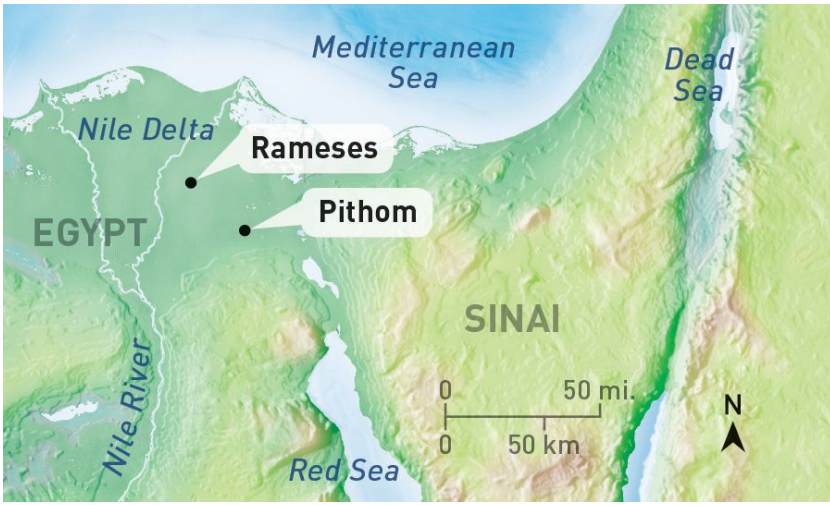
The city itself was fortified by massive earth embankments topped with walls made from bricks and sitting on a stone foundation. Inside the city was a palace temple complex consisting of many rooms. The population was substantial, but it is uncertain how many men were slaughtered or how many women and children were captured.

The Khufu (foreground) and Khafra (background) pyramids at Giza

Gen 37:1–50:26

EGYPT

Egypt was a powerful nation and an influential culture. God used Joseph's move to Egypt to shape his family and their descendants in ways that even Joseph never dreamed.



Exod 1:11

PITHOM AND RAMESES

The modern cities of Tell el-Maskhutah and Qantir are located where Pithom and Rameses once stood. These ancient cities were located in the northern region of Egypt, in the Nile delta. Both were built during the Late Bronze period when the Hebrews were living in Egypt (1550–1250 BC).

Exod 2:15

MIDIAN

Midian was the region just east of the Gulf of Aqaba—beyond the southern Sinai Peninsula on the western edge of the Arabian Peninsula. Southern Arabia was connected to Egypt by a trade route

that passed through this desert region. Living in Midian prepared Moses to lead the Hebrews when they later traveled through this area.

Exod 7:20-25

THE NILE DELTA

The Nile River was and continues to be the great river of Egypt, providing water and thus life to this otherwise dry region. Because the Nile flows north from Lake Victoria to the Mediterranean, the Nile region in the south is called “Upper Egypt.” The yearly flooding of the river brought minerals and silt as well as water to

the delta, creating a vast fertile plain.

Exod 15:27

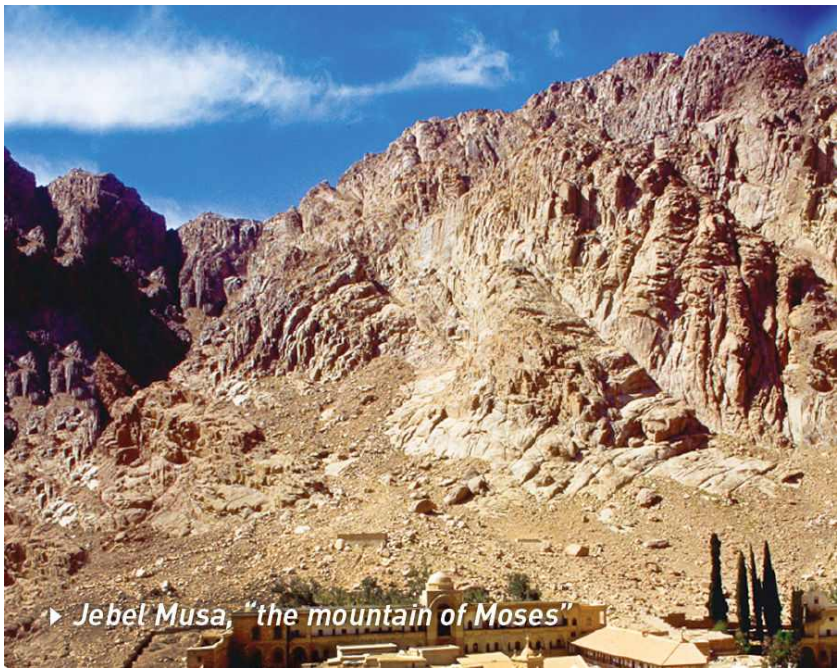
ELIM

Elim was an oasis in the desert that had twelve springs and seventy palm trees. This was the second stop for the Hebrews after crossing the Red Sea. It is thought to be located seven miles south of modern-day Ain Hawarah in the fertile valley of Gharandel.

Exod 19:1-2

WILDERNESS OF SINAI

The wilderness of Sinai is a small region located in the south-central area of the Sinai Peninsula. It is a mountainous area containing Mount Sinai. The highest peaks of these granite mountains reach eight thousand feet above sea level and are snow covered in winter. The Israelites camped in this region for over a year.



Jebel Musa, "the mountain of Moses"

Exod 19:3-8

MOUNT SINAI

Mount Sinai is a mountain in the southernmost part of the Sinai Peninsula. It is also called Mount Horeb or the mountain of God. God first spoke to Moses here in the form of a burning bush. Later, on the same mountain, he gave Moses the law and the Ten Commandments while the Israelites camped below on the desert plain.

Lev 7:37-38

MOUNT SINAI

Mount Sinai was a peak in the mountain range of the southern Sinai Peninsula. The mountain is also referred to as “Horeb” and “the mountain of God.” Two major revelations from God happened here: He declared his name, “Yahweh,” to Moses in the burning bush; and later, he presented the Ten Commandments and the law to Moses. Some scholars believe that Jebel Musa, a 7,363-foot granite mountain rising high above the plain below, is likely the modern-day site.

Num 6:22-27

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

This simple but elegant Hebrew blessing has comforted millions of believers since the time of Moses. In 1979 excavators discovered two silver scrolls in a rock tomb in Ketef Hinnom, southwest of the original city of Jerusalem. These scrolls contained phrasing very similar to the blessing recorded in Numbers 6:24, demonstrating the timeless relevance of these sacred words.

Num 8:1-4

THE LAMPSTAND

The lampstand symbolized the light of God's presence among his

people. Bezalel had originally fashioned it after almond branches with buds and petals holding each lamp. It was made of pure gold and weighed seventy-five pounds.

Num 12:16

THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN

The Hebrews camped in the wilderness of Paran while the spies explored the land. Little did they know that they were already inside the territory that God had promised to them. Their campsite eventually became part of the territory of the tribe of Judah and was known as Kadesh-barnea. About 400 years later, when David ruled the entire kingdom, Kadesh-barnea was located along the southernmost boundary of the kingdom, about fifty miles southwest of Beersheba.

N
Damascus
ARAM
Sea of Galilee
BASHAN
Mediterranean Sea
Ashtaroth
Edrei
Ramoth-gilead
Jordan River
GILEAD
Mahanaim
AMMON
Rabbah (Amman)
Heshbon
Medeba
Dead Sea
MISHOR
Dibon
MOAB
Kir-hareseth
The King's Highway
EDOM
Petra
WILDERNESS OF PARAN
0
50 mi.
0
50 km
Gulf of Aqaba (Red Sea)
Ezion-geber

Num 21:21-22

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

The "king's highway" was a well-known trade route connecting Damascus to the Red Sea. Anyone traveling from one end to the other had to go through Edom. Edom still distrusted Israel. It was a nation of people descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob, and the resentment between these brothers was carried on by their descendants, turning two rivals into two warring nations. Today, the King's Highway in modern Jordan follows part of this 5,000-year-old route.

Num 22:5

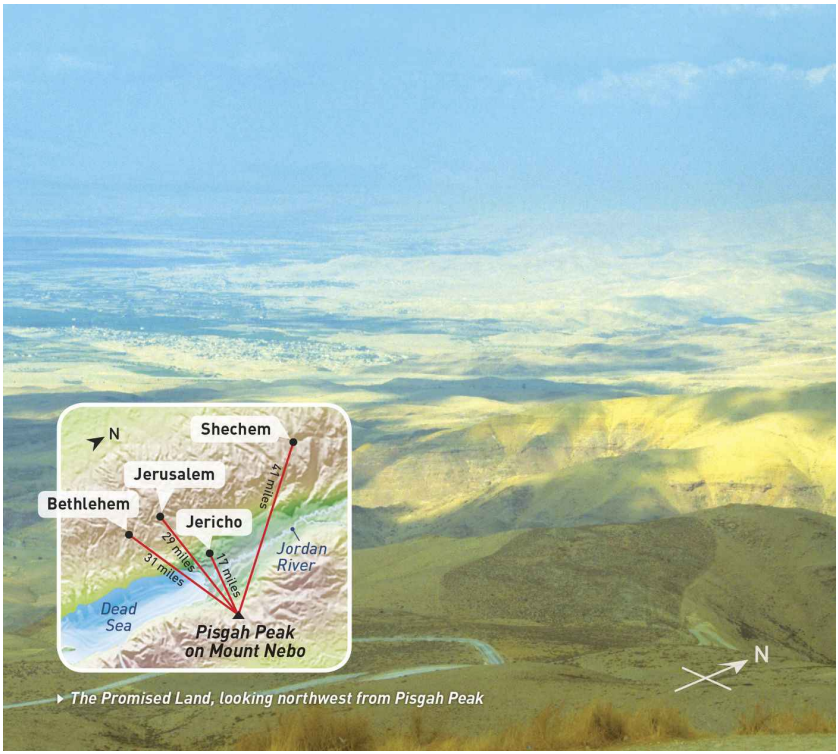
THE LAND OF PETHOR

The land of Pethor was the homeland of Balaam, the diviner hired to curse the Hebrews. Pethor was located in northern Mesopotamia, west of the Euphrates River and south of Carchemish. Balaam would have had to travel about four hundred miles to reach Moab.

Num 33:11

WILDERNESS OF SIN

The wilderness of Sin—probably derived from the word “Sinai”—was one of several deserts on the Sinai Peninsula. It was located along the Gulf of Suez in the southwest, an area known for its turquoise and copper mines. The Egyptians had already been mining turquoise in the area for a millennium.



Deut 3:26-27

PISGAH PEAK

Pisgah Peak was the highest point in the mountainous Abarim region of Moab, located on the east side of the Jordan River. From this vantage point, Moses could see the Promised Land in every

direction.

Deut 5:6-21

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments are the climax of the laws God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. They clearly and succinctly state what humans must do to be in a relationship with a holy God. They are unique among all the other Old Testament laws, and are some of the only laws that appear twice in the Bible, first in Exodus 20 and again in Deuteronomy 5. These ten rules for living reflect God's character and speak to all people of every age.

▸ *The Jordan River, with the Sea of Galilee in the background*

Josh 3:1-17

THE JORDAN RIVER

▸ *Excavation at Jericho*

Josh 6:1-27

EXCAVATION AT JERICHO

Josh 11:10-11

HAZOR

Hazor was an exceptional city north of the Sea of Galilee. At its peak, it may have been home to as many as 40,000 people. But when Israel conquered the region, Hazor was the only city that Joshua burned to the ground (11:13). The excavated site clearly shows that the city was destroyed by fire in the latter part of 1200s BC, reinforcing the biblical account. By the time of Solomon, two hundred years later, the city was rebuilt and well-fortified and stood for almost three hundred years. Today, the site is known as Tell el-Qedah.

Josh 13:5, 11

MOUNT HERMON

▸ Excavation at Shechem in modern-day Nablus

Josh 24:32

THE CITY OF SHECHEM

Shechem was a major site in Canaan, centrally located in the Promised Land. Jacob had purchased land near it (Genesis 33:18-19), leading to tragedy when his daughter Dinah was raped by the men of Shechem and Jacob's sons avenged her. Eventually Jacob gave the land to Joseph as an inheritance, and Joseph's burial in Shechem confirmed what God had promised—this land would belong to Abraham's descendants (Genesis 12:6-7).

Judg 3:8

BETWEEN THE TWO RIVERS

Aram-naharaim literally means "Aram of the two rivers." It was a region in northwestern Mesopotamia between the Euphrates and Balih Rivers. Some scholars say that Aram-naharaim refers to all of

Mesopotamia—the region located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Isaac's wife, Rebekah, and Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel, came from this area. Balaam the prophet also came from the land between the two rivers.

Judg 3:12

THE MOABITES

The Moabites lived across the Jordan River, southeast of the Promised Land. At this time, however, they were encroaching on Israel's territory west of the Jordan River as far as Jericho. God's people warred with the Moabites to drive them back into their own territory.

Judg 4:14

MOUNT TABOR

Mount Tabor is a 1,900-foot-high mountain located beside the Jezreel Valley. Barak's troops safely hid in the dense forests of this mountain until they were ready to attack the enemy.

Judg 6:1

THE LAND OF MIDIAN

The land of Midian was located to the south in the Arabian Peninsula and farther to the east, past the Gulf of Aqaba. Moses had fled to this region, married the daughter of Jethro, and lived there as a shepherd before the Exodus. These Midianite raiders were a long way from home and had joined forces with other Canaanites to harass God's people.

Jokneam, in the Jezreel Valley

Judg 6:33

THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL

The valley of Jezreel was a popular battlefield during the time of the judges. Deborah and Barak had defeated Sisera in battle here. Now, years later, Gideon would face the Midianites in the same valley.

Judg 11:4

AMMON

Ammon was a nation located east of the Jordan River and outside the boundaries of the Promised Land. God had prohibited the Hebrews from taking the land of the Ammonites because he had designated it for the descendants of Lot (Deuteronomy 2:16-19). Contrary to the king's complaint, the Hebrews had not stolen his land because, at the time, another people, the Amorites, had lived

there.

Judg 13:25

MAHANEH-DAN

Mahaneh-dan was Samson's hometown. It was either a small town or a temporary settlement about fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, in the valley of Sorek. It was situated at the pass that led into the territory of the Philistines, who had recently come to occupy the area.

Ruth 1:2

THE LAND OF MOAB

Moab was the country southeast of Israel on the opposite side of the Dead Sea. Because of its location, Moab usually received rain when Israel experienced drought. The Israelites despised the Moabites, calling them a cursed race (Deuteronomy 23:3-6). The Moabites descended from Lot's son Moab.

1 Sam 1:3

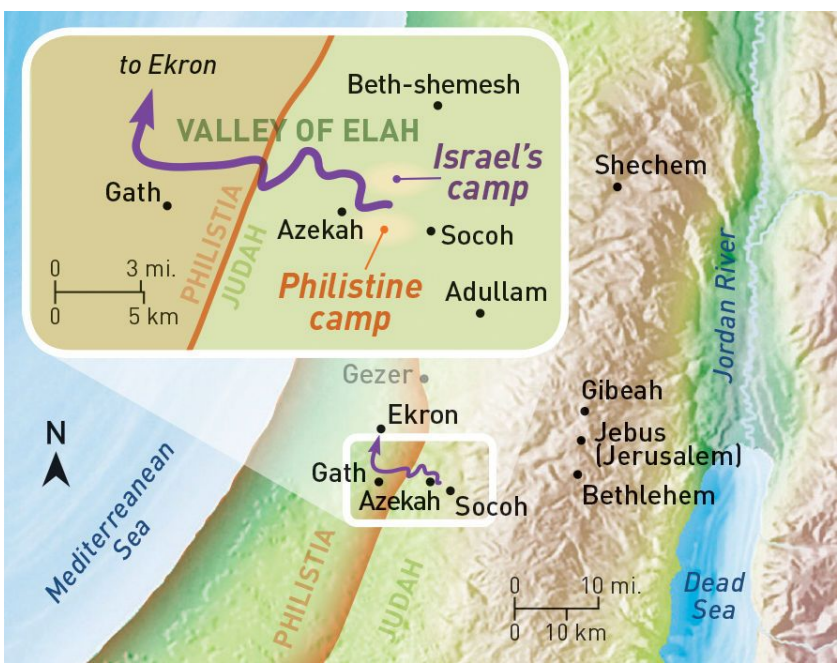
THE CITY OF SHILOH

Shiloh was a town in the territory of Ephraim, about 8.5 miles north of Bethel and 12 miles north of Jerusalem. Joshua placed the Tabernacle of God here (Joshua 18:1). It remained there for at least two hundred years until King David moved the special tent to Jerusalem.

1 Sam 5:6

THE CITY OF ASHDOD

Ashdod was one of the five major Philistine cities. From Gaza, it was located up the Great Trunk Road along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. When the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant, they took it to the temple of Dagon here, and God sent a plague on the city.



1 Sam 17:19

THE VALLEY OF ELAH

The valley of Elah, located south and west of Bethlehem, stretched out over ten miles. The Israelite army camped in the mountains on the north side of the valley, and the Philistines in the mountains on the south side near Azekah and Socoh in Judah's territory. After defeating the Philistines, the Israelites chased them back into their own territory along the Mediterranean Sea.

1 Sam 19:18

THE CITY OF RAMAH

Ramah was Samuel's hometown, located about five miles north of Jerusalem along the route to Bethel. David fled to Ramah to escape King Saul's attempt to kill him. Ramah eventually became a fortress on the border between Israel and Judah (2 Chronicles 16:1).

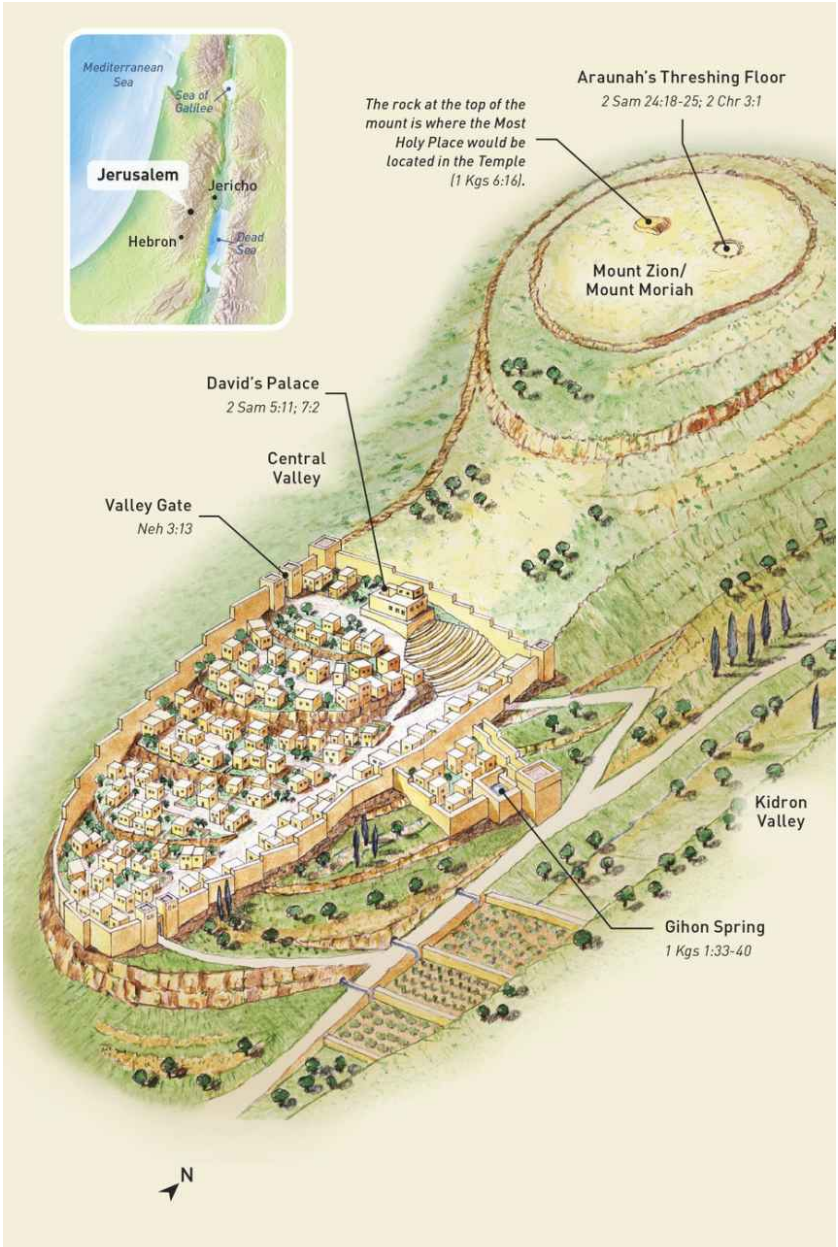
▸ *En-gedi, west of the Dead Sea*

1 Sam 24:1-2

THE CAVES OF EN-GEDI

Caves dotted the wilderness of En-gedi because of the deposits of chalk, limestone, and sandstone that were easily hollowed out by rainwater. The cave where David and his four hundred men hid was one of many huge caves in the area that could easily accommodate

hundreds of people. The residents of En-gedi used the caves as homes and as burial sites.



2 Sam 5:6-7

JERUSALEM: THE CITY OF DAVID

Jerusalem was a well-established city four hundred years before David captured it from the Jebusites and made it Israel's capital. As the political and spiritual capital of Israel, Jerusalem was a walled fortress situated on a mountaintop, surrounded by valleys. Its location made it almost impregnable. Only three invaders successfully captured the city in the Old Testament: David (1004 BC), King Jehoash of Israel's northern kingdom (about 791 BC), and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (605 BC).

2 Sam 15:23

THE KIDRON VALLEY

The Kidron Valley runs north and south, separating Jerusalem in the west from the Mount of Olives in the east. The valley turns to the southwest for about 200 meters before turning south again, and the Temple and royal palace were situated in this crook. During Absalom's coup, David fled Jerusalem by crossing through this valley, and his descendent Jesus passed through this valley, too, crossing over to the Mount of Olives before his crucifixion. For these reasons, the Kidron Valley symbolizes suffering to this day.

2 Sam 18:18

ABSALOM'S MONUMENT

Absalom erected a pillar to remind people of his name and his presence on earth, since he did not have a son to carry on his

memory. (Absalom did have three sons, but since their names are never given, scholars assume that they died as infants.) Much later in history, a second monument was placed in the valley east of Jerusalem to remember Absalom. It is still there today.

2 Sam 18:23

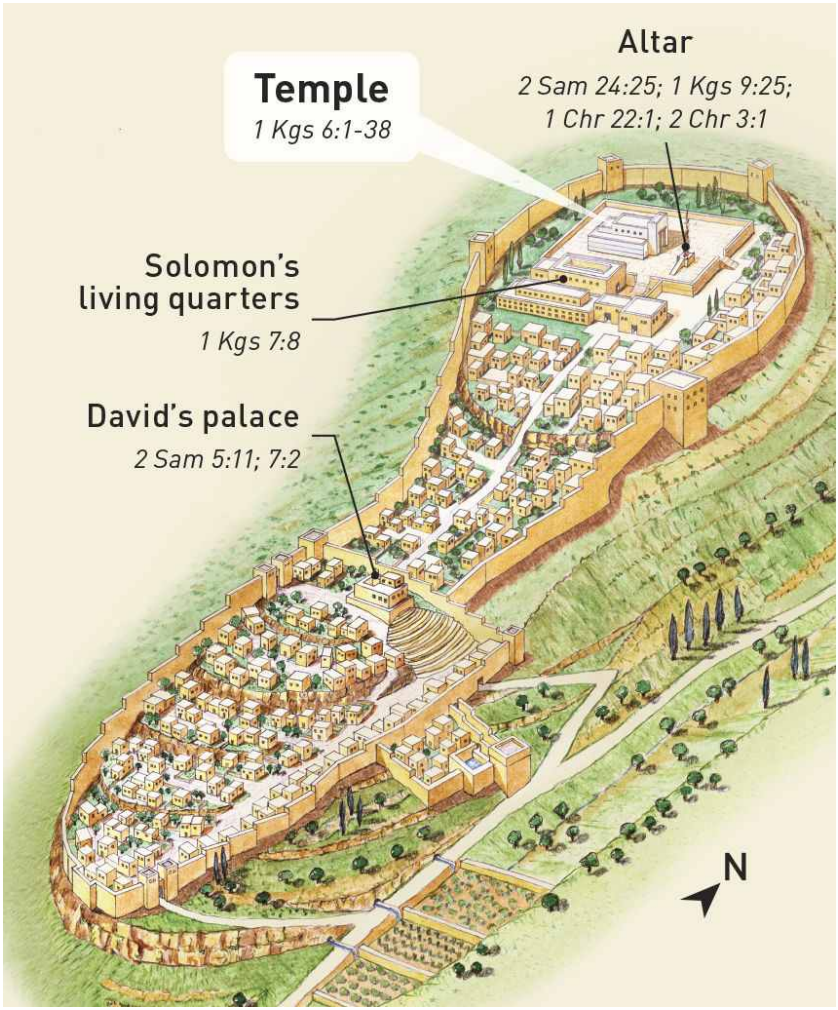
THE CITY OF MAHANAIM

The city of Mahanaim was located near the Jabbok River and east of the Jordan River. For increased security, this city had double walls with gates in each wall. Any invader would exert twice the effort to invade the city. David situated himself between the gates in the two walls, waiting for news of the battle. There was a small room above this gateway. From the roof of that room, the watchmen could see a great distance and announce a runner's approach.

1 Kgs 3:3-4

THE CITY OF GIBEON

The city of Gibeon was located six miles northwest of Jerusalem. One of the most important places for worshiping God was here. Its huge bronze altar could accommodate the large royal sacrifices that Solomon made to the Lord. The Tabernacle from the time of Moses was also located here, but the Ark of the Covenant, which was normally housed in the Tabernacle, remained in Jerusalem in a special tent.


Temple
1 Kgs 6:1-38
Altar
2 Sam 24:25; 1 Kgs 9:25;
1 Chr 22:1; 2 Chr 3:1
Solomon's
living quarters
1 Kgs 7:8
David's palace
2 Sam 5:11; 7:2
N

1 Kgs 6:1–7:51

THE TEMPLE

Solomon's Temple stood on the site of the threshing floor of Araunah, which David had purchased. This is also the location of Mount Moriah, where Abraham had prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac to God. The Temple was located in the northeastern corner of Jerusalem, in a new section of the city that Solomon had fortified and built up so that a large flat area could accommodate the Temple. Today this area is known as "the old city" and surrounds the Dome of the Rock, an Islamic holy site.

1 Kgs 10:1-13

SHEBA

Sheba was a prosperous commercial center located in southwestern Arabia (modern-day Yemen). The people of Sheba traded

extensively throughout Africa, India, and Syria. Sailors on the merchant ships told tales of Solomon's vast wealth and wisdom, spreading the news along the trade routes of the ancient world.

The region of Samaria

1 Kgs 16:29-32

SAMARIA

Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel for 150 years, was established by King Omri as the new capital when he relocated the seat of government from the city of Tirzah, which was farther east. Samaria, centrally located in the northern kingdom, rose 300 feet above the fertile valleys below. Extensive excavations

in the twentieth century uncovered the remains of a palace built there during the time of Omri and Ahab.

1 Kgs 18:1-40

MOUNT CARMEL

Mount Carmel crowns a mountain ridge at the entrance to the Jezreel Valley in what was once the tribal territory of Asher. It was a prime location for challenging Baal worship. The mountain rises 556 feet above the Mediterranean Sea, overlooking the harbor of the modern-day city of Haifa.

Hazor, near Israel's border with Aram

2 Kgs 5:1

THE LAND OF ARAM

Aram, once part of David and Solomon's kingdom, was a nation northeast of Israel. Damascus, its capital city, was established at an oasis watered by the clear Abana and Pharpar Rivers. Throughout its history, Aram battled with Israel's kings. The kingdom of Aram

ended in 732 BC when the Assyrians conquered the entire region.

2 Kgs 23:33

THE CITY OF RIBLAH

Riblah was a fortified city in Aram that served as a political and military administration center for armies controlling that territory. Political prisoners and captives of war were detained and judged here. It was sixty miles northeast of Damascus on the Orontes River. Pharaoh Neco imprisoned King Jehoahaz of Judah in Riblah until he transported him to Egypt as a prisoner.

1 Chr 29:4

THE LAND OF OPHIR

Some of the descendants of Noah's son Shem inhabited a region called Ophir. It was located either somewhere in India, Arabia (possibly present-day Oman), or on the east coast of Africa (possibly

present-day Somalia). Famous for its gold mines, it may also have been a stopping point for ships sailing the trade route to India. Gold is no longer mined there.

2 Chr 13:4

MOUNT ZEMARAIM

Mount Zemaraim was probably located on the border between the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin—that is, between the northern and southern kingdoms. Its mountain range was north of the city of Mizpah, near Bethel. Mount Zemaraim shared its name with a town in the northern part of Benjamin's territory.

2 Chr 21:10

THE TOWN OF LIBNAH

Libnah was a town located at the western end of the Valley of Elah and bordering Philistine territory. Joshua originally captured it and designated it for the Levites and as a city of refuge for all the people. The town fought for its independence while King Jehoram was busy fighting the Edomites some seventy miles to the southeast, on the edge of the kingdom of Judah.

2 Chr 30:5

BOUNDARIES OF ISRAEL

Beersheba was the southernmost city in the Promised Land. Dan was the city farthest to the north. Mentioning these two cities implied that Hezekiah's invitation was sent to the farthest points of what had once been the united kingdom, even if those cities were now controlled by other nations.

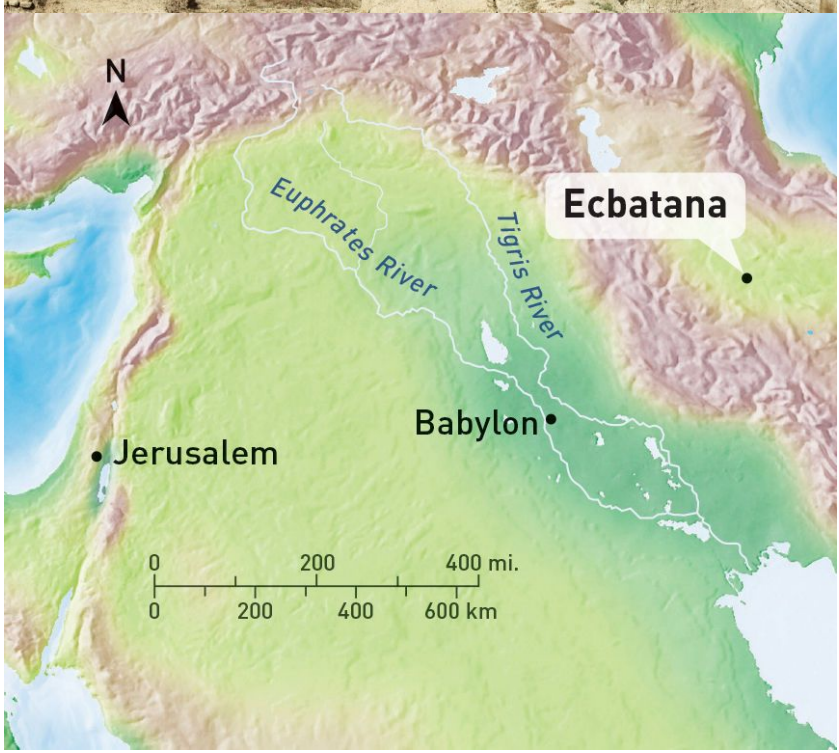
2 Chr 32:30

HEZEKIAH'S TUNNEL

King Hezekiah's tunnel (see 2 Kings 20:20) was a famous engineering feat in the ancient world. He commissioned a tunnel to be dug under the city through solid rock to transport water into Jerusalem, even if the city was under siege. Fresh water from the Gihon Spring flowed through the tunnel to the pool of Siloam. The

tunnel was six feet high and almost a third of a mile long. In 1837 Edward Robinson explored the tunnel. Later, in 1880, children found an inscription on the tunnel wall marking the spot where the workers met after digging from opposite ends.

Excavation at Ecbatana



Ezra 6:2

THE CITY OF ECBATANA

The city of Ecbatana, about 300 miles northeast of Babylon, was the location of the Persian king's summer home. It was one of four capital cities in the empire, along with Babylon, Persepolis, and Susa. Today Ecbatana is the Iranian city of Hamadan. The ancient city's ruins have not yet been fully excavated.

Ezra 8:15

THE AHAVA CANAL

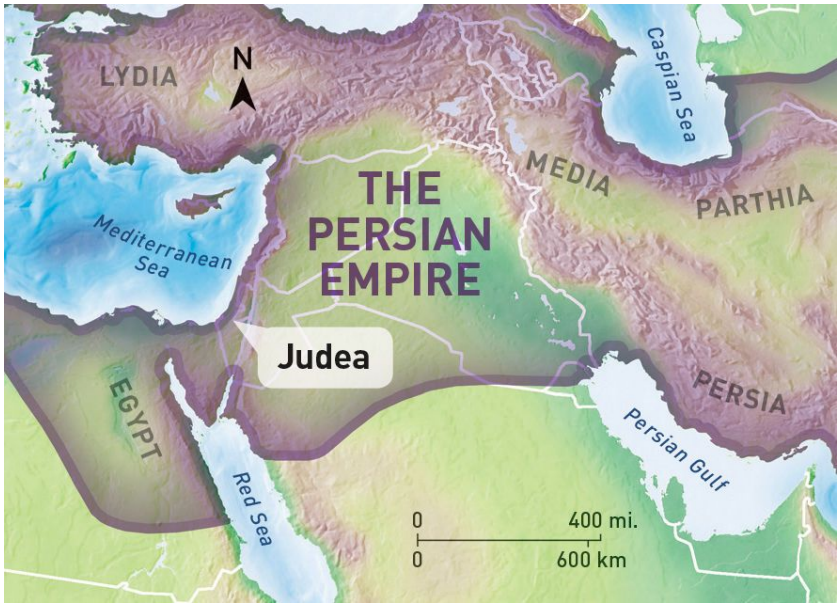
The Ahava Canal was a waterway near Babylon that flowed from the Euphrates River, bringing water to areas throughout the Persian Empire. Its exact location is not known.

The prophet Daniel's tomb in Susa, Iran

Neh 1:1

THE CITY OF SUSA

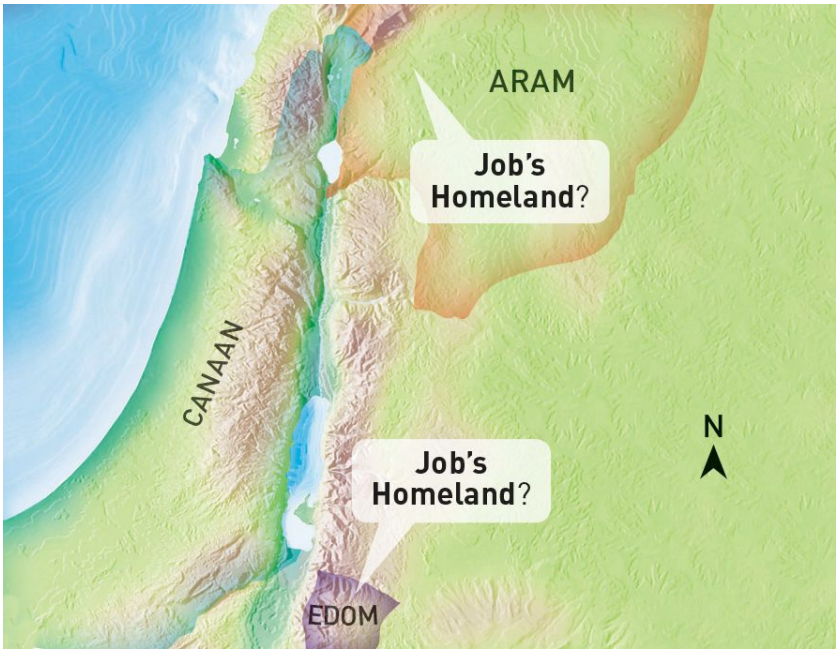
Susa was the winter residence of the Persian kings. There were three other capital cities in the Persian Empire: Babylon, Ecbatana, and Persepolis. Nehemiah served the king in Susa, and one of Daniel's visions took place there as well (Daniel 8:2). The citadel at Susa was a fortified complex containing the acropolis and palace and was separate from the rest of the city. During the 1800s, archaeologists verified that Xerxes renovated the palace extensively while he was king.



Esth 1:1-2

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

The Persian Empire in Esther's time extended from present-day Pakistan to southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia. King Xerxes tried to extend his empire by invading Greece but was unsuccessful. Herodotus, a Greek historian, recorded that the Persian Empire was organized into twenty satrapies, or territories. The provinces were smaller administrative units within each satrapy; Judah was one of those 127 provinces.



Job 1:1

THE LAND OF UZ

The location of the land of Uz is difficult to determine. It was possibly in the area of Edom located to the southeast of Canaan, on the other side of the Jordan River. It could also have been somewhere near Aram to the north. It was close to a desert (Job 1:19), but it had fertile land ideal for raising sheep and cattle. Wherever it was, it was quite a distance from where God's chosen

people lived at that time.

Job 27:8

ANCIENT WRITINGS ABOUT SUFFERING

The book of Job is similar to many other ancient Near Eastern literary texts, suggesting that, for a very long time, people have asked, “Why is there suffering?” The Canaanite legend of King Keret, the Egyptian text “Dispute over Suicide,” and the Babylonian poems “I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom” and “Babylonian Theodicy” all have aspects that are similar to the story of Job. One significant difference is that the other accounts speak of many gods vying with one another for justice, while Job appeals to only one, all-powerful deity. But the greatest difference is that the book of Job was inspired by God, while the others were not.

Ps 72:10

SHEBA

King Solomon had become famous throughout the world. The queen of Sheba, which was a country in southwestern Arabia, brought gifts to him to acknowledge his greatness, authority, and high position. Sheba continues to be a land of mysteries. It had fertile land and hills that were rich in gold and precious stones. The Romans attempted to conquer it in the first century BC but were unsuccessful. In 1950 an archaeological expedition researched a temple in the ancient capital of Marib, but little else is known about this area.

Ps 114:5

JORDAN RIVER

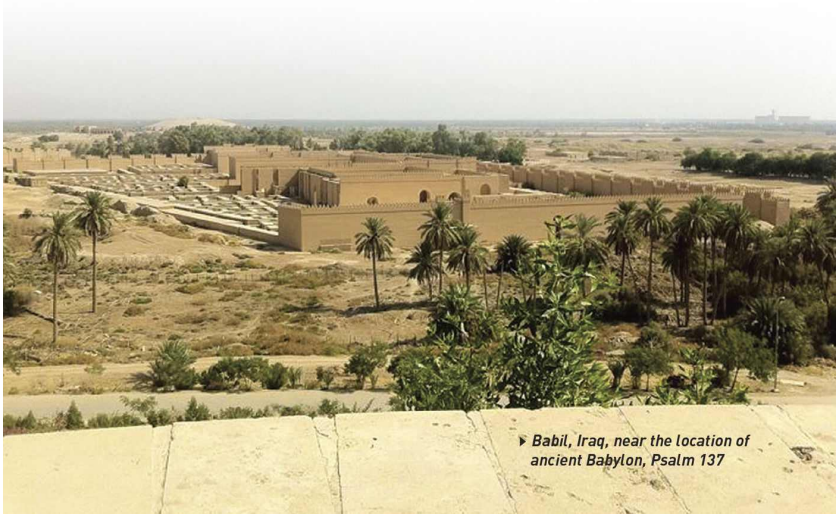
Ps 136:13-15

THE SHORES OF THE RED SEA

Ps 137:1-9

THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

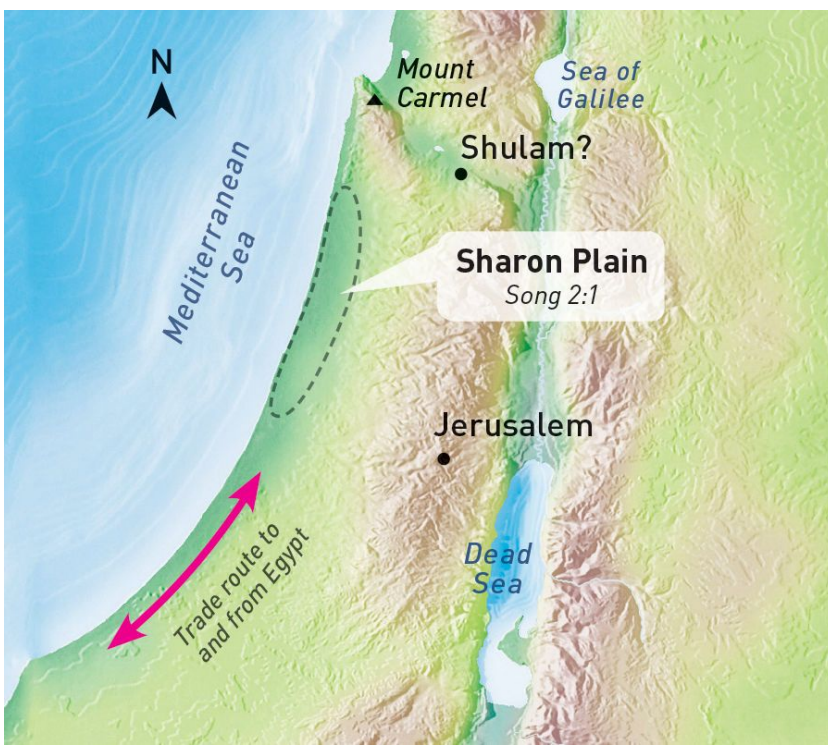
The “rivers of Babylon” included the two main rivers of the region, the Tigris and the Euphrates, as well as numerous canals and waterways that channeled the water into the areas surrounding the city of Babylon. In ancient times these two main rivers created a well-watered land area called the Fertile Crescent, the cradle of civilization. Today these rivers are vitally important for supplying water to the countries of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq.



▸ *Babil, Iraq, near the location of ancient Babylon, Psalm 137*

Ps 137:9

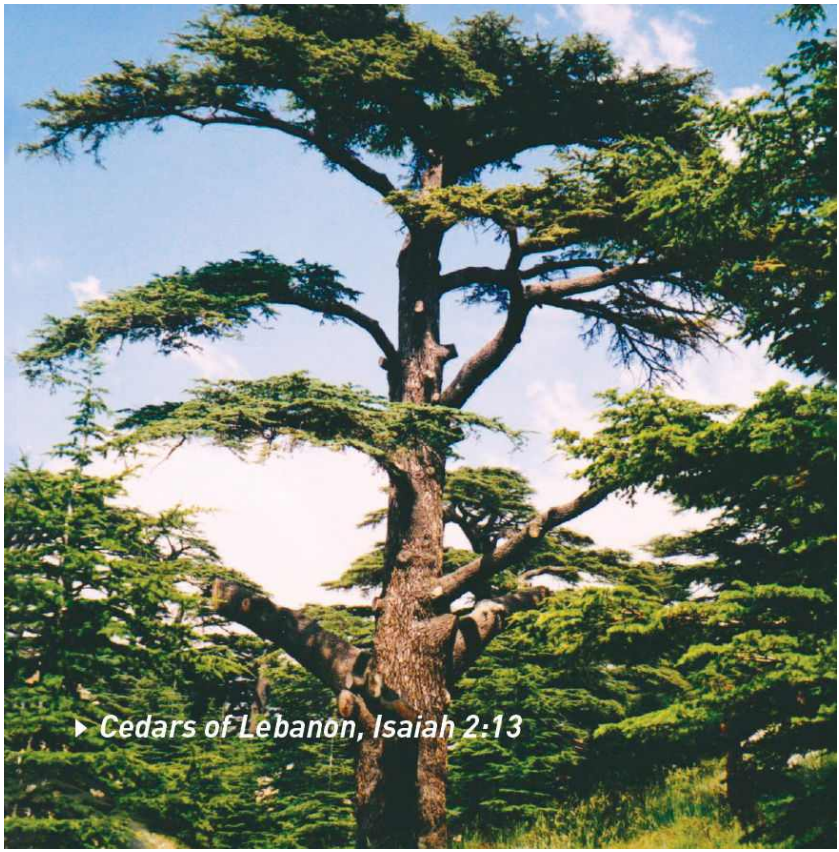
ANCIENT BABYLON



Song 2:1

THE SHARON PLAIN

The “Sharon Plain” refers to the region south of Mount Carmel in the coastal plain along the Mediterranean Sea. It was a fertile area famous for its forests and vegetation. An ancient trade route passed through this plain, connecting Egypt to the nations of the region.



Isa 2:13

CEDARS OF LEBANON

Isa 8:18

THE TEMPLE ON MOUNT ZION

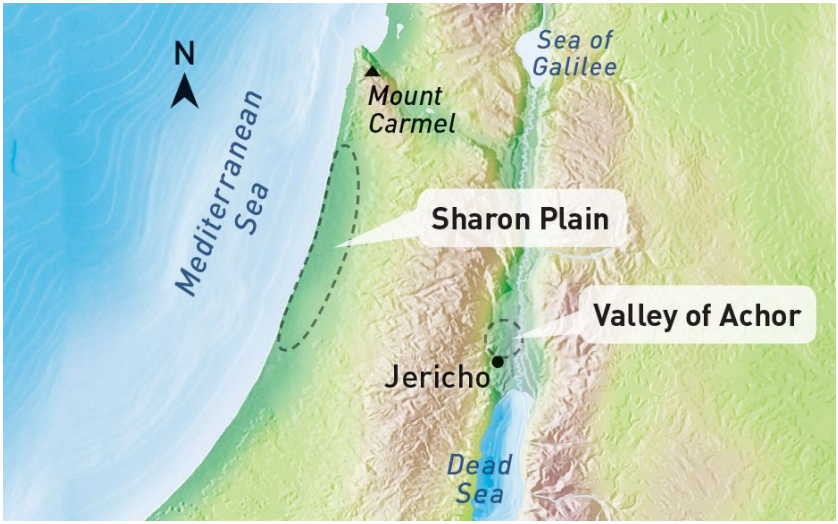
“Mount Zion” was a special way of referring to the city of Jerusalem that focused on the city as the sacred location of the Temple, which was filled with God’s glory. It was a phrase that reminded Jews that the ordinary city and the Temple were extraordinary and holy places. Mount Zion was holy because God had often revealed himself there; it was the location of Abraham’s attempt to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Isa 17:1–20:6

FACING THE EMPIRE

Damascus, Israel, Judah, and Ethiopia were all that stood in the way of Assyria’s invasion of Egypt. These nations were caught in the middle of an international conflict. Israel and Damascus would join

forces to fight against the Assyrian Empire, but before the end of Isaiah's career, both nations would fall.



Isa 65:8-10

SHARON AND ACHOR

The plain of Sharon was a coastal plain south of Mount Carmel known for its rich vegetation, forests, and pastureland. The valley of Achor was located north of Jericho and was ideal for raising sheep. During the Exile these places would fall into disuse, but Isaiah foresaw a day when they would again be fruitful and prosperous.

Jer 7:30-34

THE VALLEY OF BEN-HINNOM

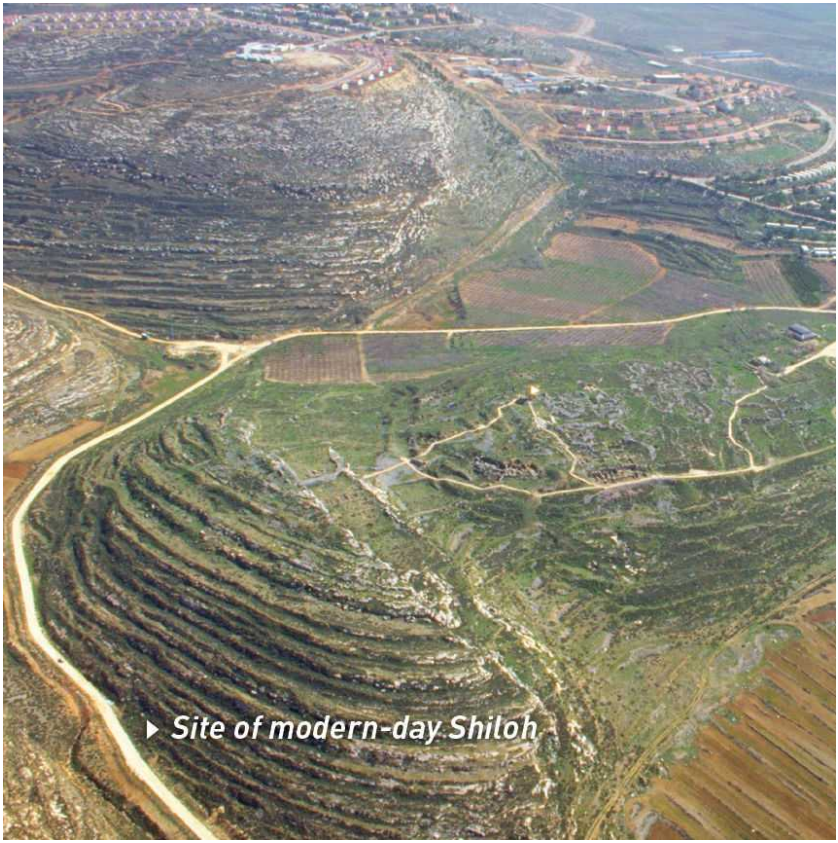
The valley of Ben-Hinnom was on the western and southern sides of Jerusalem. It was a combination of garbage dump and graveyard. Child sacrifice to pagan gods was also performed here, even by kings of Judah. After the Babylonians captured Jerusalem, it was named the Valley of Slaughter because the enemy slaughtered thousands of people and disposed of the corpses in the valley, filling it up. At a later time in biblical history, the valley was called Gehenna and became synonymous with hell.

Jer 10:8-10

TARSHISH

Tarshish was a port on the southern tip of Spain, the westernmost port that sailors from Tyre sailed to. Alternatively, this name might

have been used to indicate any location that was a very long distance from the coastline of Canaan.



Jer 26:4-6

SHILOH

Shiloh was a town in Ephraim, north of Jerusalem. It was Israel's worship center and the location of the Tabernacle for hundreds of years after the people settled in the Promised Land. When Samuel was judge of Israel, the Philistines attacked Shiloh and stole the Ark of the Covenant from the Tabernacle. King David later moved the Tabernacle and the recovered Ark to Jerusalem. By the time of Jeremiah, Shiloh was deserted and in ruins.

Jer 26:20

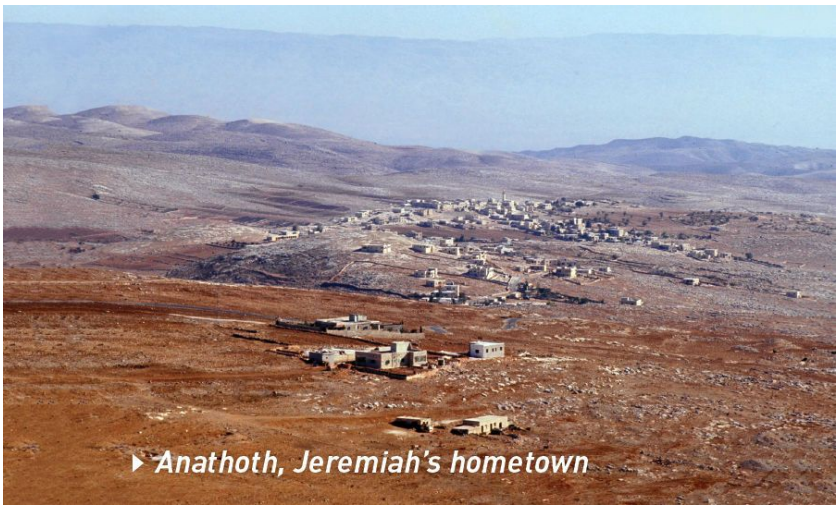
KIRIATH-JEARIM

Kiriath-jearim was a fortified city about nine miles northwest of Jerusalem, on the border of Judah and Benjamin. Originally a high place for worshiping Canaanite gods, it became known as the location where the Ark of the Covenant was kept in the home of Abinadab for twenty years.

Jer 31:38-40

JERUSALEM'S SURROUNDINGS

The boundaries of Jerusalem were marked by strategic features on many sides. The Tower of Hananel anchored the northeast corner of the old city, and the Corner Gate was on the northwest side. The locations of the hills of Gareb and Goah are uncertain, but they were probably on the west side of the city because the Kidron Valley was on the east side. Mentioning these perimeter strongholds is a way of indicating that God was going to rebuild the entire city of Jerusalem to be his indestructible holy place.



▸ Anathoth, Jeremiah's hometown

Jer 32:6-9

ANATHOTH

Anathoth, located three miles north of Jerusalem, was Jeremiah's birthplace and home. It was one of the cities granted to the Levite priests during the time of Joshua's leadership. At the time Jeremiah bought this piece of property from his cousin, the town was already under Babylonian control; but after the Exile, about 128 men returned to that area. Today Anathoth is known as Anata, a tiny village outside Jerusalem with only 100 residents.

Jer 32:35

THE PAGAN SHRINES AT TOPHETH

The shrines at Topheth were altars located in a specific area of the valley of Ben-Hinnom that was used for presenting sacrifices to idols. The area contained a fire pit into which the people threw

their children to sacrifice them to Molech or Baal.

Lam 2:1-22

JERUSALEM

Lam 4:6

THE CITY OF SODOM

Sodom was a city on the plain that was located at the southern end of the Dead Sea. In Abraham's time this area was densely populated and very fertile, with a major water source. But God destroyed Sodom with fire and burning sulfur because of the residents' great sin. The exact location of this city is uncertain since the area became desolate over time. Some believe that the ruins of the city lie in the shallow waters of the Dead Sea.

Lam 4:21

EDOM

Edom was a nation located southeast of Israel, beyond the Dead Sea. They had been in occasional conflict with God's people ever since they refused to allow Moses and the Hebrews to travel through their country on the way to the Promised Land. Edom was eventually destroyed by invaders, just as the prophet Obadiah predicted.

Ezek 1:1-3

THE JEWS IN EXILE

The exiled Jews settled in a small town on the Kebar River, one of the many irrigation canals that flowed from the Euphrates River. Living about sixty miles outside Babylon, these exiles never saw the glorious city. They were apparently allowed to create their own community, which allowed them to retain their identity even in a foreign land.

▸ *The former island of Tyre*

Ezek 26:1-19

TYRE

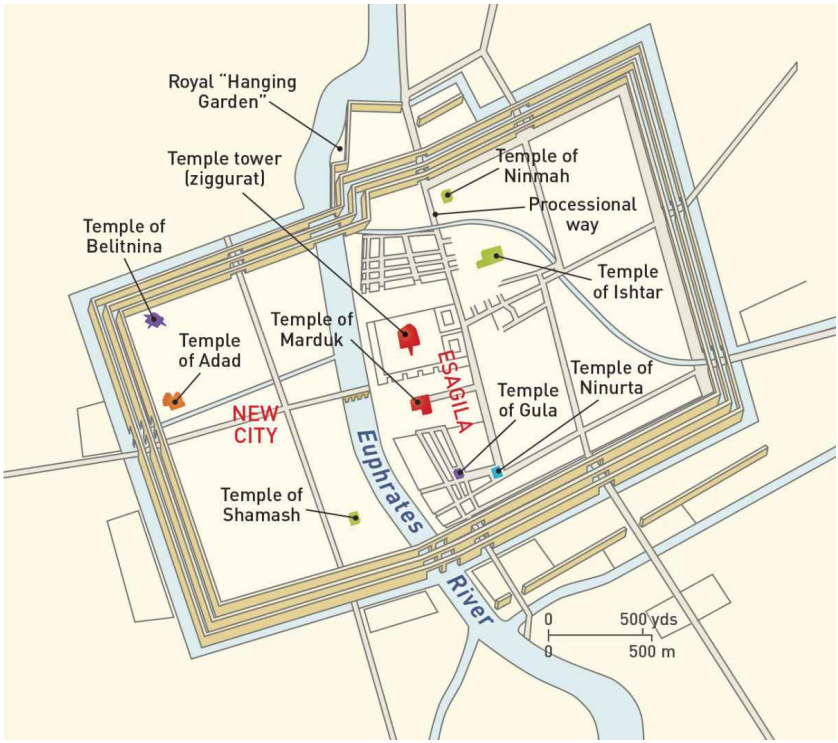
Tyre was originally an island on the Mediterranean coast. King Hiram of Tyre provided David and Solomon cedar trees for their building projects, including the Temple. Later Jezebel, a daughter of the king of Tyre, married King Ahab of Israel. Along the way, the commercial city developed a reputation for its unscrupulous traders. Ezekiel spoke out against Tyre's corruption, and prophesied its demise. Eventually, Alexander the Great built a causeway from the mainland, besieged the city, and conquered it.

Dan 1:1-2

EXCAVATING BABYLON

Between 1899 and 1917, Robert Koldewey and a team of German archaeologists excavated the ruins of Babylon. They uncovered a

large city with streets, canals, palaces, temples, and fortifications covering 3.5 square miles. The two world wars ended any further excavations until 1958, when Iraq's Directorate-General of Antiquities began additional excavation and restoration of the city.



Dan 1:3

THE CITY OF BABYLON

Babylon was located along the banks of the Euphrates River, in central Mesopotamia, and it was a magnificent and influential city in the ancient world. During Nebuchadnezzar's reign, it was the cultural, religious, and political heart of the Babylonian Empire.

Dan 3:1

THE PLAIN OF DURA

The exact location of the plain of Dura is uncertain because "Dura" was a common name in Mesopotamia, given to any flat area surrounded by mountains or walls. This plain would have been close to the city of Babylon, since it was in the same province as the great city. Archaeologists have uncovered a large brick base on a plain in modern-day Iraq that could have been the base of

Nebuchadnezzar's immense gold statue.

Dan 5:1-31

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

Belshazzar's feast was held in the Southern Palace of Babylon, the primary residence of the king. Archaeologists have uncovered a huge banquet hall that was 165 feet long and 55 feet wide with plaster walls, a location large enough to accommodate the 1,000 guests who attended this historic event. The banquet was held either to allay the nobles' fear of the enemy invasion or to show contempt for the invaders. According to some ancient historians, the Persian army did not attack the city walls but instead diverted the water of the Euphrates River, which flowed through the city, and entered Babylon on the dried-up riverbed on the night of October 12, 539 BC. This brought the Babylonian Empire to an end.

Hos 11:8

ADMAH AND ZEBOIIM

Admah and Zeboiim were two of the five “cities of the plain” located in the vicinity of the Dead Sea (Genesis 13:12; 14:1-12). They were consumed by fire and burning sulfur along with Sodom and Gomorrah. The location of these cities is unknown. Some suggest that they are now underwater at the southern end of the Dead Sea, but although the water there is only twelve to fifteen feet deep, no trace of the destroyed cities has ever been found.

Joel 3:1-2

THE VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is not connected with King Jehoshaphat of Judah. “Jehoshaphat” means “the Lord judges,” so the location’s name literally means “the valley where the Lord will judge” the

nations. Some traditions have identified the Kidron Valley as the location for the last judgment, but the exact location of the valley of Jehoshaphat is not certain since this is the only reference to it in the Bible.

Obad 1:1

EDOM

The people of Edom were descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob (the forefather of Israel). The conflict between these two brothers was passed down to their descendants. The first conflict occurred when the people of Israel were making their way to the Promised Land and requested permission to travel through Edom's territory along the King's Highway (Numbers 20:14-21). The king of Edom refused their request and even attacked them. Over the centuries, the Edomites persisted in their hostility toward Israel by invading their land and rebelling against their rule. Obadiah—along with the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and Amos—predicted God's judgment on this nation.

Jon 1:3

JOPPA

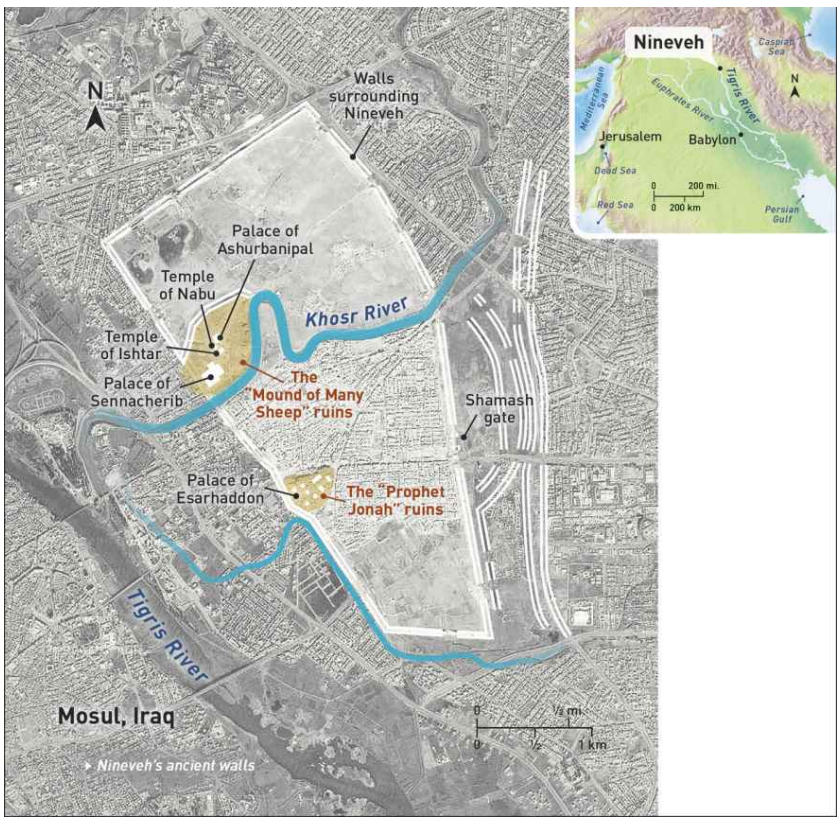
Joppa was an ancient fortified city on the Bay of acre along the coast of the mediterranean sea. Located just thirty-eight miles northwest of Jerusalem on the only natural harbor in the region, Joppa was considered the seaport of Jerusalem. the cedar timbers from Lebanon used to build Solomon's temple and the second temple were floated from Tyre and arrived through this port. Although Joppa was part of the territory of the tribe of Dan at one point, Israel lost control of the city just before the exile. Today this seaport is known as Jaffa, a suburb of Tel Aviv.

Jon 1:3

TARSHISH

The location of Tarshish is uncertain. Its name suggests a place that

specialized in metalworking. Ezekiel 27:12 refers to Tarshish as being rich in silver, iron, tin, and lead. Many possible locations have been proposed by scholars: Tartessos in southern Spain, Tyrseni in Italy, Carthage in northern Africa, and Tarsus in modern-day Turkey. What's clear is that it represents a place far from Israel and Nineveh. Jonah had no intention of going to Nineveh; he was doing everything in his power to avoid taking God's message to its citizens.



Jon 3:3

NINEVEH

The ancient city of Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. Although Nineveh stood on the east bank of the Tigris River, King Sennacherib built thirty miles of aqueducts to bring water into the city from distant places. An eight-mile-long wall with fifteen gates surrounded the city. It encompassed over 1,700 acres, more than forty times larger than Jerusalem in the time of David.

Mic 1:5

THE FALL OF SAMARIA

Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom, Israel. The Assyrians surrounded Samaria and held it under siege for three years, causing starvation and terror. The city and the nation finally fell to the invaders in 722 BC.

Mic 3:12

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, the capital city of the southern kingdom, Judah, was conquered by the Babylonians in 586 BC, almost 150 years after the fall of Samaria. The Babylonians destroyed and burned Jerusalem, as well as many other cities, and they exiled the people to Babylon.

Nah 3:19

NINEVEH

Nineveh was a large city with a population of 120,000 people, and it became the capital of the Assyrian Empire around 700 BC under King Sennacherib. It remained the royal city for about ninety years until its destruction in 612 BC. The prophet Jonah had preached to the people of Nineveh, who repented and experienced God's mercy. But the repentance did not last. Nahum's prophecy suggests that the

destruction of the great city was imminent.

Zech 10:10

GILEAD

Gilead was a fertile region on the east side of the Jordan river, with pasturelands ideal for growing grain and raising flocks. The land was so lush that the tribes of Manasseh and Gad decided to settle here rather than in the lands across the Jordan river, where the other tribes would reside.

Zech 10:10

LEBANON

Lebanon, a mountainous region north of Canaan, was known for its lush forests and towering cedar trees. King Solomon procured timbers from this region for building the original Temple in Jerusalem. Today, Lebanon is an independent country on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel and southwest of Syria.

Mal 1:4

THE FALL OF EDOM

Edom was a nation located far to the southeast of the Dead Sea, near the Gulf of Aqaba. It was settled by the descendants of Esau and was a perennial rival of Israel and Judah. Edom came to personify the pride of self-centered existence and even gloated over the destruction of Judah (see Jeremiah 49:16; Obadiah 1:13). The prophet Obadiah preached of the nation's demise. This prophecy may have been at least partially fulfilled in 553 BC, when King Nabonidus of the Babylonian Empire attacked Edom and burned its cities.

Matt 2:23

NAZARETH

Nazareth was a small town in southern Galilee, near a great caravan

trade route. Many devout Jews, especially those in Jerusalem, considered the Galileans irreligious. Galilee was known as a Gentile stronghold, and its residents were disdained by most of the nation.

Matt 3:13-17

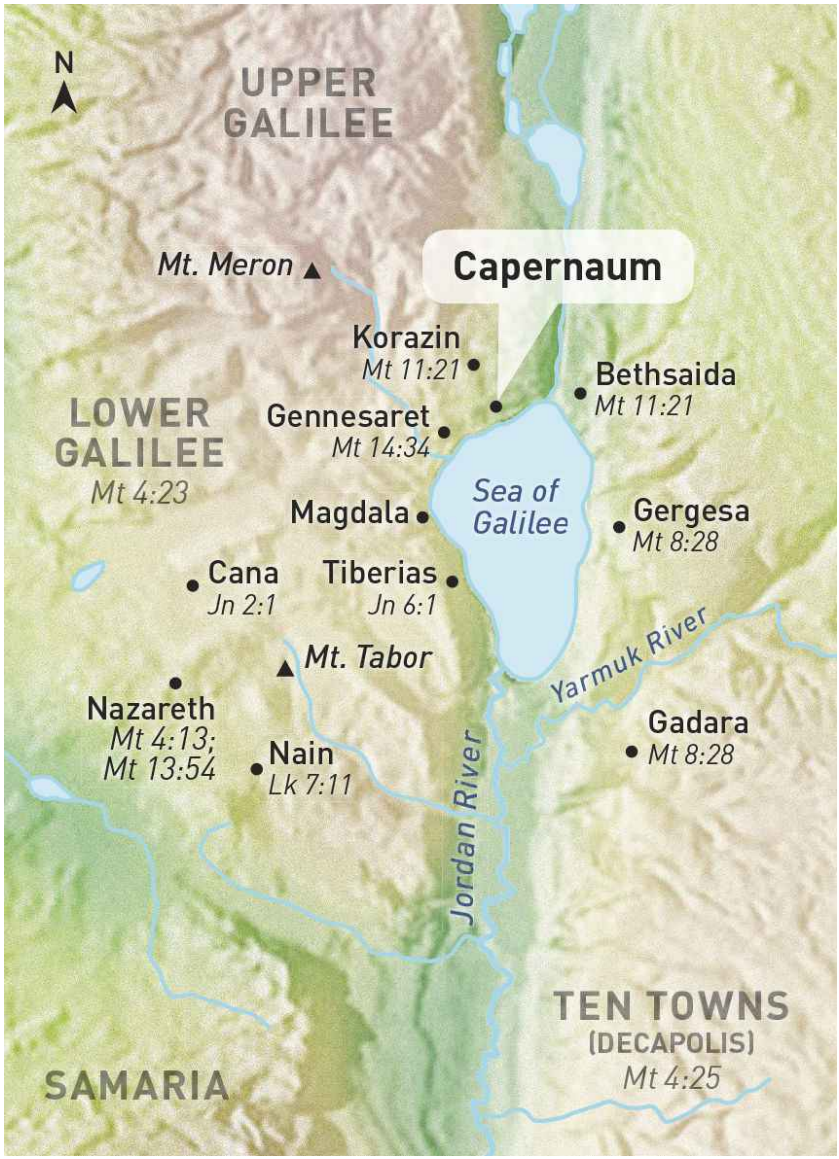
BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN RIVER

John probably baptized Jesus on the east side of the Jordan River. The eastern river valley is quite lush along the gradual banks of the meandering river. Jesus was baptized near a town named Bethany (not the Bethany near Jerusalem), which some scholars think was about six miles north of the Dead Sea. The precise location is unknown. Over time the river has changed course and flooding has completely destroyed any evidence of this city.

Matt 4:1-11

JESUS' TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

The wilderness in which Jesus was tempted was probably the Judean wilderness south of Jericho: the same region where John the Baptist had lived. It was relatively close to the Jordan River, where Jesus had been baptized.



Matt 4:12–15:20

JESUS' MINISTRY IN GALILEE

Galilee was a major center of Jesus' ministry. He made the town of Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee his base of ministry. From there he traveled by land and sea to spread his message of the Kingdom of God.

Matt 4:13

CAPERNAUM AND NAZARETH

Capernaum in Galilee was a large town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, about twenty miles from Nazareth. Situated on the highway leading from the Mediterranean Sea to Damascus, Syria, it had a large enough population to justify its own tax collector. Capernaum was located in the ancient tribal territory of Naphtali; Nazareth was in the territory of Zebulun.

Matt 4:25

THE TEN TOWNS

The Ten Towns was a federation of cities, most of which were located east of the Jordan River and southeast of the Sea of Galilee. They were populated by Gentiles who were heavily influenced by Greek culture. The cities included Damascus, Raphana, Hippus, Gadara, Abila, Scythopolis, Pella, Dion, Gerasa, and Philadelphia.

Matt 5:1

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The exact place where Jesus preached his famous sermon is uncertain. The traditional site is a low hill (not a mountain) in the countryside near Capernaum, to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee. Another possible site is outside Tiberias, about ten miles farther south on the western shores of the Sea.

Matt 14:13-36

THE SEA OF GALILEE

The northern end of the Sea of Galilee (which could also be called a lake) was well-known for its fishing. The ancient historian Josephus estimated that 230 fishing boats were active on the Sea of Galilee in the first century. Some areas of the lake are as deep as 150 feet. The whole body of water lies 700 feet below sea level, between two hilly ranges. This location makes it susceptible to sudden squalls with treacherous winds.

Matt 17:1-13

THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION

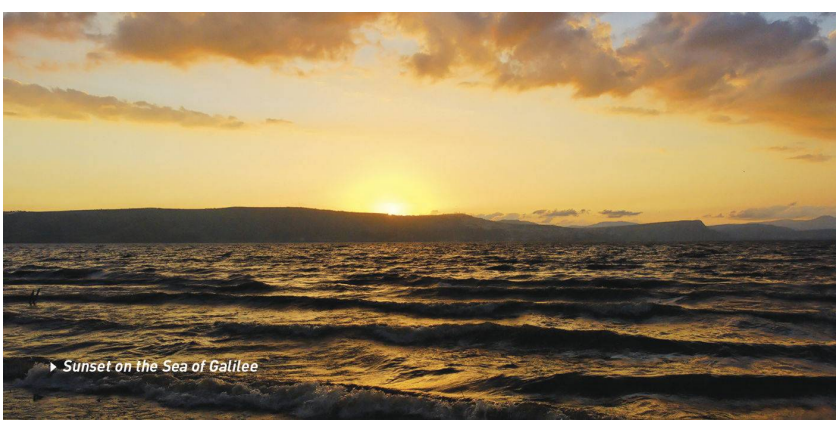
The Transfiguration most likely took place on Mount Hermon since Caesarea Philippi is situated at the base of this mountain. Mount Hermon consists of three peaks 9,200 feet above sea level that can

easily be seen from a great distance. Snow covers the highest peaks in winter. In the lower ranges on the mountain's western slopes, abundant rain waters vineyards and orchards.

Matt 24:3

THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

The Olivet Discourse was a major sermon that Jesus preached to his disciples while he was in the Jerusalem area. The Mount of Olives was a hill to the east of Jerusalem, just outside the city. It was a quiet place where Jesus gathered with his disciples and talked to them.



▸ *Sunset on the Sea of Galilee*

Mark 4:35-41

SUNSET ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

Mark 5:1

THE REGION OF THE GERASENES

The region of the Gerasenes, a territory inhabited mostly by Gentiles, included the towns of Gergesa and Gerasa. Gergesa lay on the southeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, and Gerasa was located about thirty-five miles southeast from there. It is possible that Gergesa was where Jesus met the demon-possessed man, since there is a steep slope along the shoreline about a mile outside of town.

Mark 7:31

TYRE AND SIDON

Tyre and Sidon were two cities on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in what would become modern-day Lebanon. Originally Tyre

was an island off the coast until Alexander the Great constructed a causeway connecting it to the mainland. Sidon was located about twenty-five miles to the north. Tyre was also the name of a region northwest of Galilee.

Mark 8:27

CAESAREA PHILIPPI

The city of Caesarea Philippi was about twenty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee and was located on a tributary that flowed into the Jordan River near the slopes of Mount Hermon. It was built by Philip the Tetrarch, son of Herod the Great. A shrine to the Greek god Pan, one of many pagan influences in the region, was prominent in this city. Today the area is called the Golan Heights.

Mount Hermon, possible site of the Transfiguration

Mark 9:2-13

MOUNT HERMON

Mark 14:12

PASSOVERS THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE

God instructed his people long ago to celebrate the Passover every year; however, the Bible records only a few of these observances. The first Passover was observed by the Hebrews in Egypt just before the Exodus (Exodus 12:14). Joshua 5:10 records the celebration that took place after the Hebrews entered the Promised Land. Passover is mentioned twice in the history of the Israelite kingdom (2 Kings 23:21-23; 2 Chronicles 30:1-20) and once in the accounts of Israel's return from exile (Ezra 6:19-21). Finally, the Gospels record the Passover celebration four times: Mark 14:12; Luke 2:41; John 2:13-16; and John 6:4.

Mark 14:26

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

In Jesus' day, the Mount of Olives was covered with olive trees. The Roman emperor Titus destroyed most of the trees in the area when he destroyed the city of Jerusalem in AD 70. Today, a few olive trees remain that are over nine hundred years old, and they yield a small amount of olives every other year. These are the oldest known trees in the world, and DNA analysis has shown that they came from the same parent plant. Some have speculated that they are directly related to the trees that stood there in Jesus' day.

Mark 14:53

THE HOME OF THE HIGH PRIEST

The home of Caiaphas was located in the southwestern corner of Jerusalem, about a mile across the city from the garden of Gethsemane. The rooms of the two-story buildings overlooked a central courtyard, which was spacious enough to accommodate a large group like the seventy-one members of the Sanhedrin (Jewish high council), who gathered there in secret. The next day the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas held an official trial.

Mark 15:22

GOLGOTHA

Golgotha is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew word *gulgoleth*, which means "skull." It was the name given to the hill where Jesus was led to be crucified. It is uncertain whether this place got its name because it was a place of death or because the hill physically resembled a skull. In Jesus' day Golgotha lay outside the city limits —the standard place for executions and for outcasts of society—

near the Jerusalem's northwestern wall. Herod Agrippa I later enlarged the city and extended its wall to include this area, which is inside modern Jerusalem at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Mark 15:42–16:1

ANCIENT BURIAL PRACTICES

The tomb owned by Joseph of Arimathea had not been used at the time of Christ's death. It was a hole chiseled out of the stone cliff in the burial area, which was about fifty yards from Golgotha. The Jews did not use caskets or embalm their dead; the burial spices only alleviated the stench of a decomposing body. They wrapped the body in cloths and spices and placed it on a ledge inside the tomb. A large stone, weighing one to three tons, was rolled in front of the tomb's opening with the help of gravity and a sloping groove.

Luke 2:4-5

MARY AND JOSEPH'S JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem takes about two hours today by car. Two thousand years ago, the same journey, a ninety-mile trip, would have taken as long as two weeks. Joseph and Mary would have had to traverse hilly, rocky terrain as they made their way south. Bethlehem, a small town five miles south of Jerusalem, sits on a ridge 2,000 feet above sea level.

Luke 3:2

THE JUDEAN WILDERNESS

John lived in the Judean wilderness, an area between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. Most of this territory was barren, desolate, and sparsely populated. John ministered to people who came looking for him. They desired to separate themselves from others so much

that they went to the Judean wilderness to confess their sins and be baptized.

Luke 10:30

THE ROAD TO JERICHO

Jericho was about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, but the winding road covered eighteen miles. The distance was not exceptionally long for a first-century traveler, but the terrain made the journey treacherous. Jerusalem was at a much higher altitude than Jericho. The road descended 3,300 feet, weaving through rocky areas where criminals could hide to take travelers unawares.

Luke 10:38

THE VILLAGE OF BETHANY

Bethany was a village on the lower eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, just two miles southeast of Jerusalem, along the road to

Jericho. Today the village is named El-Azariyeh, “the place of Lazarus.”

Luke 17:11

SAMARIA

Samaria was a region north of Judea and south of Galilee. Because the Samaritans and the Jews despised one another, the Jews avoided traveling through this territory. Jesus, however, did not. His compassion for the Samaritans baffled his disciples and caused others to wonder what he was doing.

Luke 19:1

JERICHO AND JERUSALEM

Jericho was located in the Judean wilderness about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem. It is one of the world’s oldest cities as well as one of the lowest, sitting 825 feet below sea level. Because

Jerusalem was over 2,000 feet above sea level, Jesus and his disciples literally were traveling “up to Jerusalem.”

Luke 24:13

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Emmaus was a village seven miles northwest of Jerusalem. Cleopas and another follower of Jesus were returning to their hometown after the celebration of Passover in the Holy City. The road they took may have been a local road called the Way to Beth Horon, which ran north of Jerusalem and intersected two main north-south coastal highways.

John 2:1

CANA

Cana was an obscure town near Capernaum in Galilee. It is best known as the location of the wedding celebration where Jesus

performed his first miracle. Nathanael, one of Jesus' disciples, probably came from Cana or a nearby Galilean town. The exact location of this town is unknown.

John 2:23

JERUSALEM UNDER HEROD'S RULE

Jerusalem was the center of religion for the Jewish people. In the decades before Jesus' ministry, Herod the Great expanded the Temple, reinforced the walls of the city, and built a fortress (Antonia) north of the Temple. Jerusalem was at the pinnacle of grandeur because of Herod's extensive building programs. The population of this great city was about 50,000 and swelled to several times this number during Passover and other religious festivals.

John 4:6

JACOB'S WELL

About two thousand years before the time of Jesus, Jacob left his uncle Laban in Paddan-aram and returned to Canaan. He purchased land outside the city of Shechem and settled there (Genesis 33:18-19). In order to thrive, he had to have sufficient water from a well because there were no rivers in the area. Although this is the only mention of the well in the Bible, it still exists today near the village of Askar. It is over 100 feet deep!

John 4:9

THE JEWS AND THE SAMARITANS

Although the Samaritans shared common ancestors with the Jews, ethnic and cultural tensions existed between them. The Samaritans descended from Jews who had married foreigners, and they blended

ethnicities, cultures, and even worship. By Jesus' time, the Samaritans worshiped only the true God, but they did so in a temple on Mount Gerizim rather than in Jerusalem. Their scriptures contained only Genesis through Deuteronomy, so they did not know what the prophets taught about the Messiah. The "pure-bred" Jews in Jerusalem despised anyone from Samaria.

John 9:7

THE POOL OF SILOAM

The pool of Siloam was a reservoir in the southeast corner of Jerusalem. It was built by King Hezekiah in the eighth century BC to ensure that the people would have drinking water if an enemy ever laid siege to the city. Water from the Gihon Spring flowed into the reservoir through an underground tunnel. The pool's water was considered sacred and was used for ceremonies in the Temple. This pool is still in existence today.

John 10:22

THE ORIGIN OF HANUKKAH

Hanukkah was a celebration commemorating the rededication of the Temple after it had been desecrated by the Greek ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes almost two hundred years before Christ's birth. In 165 BC, a Jewish army led by Judas Maccabeus recaptured the Temple and rededicated it to the Lord's worship.

John 13:1–17:26

THE UPPER ROOM

The room where Jesus gathered his disciples is traditionally called "the upper room." It was an upstairs guest room in a house on the southwest side of Jerusalem. It could have been a large, elevated, open room off the courtyard; a room over the porch; or an open area on the roof. The disciples gathered in this same room after

Jesus' ascension and in the days before Pentecost.

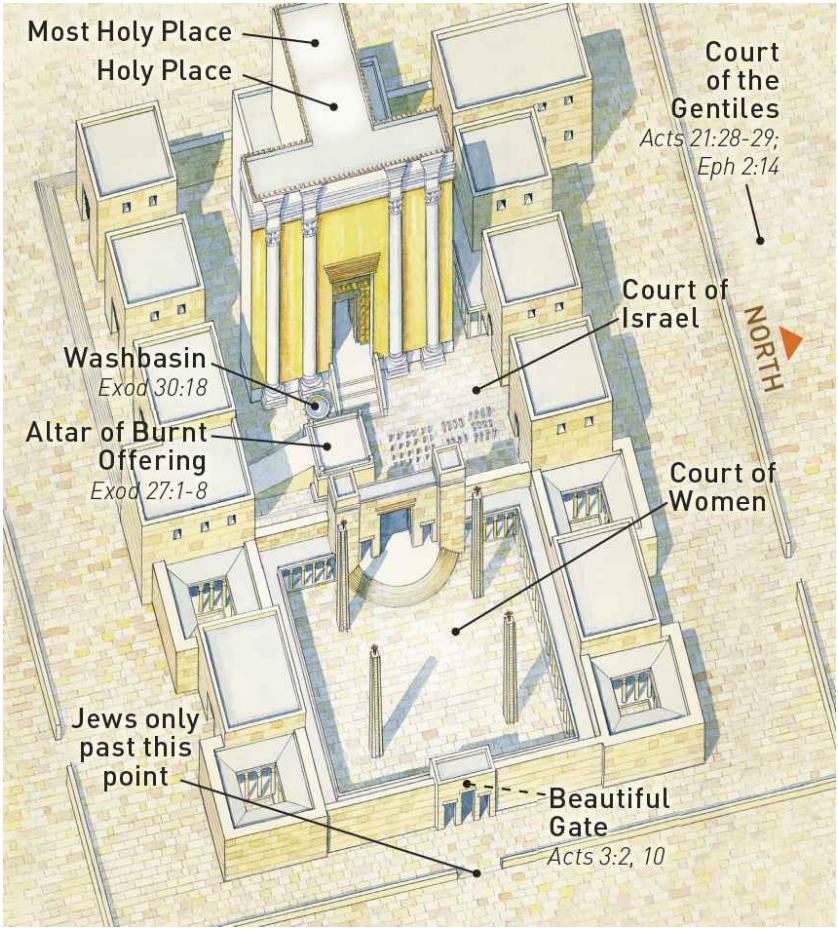
Modern-day view from the northwest of the Mount of Olives (upper left) and Gethsemane (lower right)

Acts 1:6-12

MOUNT OF OLIVES

The Ascension took place on the Mount of Olives, a peak on a two-mile-long ridge that rose 250 feet higher than the Temple area in Jerusalem. The garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus had prayed, was located on the lower slopes of this mountain. Since King

Solomon's time, this location was used as a lookout point to protect the city.



Acts 3:1-26

THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

The Temple in Jerusalem was like a city within a city. The Temple area was made up of buildings and courtyards surrounded by a high wall. People entered different areas of the Temple by going through various gates. Gentiles were not allowed beyond the outer court. The Beautiful Gate was located on the east side, directly in front of the main entrance to the Temple and near the covered porch of Solomon's Colonnade. After walking through the Beautiful Gate, Jews would have found themselves in the Court of Women.

Acts 4:36

THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

The island of Cyprus is a large island in the northeast region of the Mediterranean Sea. It is located about seventy-five miles west of

Syria and forty-five miles south of Turkey. Barnabas was a native of Cyprus.

Acts 5:12

SOLOMON'S COLONNADE

Solomon's Colonnade was the open-air portico on the east side of the Temple's outer court. It consisted of a double row of beautiful marble columns and a roof to provide shade. Christian believers in Jerusalem frequently met there.

Acts 8:27

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia was the name used in this time period to refer to the area south of a boundary marked by the rapids of the Upper Nile, near what would become Aswan, Egypt. Today this region encompasses southern Egypt, Sudan, and South Sudan. The modern nation of

Ethiopia is located east of South Sudan.

Acts 9:2

DAMASCUS

Damascus is about 140 miles northeast of Jerusalem and 60 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea. It is perhaps the oldest continuously occupied city in the world, dating as far back as the time of Abraham (Genesis 14:15). In Bible times it was strategically located between two rivers and along three major trade routes. Today Damascus is the capital city of Syria.

Acts 10:1

CAESAREA

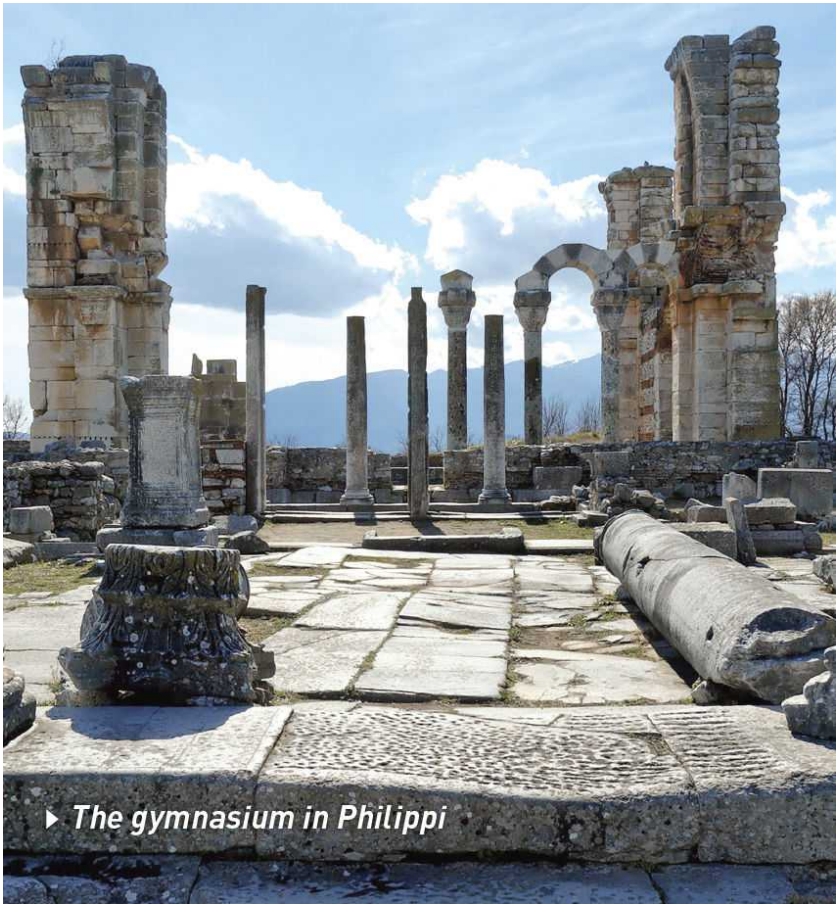
Caesarea was a city on the Mediterranean Sea, thirty-five miles north of Joppa. Herod the Great built the seaport in the first century BC and named it for the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus.

It remained the capital of the province of Judea for over six hundred years. It was home to the governors of Judea and was the regional headquarters for the Roman army.

Acts 10:23

JOPPA

Joppa was an important harbor in the region. It was a significant port during David and Solomon's reign, but it is best known for its connection to the prophet Jonah, who boarded a ship there to sail to Tarshish. The cedars of Lebanon used in building the Temple were transported to Jerusalem through this seaport. Today it is a suburb of Tel Aviv.



▸ *The gymnasium in Philippi*

Acts 16:12

PHILIPPI

Philippi was a settlement for retired Roman soldiers. It was located on the Macedonian plain on a branch of the Strymon River. Named after Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great, Philippi was accessible to other Roman cities by the Egnatian Way. As a Roman colony, Philippi had special privileges and its residents received the rights of Roman citizens. A variety of religions flourished there: Thracian, Greek, Egyptian, and with Paul's arrival, Christian.

Acts 17:1

THESSALONICA

Thessalonica was named after the stepsister of Alexander the Great. Situated on the Aegean Sea and at a major crossroads of the Egnatian Way, the city was strategically placed for commerce.

Fertile plains, ideal for planting olive groves and vineyards, lay outside the city. The synagogue, where Paul preached for three Sabbaths, was large and influential in the region.

Acts 19:1

EPHESUS

Few cities in the Roman Empire were as prominent as Ephesus. It was the commercial and educational hub of Asia Minor. This metropolis had streets and buildings made of marble. It boasted an impressive 24,000-seat amphitheater, luxurious baths and fountains, monuments, a town hall, and the colossal temple of Artemis.

Acts 28:1-10

MALTA

Located in the Mediterranean Sea about sixty miles south of Sicily,

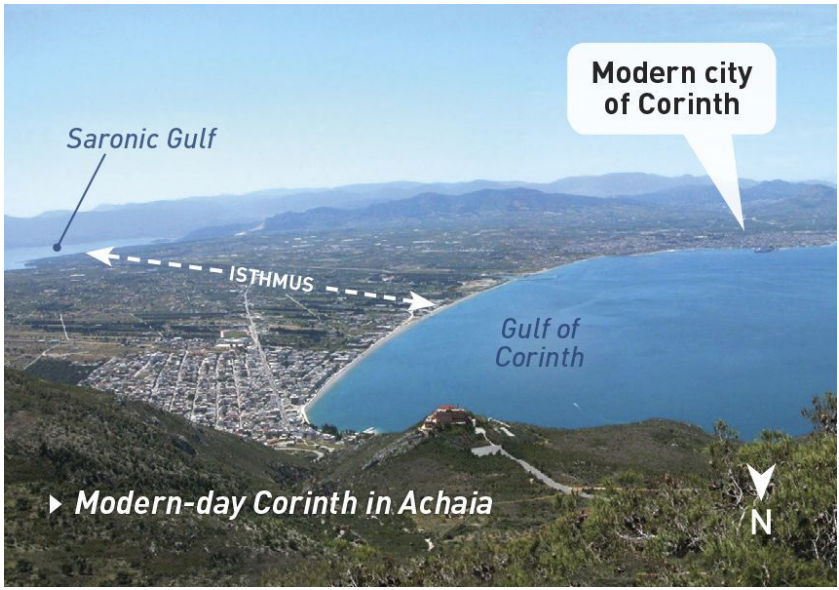
Malta was a major island under Roman control. On the northeast coast of the island there is a place called St. Paul's Bay, named in commemoration of Paul's unplanned visit.

Acts 28:15

ROME

The Forum on the Appian Way was forty-three miles outside Rome. The Three Taverns was thirty-five miles from Rome. Both were well-known stopping places on the Appian Way, the "queen of the long roads" that led to Rome.

The capital of the Roman empire was a magnificent, well-established city. It was filled with temples and shrines devoted to the worship of pagan gods and goddesses: Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, and Mars, to name a few.



1 Cor 1:2

CORINTH

Corinth was a major city of ancient Greece that controlled the isthmus connecting Macedonia to Achaia. Ships traveling between Rome and the port cities along the Aegean Sea were carried overland on a mile-long trail on the isthmus, making Corinth a strong and prosperous center. Merchants saved weeks of sailing in treacherous waters by paying for slaves to carry their ships past Corinth. In AD 50 Paul visited and preached in the synagogue of

this well-established city that contained many temples and an amphitheater. Paul lived and worked with Priscilla and Aquila here for nearly two years as he established a Christian community.

2 Cor 1:8

ASIA

Asia, sometimes referred to as Asia Minor, was a Roman province east of the Aegean Sea and west of Galatia. The Romans inherited the land from the king of Pergamum, who left it to them in his will. Ephesus was the capital of the province. Asia's boundaries were entirely within the borders of modern Turkey.

2 Cor 9:2

MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA

Macedonia refers to the area of northern Greece where Philippi and Thessalonica were located. The area of southern Greece, where the

cities of Athens and Corinth were located, was called Achaia.

Gal 1:2

GALATIA

Galatia was a large Roman province in central Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) that extended from the Black Sea in the north almost as far as the Mediterranean Sea in the south. It is uncertain how large an area Paul was addressing in his letter to the churches in Galatia. The Galatian churches mentioned in the New Testament—Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe—are all located in the southern region of the province.

Gates of Mazaeus and Mithridates in Ephesus

Eph 1:1

EPHESUS

Ephesus was the leading city and the capital of the Roman province of Asia (part of modern-day Turkey). It was celebrated as a thriving political, commercial, and religious center. The Christian community was strong in Ephesus but faced many external challenges because of the prominence all around them of pagan practices.

Phil 1:1

PHILIPPI

Philippi was an ancient city in northeastern Macedonia (modern Greece), ten miles inland from the port city of Neapolis. It was a colony established for Roman soldiers who were stationed in the area. It soon became a significant settlement because of its location on the main east-west Roman road, the Egnatian Way. In AD 50 Paul founded the first Christian church in Europe here with the help of Lydia and a Roman jailer.

Col 1:2

COLOSSE

Colosse was located 120 miles east of Ephesus in the Lycus River Valley, near Laodicea and Hierapolis. Although Colosse once had been a prominent city, it was eclipsed by neighboring Laodicea

during the first century. Epaphras established a Christian community there in the middle of the first century. Around AD 60, a severe earthquake damaged the city and accelerated its decline. Eventually it fell into oblivion. The ruins of Colosse were discovered in 1835, but the city has never been excavated. It remains buried under a hill designated by a roadside marker.

Titus 1:5

CRETE

The beginnings of Christianity on Crete are unclear. Some people from Crete were present at Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, and if any of them became believers that day they could have brought the Good News back to their homeland. Paul stopped in Crete briefly while he was a prisoner being transported to Rome, but he probably never even stepped onto dry land. Paul might have gone to Crete after being released from his first Roman imprisonment and might have founded the churches then (Titus 1:5; 3:15). Paul left Titus in Crete to appoint leaders in the churches throughout the island.

Phlm 1:1-2

PHILEMON AND THE COLOSSIANS

Philemon lived in the small town of Colosse in the Roman province of Asia (modern-day Turkey). Paul was in prison in Rome when he became aware of the Christian slave Onesimus. Onesimus traveled back to Colosse with Tychicus, who carried Paul's letters: one to the church in Colosse, one to Philemon.

1 Pet 5:13

BABYLON IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Several New Testament writers mention “Babylon” in their letters. This was probably referring to Rome, not to the literal city of Babylon on the Euphrates River. The word implied many things: a place of exile or loneliness, a great city, the center of a world power, and a cultural influence that was hostile to God’s people.

1 Jn 1:1-4

JOHN’S LATER MINISTRY

The apostle John started a ministry in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) after fleeing the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem during the middle of the first century. From there he wrote his Gospel to record Jesus’ life and purpose for coming to earth. Later he wrote letters to the second and third generations of Christians in

the churches of Asia Minor. John died peacefully in Ephesus around AD 100.

Rev 1:9

PATMOS

Patmos is a small island in the Aegean Sea not far from the coast of Asia Minor. It is a deserted, rocky, and isolated place. Authorities punished prisoners by banishing them to the island.

Rev 14:1

MOUNT ZION

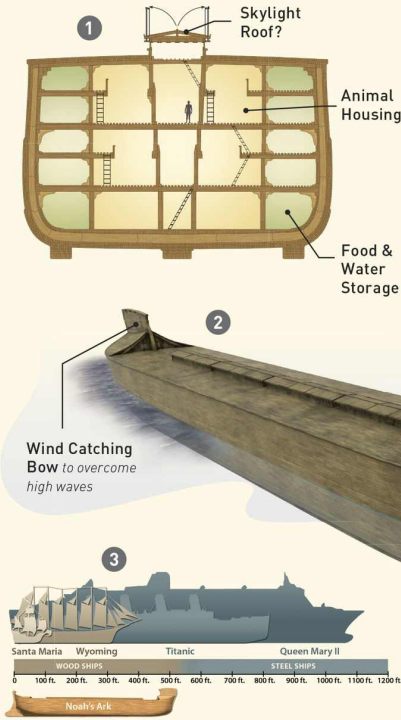
Mount Zion originally was the name of the specific fortress captured by David for his capital city, and it was just part of the area that became Jerusalem. Over time Mount Zion became a synonym for the entire city of Jerusalem. As the capital of Israel, it was the kingdom's political center. As the holy city that contained God's

magnificent Temple, it was also the kingdom's religious center.

Rev 21:1-2

JERUSALEM

In AD 70 the Romans destroyed the Temple and much of Jerusalem during their war against the Jews. Throughout their history the Jews had taken pride in their glorious city, which was situated high on a hill and could be seen for miles around. John's vision of a restored Jerusalem, more glorious than the earthly city had ever been, would have given the church of new believers great joy and hope.



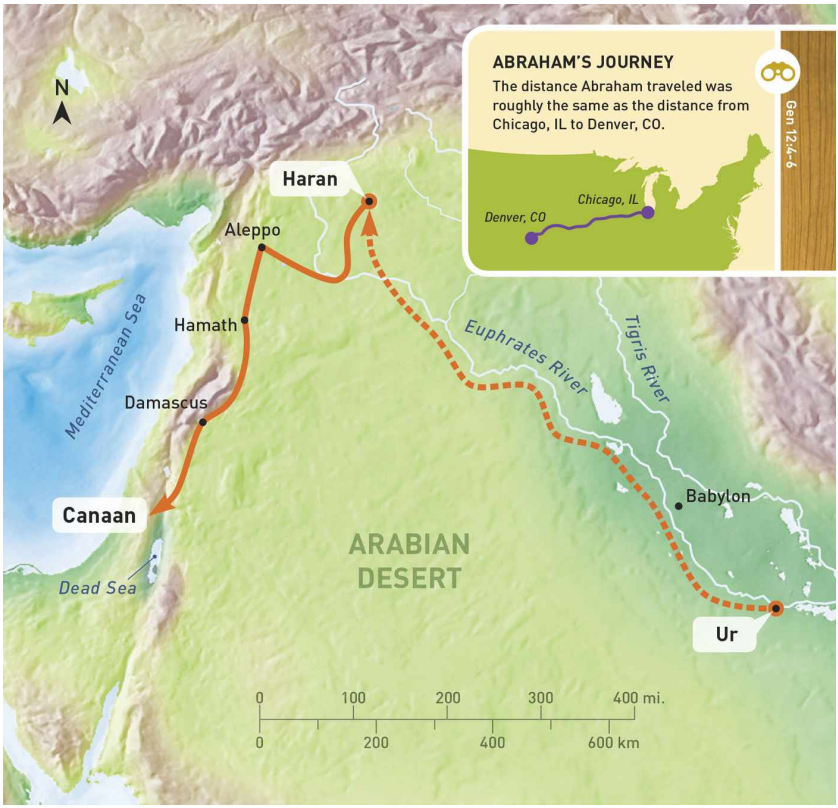
NOAH'S ARK

Gen 6:14–16

1 Cross-section view of the ark featuring lower, middle, and upper decks referenced in Genesis 6:16.

2 A possible design of the ark using the proportions in Genesis 6:15, featuring ramps to help to get animals between decks and a large stern extension seen on the earliest large ships of the Mediterranean.

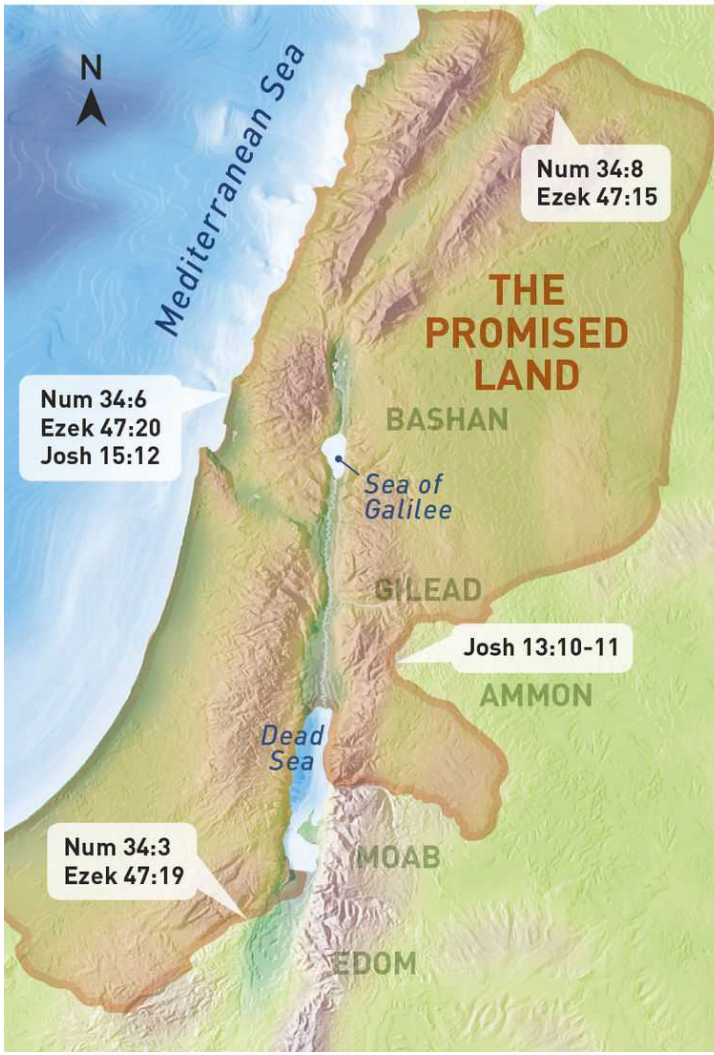
3 Diagram showing how Noah's ark would compare to other large ships.


N
ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY
The distance Abraham traveled was roughly the same as the distance from Chicago, IL to Denver, CO.
Chicago, IL
Denver, CO
Gen 12:4-6
Haran
Aleppo
Hamath
Damascus
Canaan
Dead Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Euphrates River
Tigris River
Babylon
Ur
ARABIAN DESERT
0 100 200 300 400 mi.
0 200 400 600 km

THE LAND PROMISED TO ABRAHAM

Natural landmarks like mountains, rivers, and seas designated many of the boundaries of the Promised Land. Numerous Bible passages outline these boundaries, including Numbers 34, Joshua 13–19, and Ezekiel 47–48.

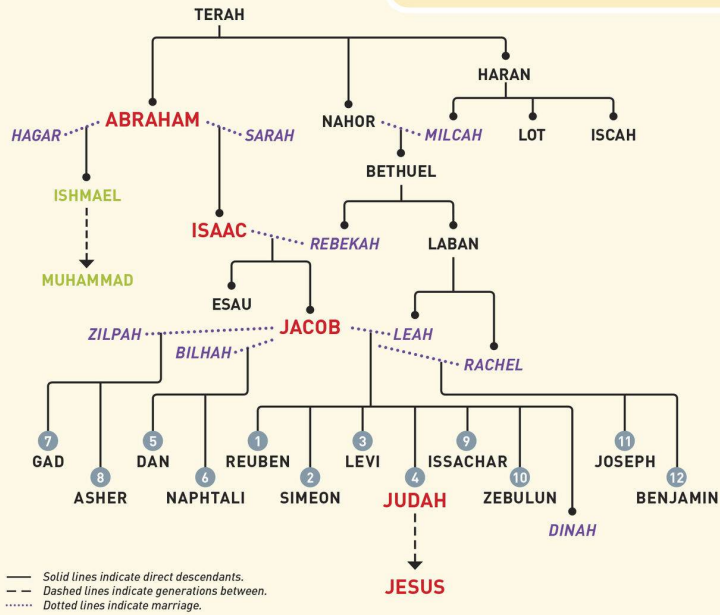
Gen 15:18-21

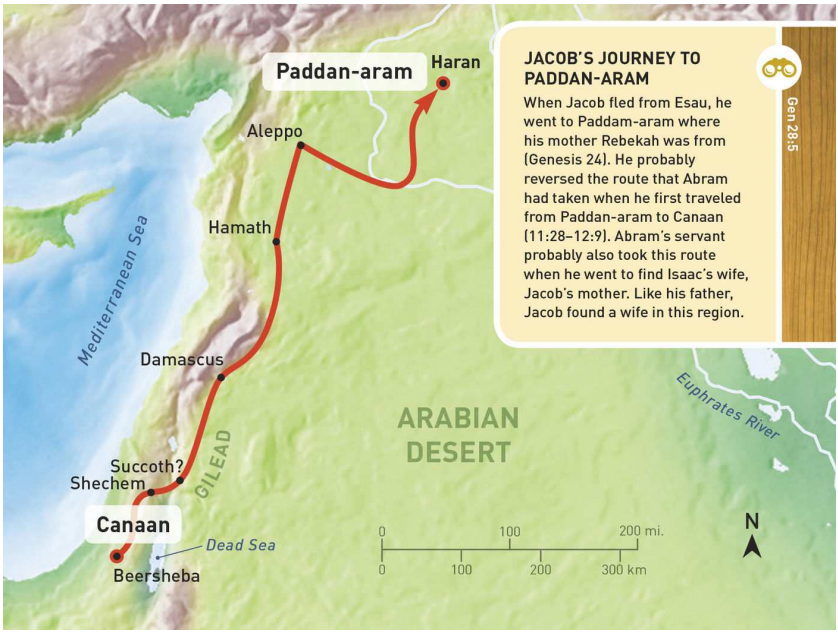


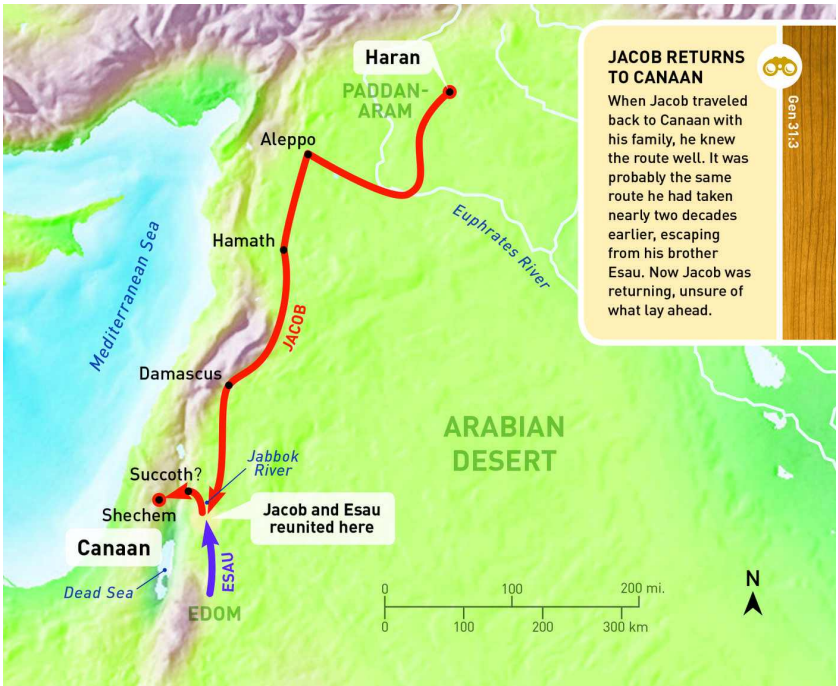
ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS

God would fulfill his promises to Abraham through many of the lives of Abraham's descendants. The Bible records God's work by telling their stories.

Gen 17:4–7



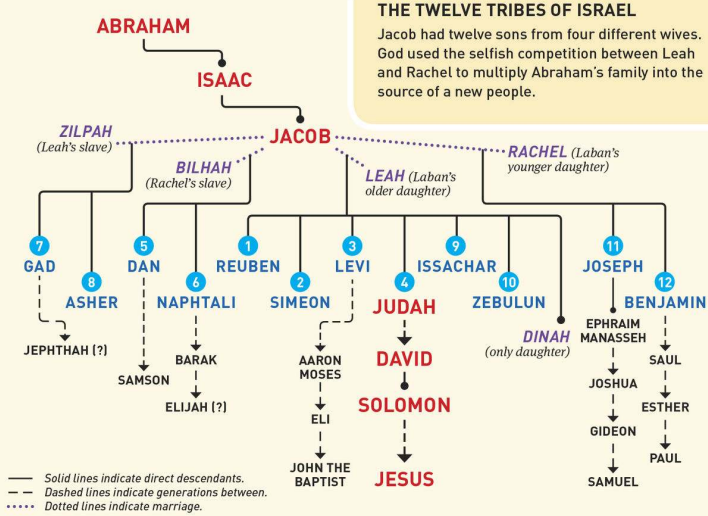

Paddan-aram
Haran
Aleppo
Hamath
Mediterranean Sea
Damascus
ARABIAN DESERT
Euphrates River
GILEAD
Succoth?
Shechem
Canaan
Dead Sea
Beersheba
0 100 200 mi.
0 100 200 300 km
N
JACOB'S JOURNEY TO PADDAN-ARAM
When Jacob fled from Esau, he went to Paddam-aram where his mother Rebekah was from (Genesis 24). He probably reversed the route that Abram had taken when he first traveled from Paddan-aram to Canaan (11:28–12:9). Abram's servant probably also took this route when he went to find Isaac's wife, Jacob's mother. Like his father, Jacob found a wife in this region.
Gen 28:5


Haran
PADDAN-ARAM
Aleppo
Euphrates River
Hamath
Mediterranean Sea
JACOB
Damascus
ARABIAN DESERT
Jabbok River
Succoth?
Shechem
Jacob and Esau reunited here
Canaan
ESAU
Dead Sea
EDOM
0 100 200 mi.
0 100 200 300 km
N
JACOB RETURNS TO CANAAN
When Jacob traveled back to Canaan with his family, he knew the route well. It was probably the same route he had taken nearly two decades earlier, escaping from his brother Esau. Now Jacob was returning, unsure of what lay ahead.
Gen 31:3

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Jacob had twelve sons from four different wives. God used the selfish competition between Leah and Rachel to multiply Abraham's family into the source of a new people.

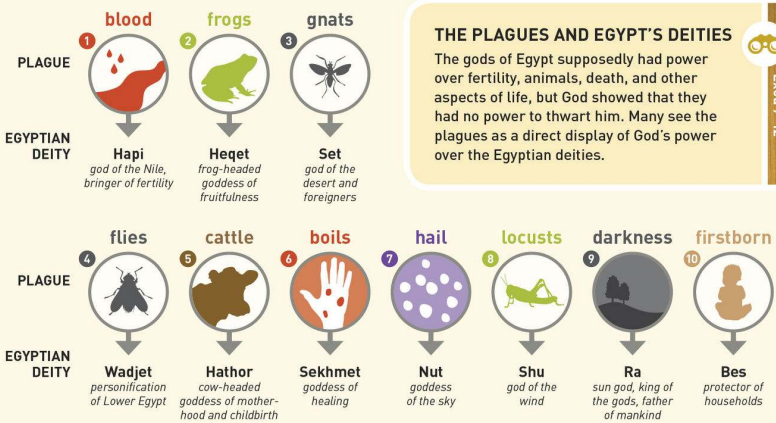
Gen 35:23-26

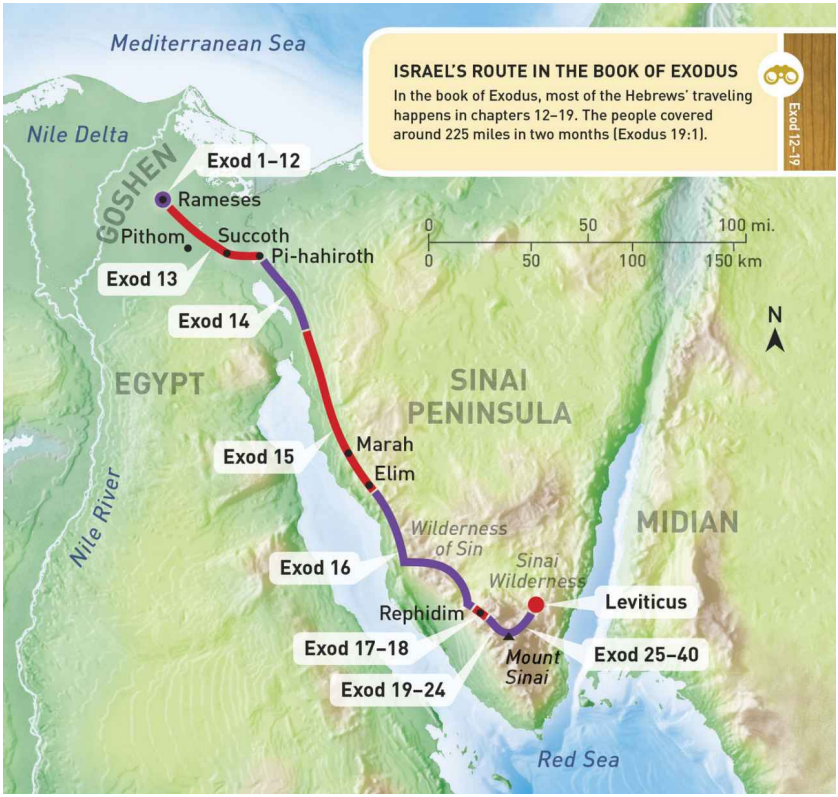


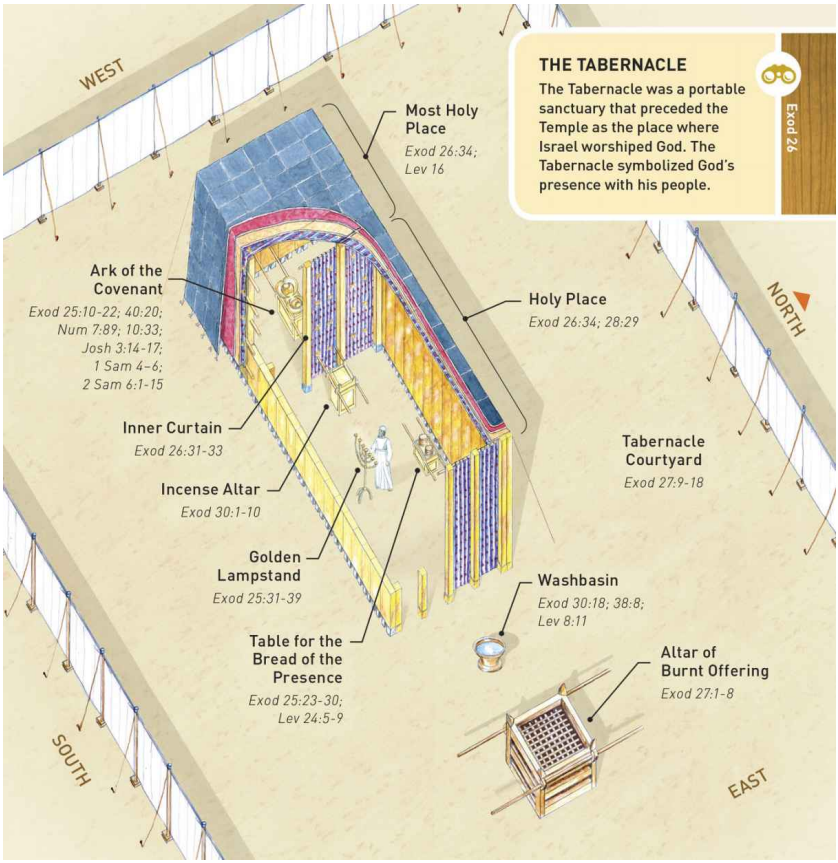
THE PLAGUES AND EGYPT'S DEITIES

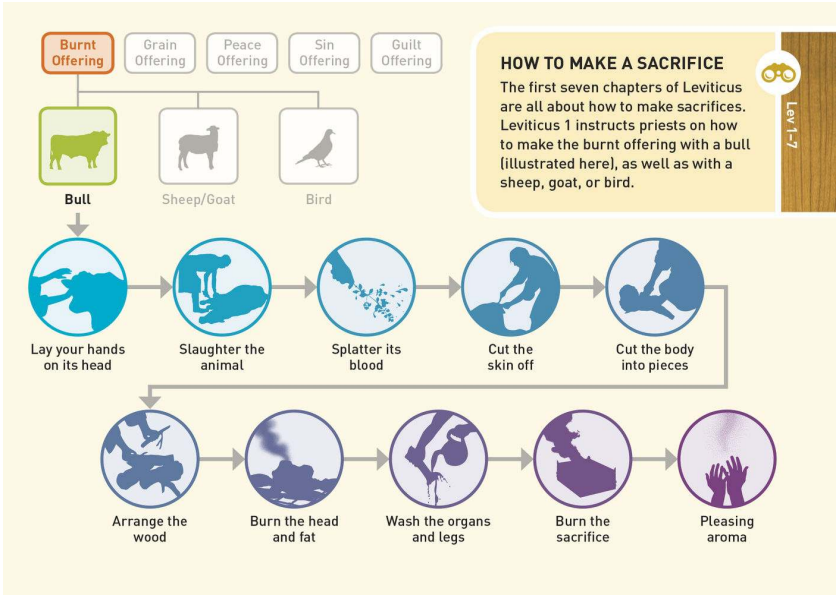
The gods of Egypt supposedly had power over fertility, animals, death, and other aspects of life, but God showed that they had no power to thwart him. Many see the plagues as a direct display of God's power over the Egyptian deities.

Exod 7-12




Mediterranean Sea
ISRAEL'S ROUTE IN THE BOOK OF EXODUS
In the book of Exodus, most of the Hebrews' traveling happens in chapters 12–19. The people covered around 225 miles in two months (Exodus 19:1).
Exod 12–19
Nile Delta
GOSHEN
Exod 1–12
Rameses
Pithom
Succoth
Pi-hahiroth
Exod 13
Exod 14
0 50 100 mi.
0 50 100 150 km
N
EGYPT
SINAI PENINSULA
Exod 15
Marah
Elim
Nile River
Wilderness of Sin
MIDIAN
Exod 16
Sinai Wilderness
Leviticus
Rephidim
Exod 17–18
Mount Sinai
Exod 25–40
Exod 19–24
Red Sea


THE TABERNACLE
The Tabernacle was a portable sanctuary that preceded the Temple as the place where Israel worshiped God. The Tabernacle symbolized God's presence with his people.
Exod 26
WEST
NORTH
SOUTH
EAST
Most Holy Place
Exod 26:34; Lev 16
Holy Place
Exod 26:34; 28:29
Ark of the Covenant
Exod 25:10-22; 40:20; Num 7:89; 10:33; Josh 3:14-17; 1 Sam 4–6; 2 Sam 6:1-15
Inner Curtain
Exod 26:31-33
Incense Altar
Exod 30:1-10
Golden Lampstand
Exod 25:31-39
Table for the Bread of the Presence
Exod 25:23-30; Lev 24:5-9
Tabernacle Courtyard
Exod 27:9-18
Washbasin
Exod 30:18; 38:8; Lev 8:11
Altar of Burnt Offering
Exod 27:1-8


Burnt Offering
Grain Offering
Peace Offering
Sin Offering
Guilt Offering
Bull
Sheep/Goat
Bird
HOW TO MAKE A SACRIFICE
The first seven chapters of Leviticus are all about how to make sacrifices. Leviticus 1 instructs priests on how to make the burnt offering with a bull (illustrated here), as well as with a sheep, goat, or bird.
Lev 1–7
Lay your hands on its head
Slaughter the animal
Splatter its blood
Cut the skin off
Cut the body into pieces
Arrange the wood
Burn the head and fat
Wash the organs and legs
Burn the sacrifice
Pleasing aroma

FESTIVALS

Passover (Lev 23:5)
14th day of the 1st month. This one-day festival celebrates God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.

Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:6-8)
15th-21st days of the 1st month. All Jews traveled to Jerusalem to commemorate their departure from Egypt in this seven-day festival.

First Harvest (Lev 23:9-14)
Day after the Sabbath during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. Celebrates the beginning of the grain harvest.

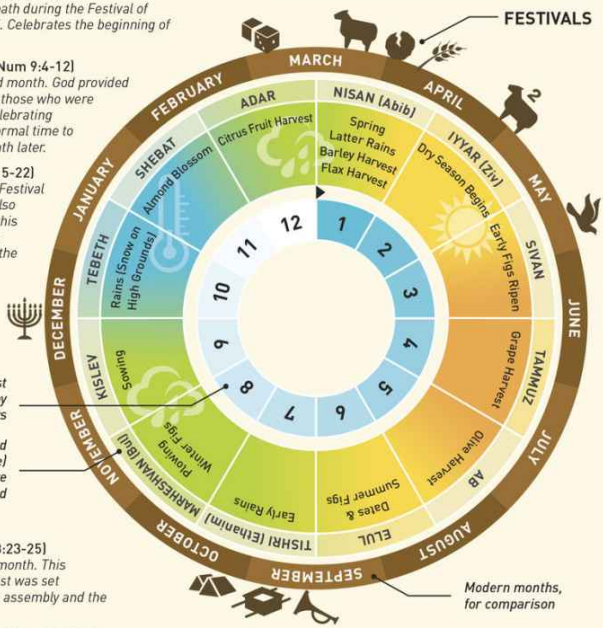
Later Passover (Num 9:4-12)
14th day of the 2nd month. God provided an opportunity for those who were prevented from celebrating Passover at the normal time to celebrate one month later.

Harvest (Lev 23:15-22)
50th day after the Festival of First Harvest. Also called Pentecost, this festival celebrates God's provision in the harvest season.

BIBLICAL CALENDAR

In biblical times, months and years were marked by the cycles of the moon. This means that their months don't match up perfectly with our current twelve-month system. This chart gives a good idea about how their months relate to ours.

Lev 23



Months were most often referred to by numbers

Babylonian (and early Canaanite) month names are sometimes used

Modern months, for comparison

Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25)
1st day of the 7th month. This day of complete rest was set aside for a solemn assembly and the blast of trumpets.

Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32)
10th day of the 7th month. The year's most solemn day. A special fast and Sabbath accompanied by the high priest's sacrifice to make atonement for all Israel's sins.

Shelters (Lev 23:33-43)
15th-21st days of the 7th month. All Jews traveled to Jerusalem and lived in temporary shelters to celebrate the final harvest and remember God's provision when they wandered in the wilderness.

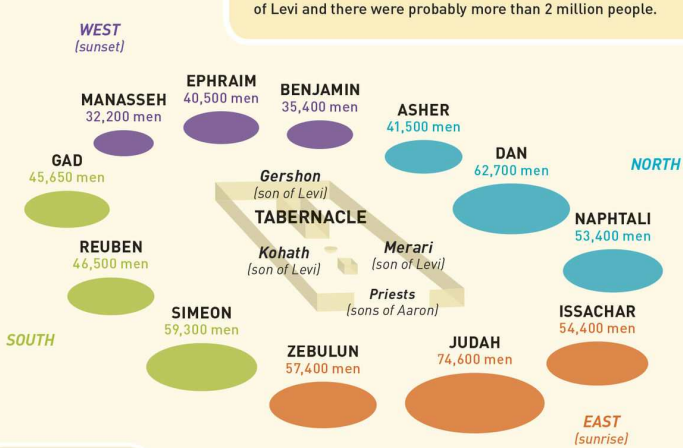
Dedication (John 10:22)
8 days, beginning the 25th day of the 9th month. Also called Hanukkah, this festival commemorates the Temple's rededication in 164 B.C. during the intertestamental period.

Purim (Esth 9:1-32)
14th or 15th day of the 12th month. Commemorates God's protection of the Jews from their enemies through Esther and Mordecai.

ISRAEL'S CAMP AND POPULATION

Every time Israel set up camp, they organized the tribes the same way, with God's tent in the middle of camp. The total number of men was 603,550. Add to them women, children, and the tribe of Levi and there were probably more than 2 million people.

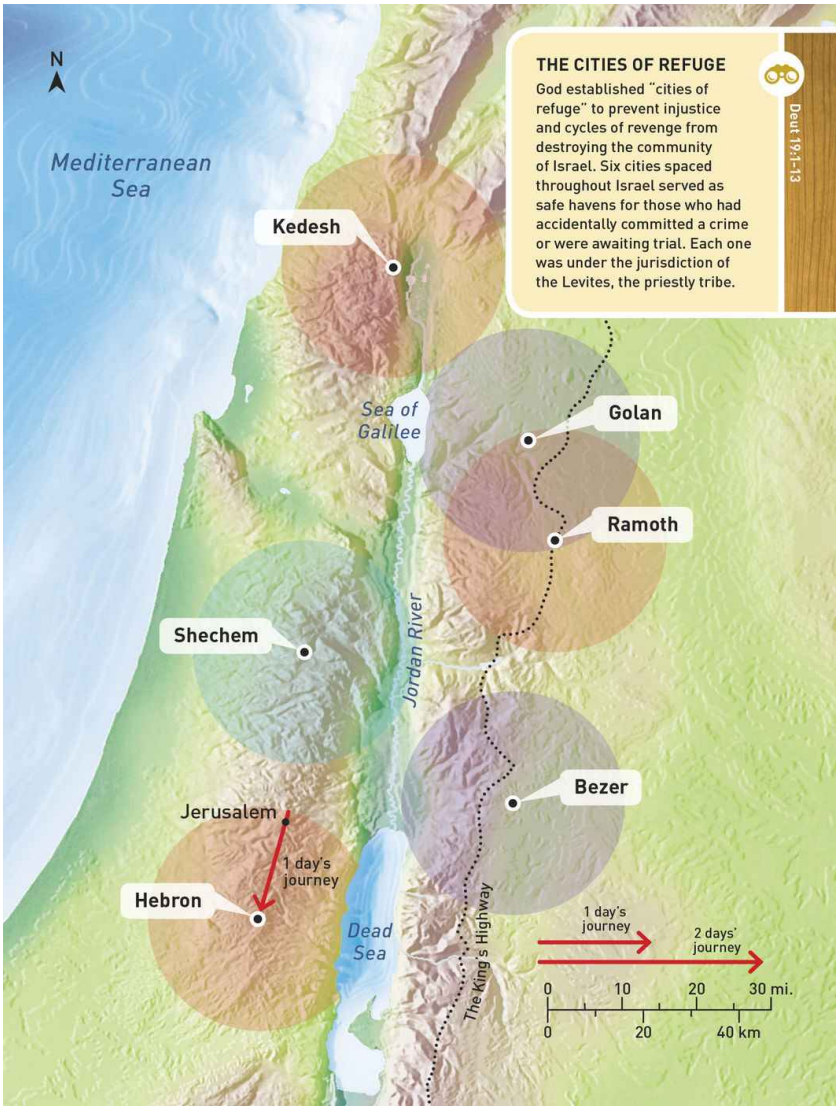
Num 2

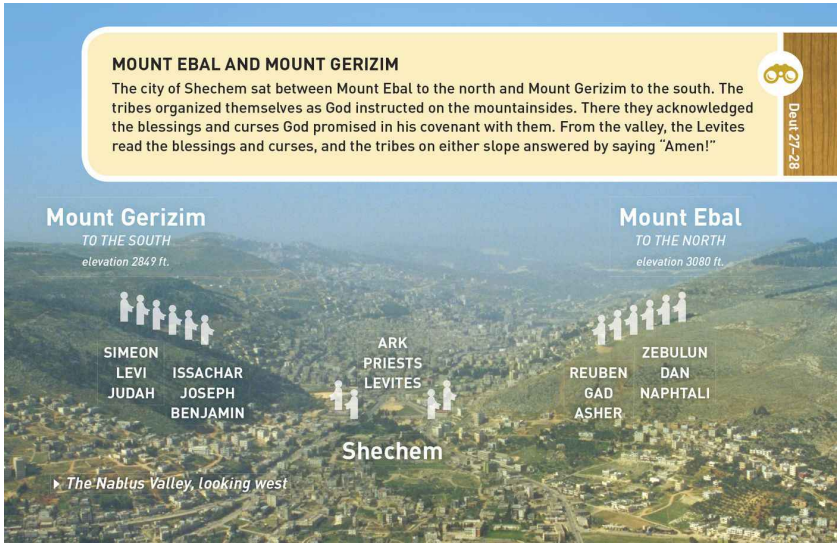


On the March

0 50 100 mi.
0 50 100 150 km
Mediterranean Sea
Sea of Galilee
Jordan River
Deuteronomy
Num 33–36
Jericho
Arnon River
Mount Nebo
Dead Sea
CANAAN
Num 22–32
Plains of Moab
Zered Brook
Zoar
Iye-abarim
GOSHEN
Rameses
Kadesh-barnea
Oboth
Num 21
Num 14–19
Punon
Mount Hor
Wilderness of Paran
Eastern Wilderness
Num 13
Num 20
SINAI PENINSULA
Nile River
Ezion-geber
Route of Exodus
Num 12
Kibroth-hattaavah
Hazeroth
Num 11
Sinai Wilderness
EGYPT
Num 1–10
Mount Sinai
N
Red Sea
ISRAEL'S ROUTE IN THE BOOK OF NUMBERS
Numbers 10–22 records most of the traveling that the Hebrews did. The people covered over 350 miles, but it took them almost 40 years.
Num 10–22

BALAAM IN MOAB
Balak, the king of Moab, recruited a "diviner" named Balaam to travel there and curse the Israelites to keep them from moving in toward Moab. Balaam was interested in the monetary rewards, but God told Balaam to bless the Israelites instead.
Num 22–24
Balaam
obeys God and blesses the Israelites
Balak
wants Balaam to curse the Israelites
ISRAELITES
View from Mount Nebo, looking northeast

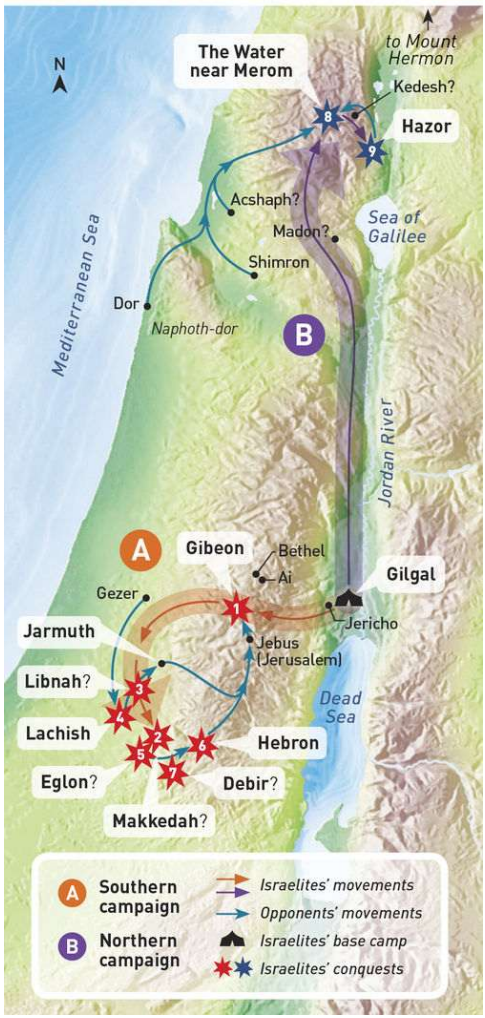

N
Mediterranean Sea
Kedesh
Sea of Galilee
Golan
Ramoth
Shechem
Jordan River
Bezer
Jerusalem
1 day's journey
Hebron
Dead Sea
The King's Highway
1 day's journey
2 days' journey
0 10 20 30 mi.
0 20 40 km
THE CITIES OF REFUGE
God established "cities of refuge" to prevent injustice and cycles of revenge from destroying the community of Israel. Six cities spaced throughout Israel served as safe havens for those who had accidentally committed a crime or were awaiting trial. Each one was under the jurisdiction of the Levites, the priestly tribe.
Deut 19:1-13


MOUNT EBAL AND MOUNT GERIZIM
The city of Shechem sat between Mount Ebal to the north and Mount Gerizim to the south. The tribes organized themselves as God instructed on the mountainsides. There they acknowledged the blessings and curses God promised in his covenant with them. From the valley, the Levites read the blessings and curses, and the tribes on either slope answered by saying "Amen!"
Deut 27–28
Mount Gerizim
TO THE SOUTH
elevation 2849 ft.
SIMEON
LEVI
JUDAH
ISSACHAR
JOSEPH
BENJAMIN
ARK
PRIESTS
LEVITES
Shechem
Mount Ebal
TO THE NORTH
elevation 3080 ft.
REUBEN
GAD
ASHER
ZEBULUN
DAN
NAPHTALI
The Nablus Valley, looking west

CONQUERING CANAAN

Israel conquered the land in two phases, first in the south, then in the north. Both campaigns, though, were initiated not by Israel but by the Canaanites already living in the land. The king of Jerusalem attacked Gibeon, initiating the southern campaign. Later the king of Hazor instigated Israel's northern campaign. Joshua 12 summarizes all the kings that Israel defeated. This map shows the major battlegrounds of each campaign.

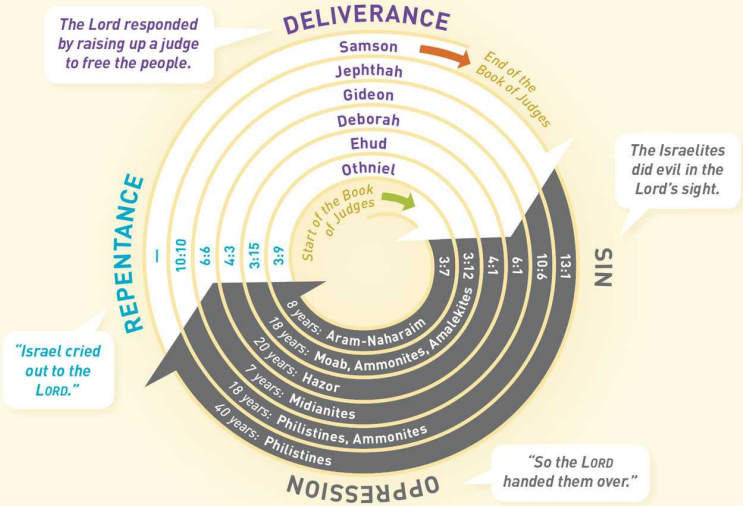
Josh 10–12

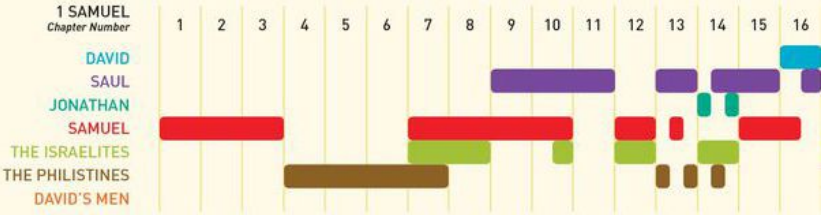


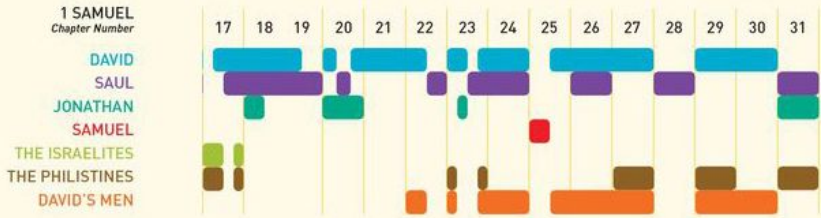
0 10 20 30 mi.
0 20 40 km
N
Mediterranean Sea
Tyre
ASHER
NAPHTALI
Sea of Galilee
EAST MANASSEH
ZEBULUN
ISSACHAR
WEST MANASSEH
Shechem
Jordan River
EPHRAIM
DAN
GAD
BENJAMIN
Jericho
Jerusalem
REUBEN
JUDAH
Gaza
Hebron
Dead Sea
Beersheba
SIMEON
A PIECE OF THE PROMISED LAND
After seven years of conquest, Israel had established its presence in the Promised Land. Joshua then allotted portions of land to each of the twelve tribes. Each portion apparently came together around a cluster of cities. This allotment probably happened in a series of ceremonies that started west of the Jordan River; continued with portions for Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh; and concluded with the remaining seven tribes. Much of the land, however, remained unconquered. The Philistines still controlled much of Issachar's allotment and the whole Mediterranean seaboard. Israel would continue to battle for the land that God had promised.
Josh 13–21

THE JUDGES CYCLE

The book of Judges illustrates Israel's cycles of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. God responded to Israel's sin by sending oppressors as a form of judgment. But when Israel repented, God responded by sending judges to deliver them into freedom and peace. Today, God responds in a similar way to our sin and repentance—always with the hope of restoring us back to himself.

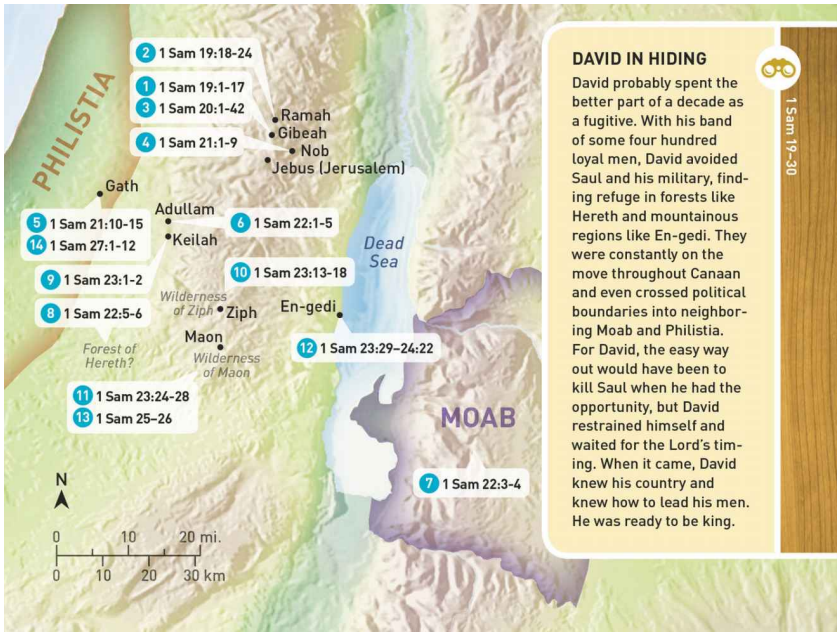






1 SAMUEL AT A GLANCE

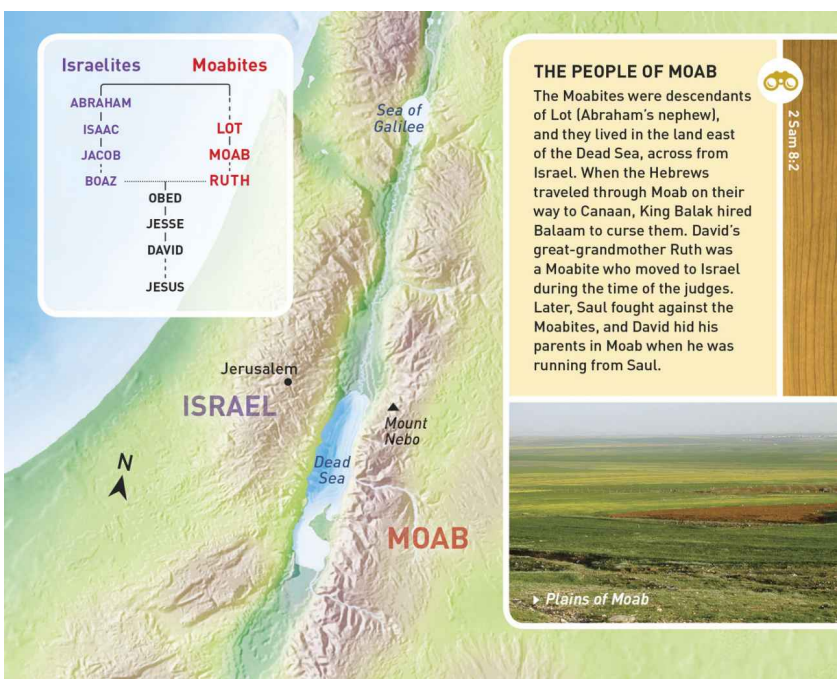
First Samuel weaves together many different lives. Here are some of the key people and where they appear throughout the story.



DAVID IN HIDING

1 Sam 19–30

David probably spent the better part of a decade as a fugitive. With his band of some four hundred loyal men, David avoided Saul and his military, finding refuge in forests like Hereth and mountainous regions like En-gedi. They were constantly on the move throughout Canaan and even crossed political boundaries into neighboring Moab and Philistia. For David, the easy way out would have been to kill Saul when he had the opportunity, but David restrained himself and waited for the Lord's timing. When it came, David knew his country and knew how to lead his men. He was ready to be king.



THE PEOPLE OF MOAB

2 Sam 8:2

The Moabites were descendants of Lot (Abraham's nephew), and they lived in the land east of the Dead Sea, across from Israel. When the Hebrews traveled through Moab on their way to Canaan, King Balak hired Balaam to curse them. David's great-grandmother Ruth was a Moabite who moved to Israel during the time of the judges. Later, Saul fought against the Moabites, and David hid his parents in Moab when he was running from Saul.

Plains of Moab

Battles under	WINS	LOSSES	OTHER*
Joshua	8	3	
David	19	0	
Solomon	3	0	
Judah's Kings	8	14	1
Israel's Kings	10	6	2
Other	12	4	12
Total: 102	60	27	15

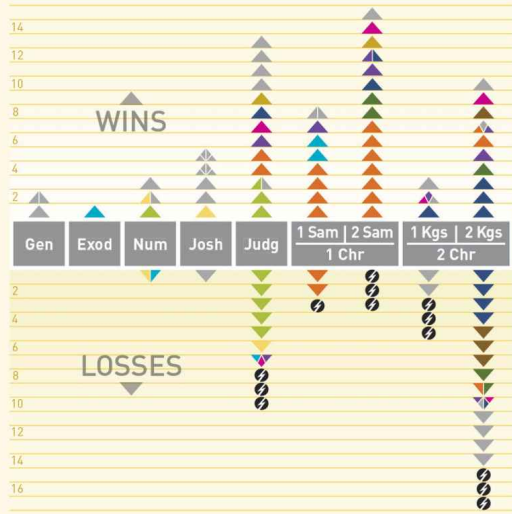
** Civil Wars, Treaties, Mixed, Unspecified*

BATTLES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Bible recounts 102 battles that God's people fought during Old Testament times. Thirty-five different nations went to war against God's people, but God's people won nearly 70% of those battles. However, sometimes God allowed his people to be defeated because they refused to trust in him. Of the battles mentioned, twelve of them were civil wars among God's people. To see them killing each other surely broke God's heart.

Israel's major opponents	Number of battles
Philistines	18
Arameans	14
Canaanites	10
Ammonites	9
Moabites	6
Assyrians	5
Amalekites	5
Amorites	5
Edomites	5
Jebusites	4
Other opponents	33
Coalitions	
Civil wars	12

Source:
http://constantlyreforming.wordpress.com/every-battle-in-the-bible/



WEALTH
25 tons of gold annually from tributes
16 tons of gold from Ophir
9,000 lbs. of gold from Sheba

KINGDOM
45,000 square miles

DAILY FOOD REQUIREMENTS
300 bushels of meal
150 bushels of choice flour
100 sheep or goats
20 pasture-fed cattle
10 oxen
Deer, gazelle, roe deer, choice poultry

WOMEN
700 wives
300 concubines

LABOR
3,600 foremen
30,000 Israelite men
70,000 common laborers
80,000 quarry laborers

MILITARY
1,400 chariots
4,000 stalls for chariot horses
12,000 horses

SOLOMON'S DECADENCE

Solomon is considered the wealthiest man who ever lived. Here's a look at his diverse portfolio. Even with all this, Solomon considered it meaningless apart from life with God.

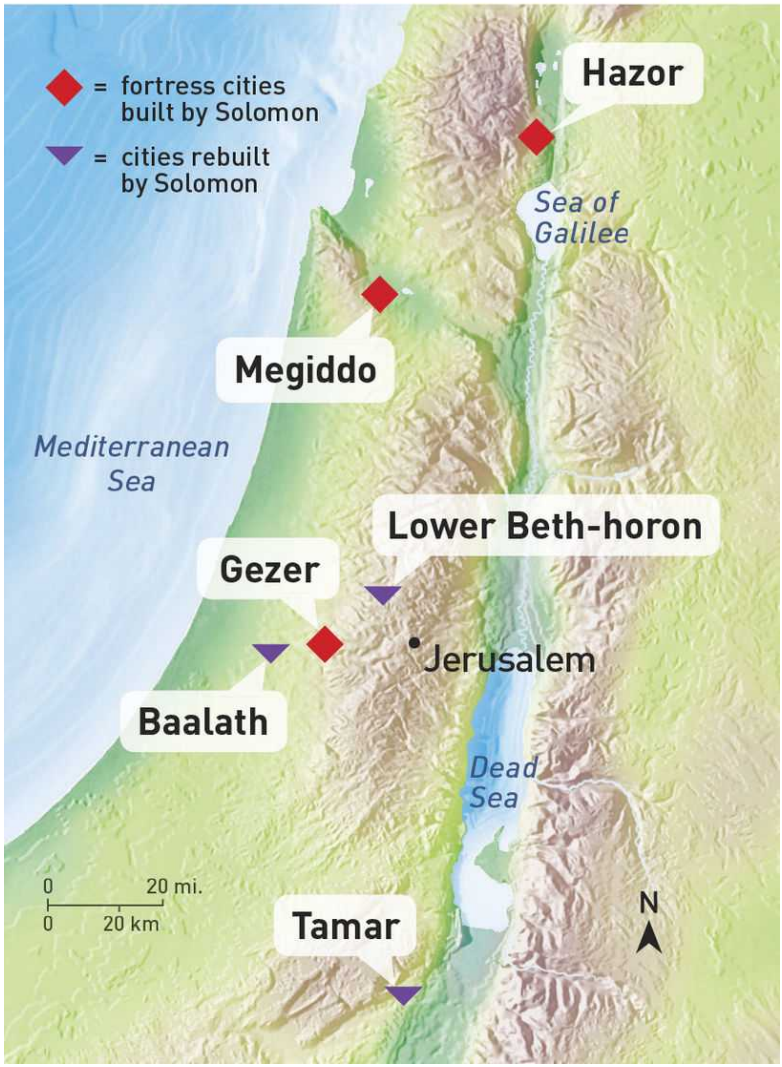
1 Kgs 4–5, 9–11

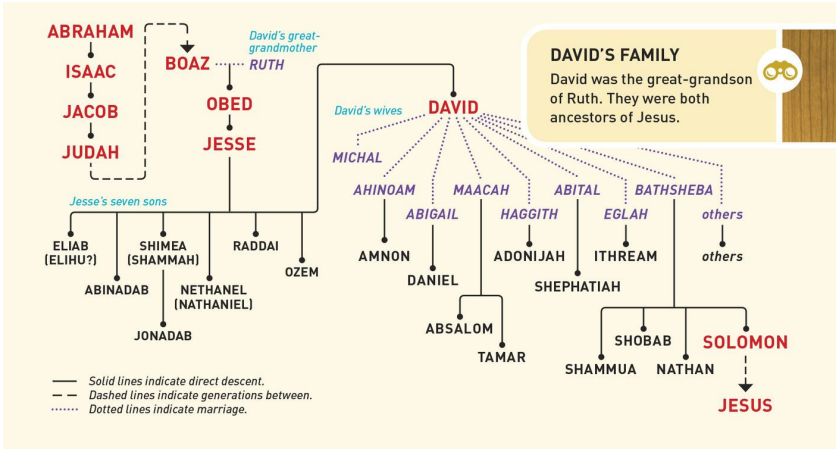
Source: 1 Kgs 4–5, 9–11

SOLOMON'S BUILDING PROJECTS

Solomon was the first of Israel's leaders to build cities. Others had rebuilt conquered cities, but Solomon made cities into fortresses.

1 Kgs 9:15-19





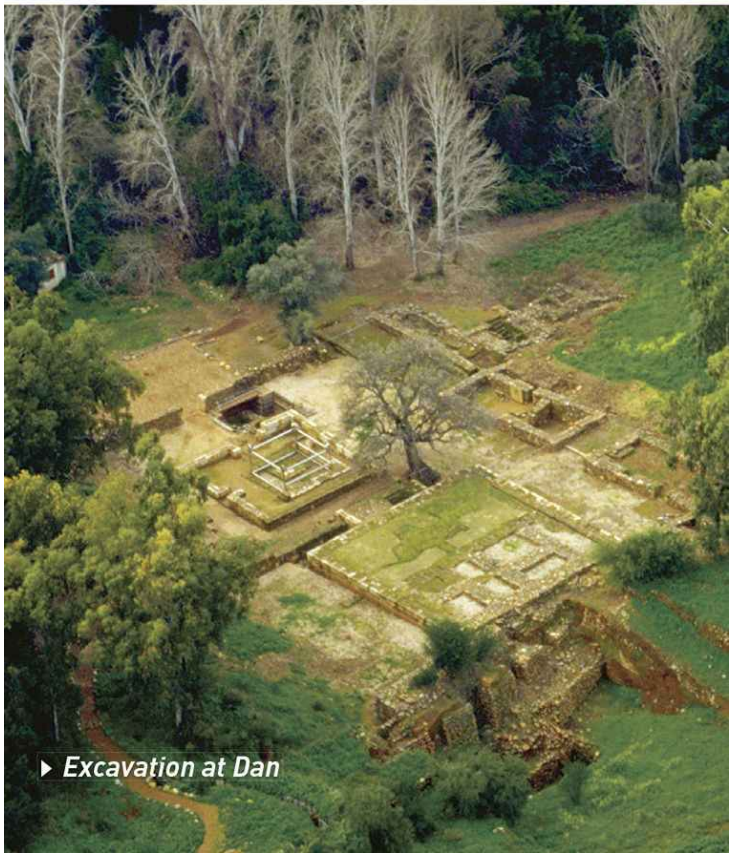
DAVID'S FAMILY

David was the great-grandson of Ruth. They were both ancestors of Jesus.

WORSHIP IN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

1 Kgs 12:25-33

Jeroboam set up two new worship centers in the cities of Bethel and Dan so that the people from the northern tribes could worship there rather than needing to travel all the way to Jerusalem. Bethel was only ten miles north of Jerusalem and thus convenient for anyone heading to Jerusalem out of habit. Dan was far north in the land of Naphtali, convenient to the northernmost people of Israel.

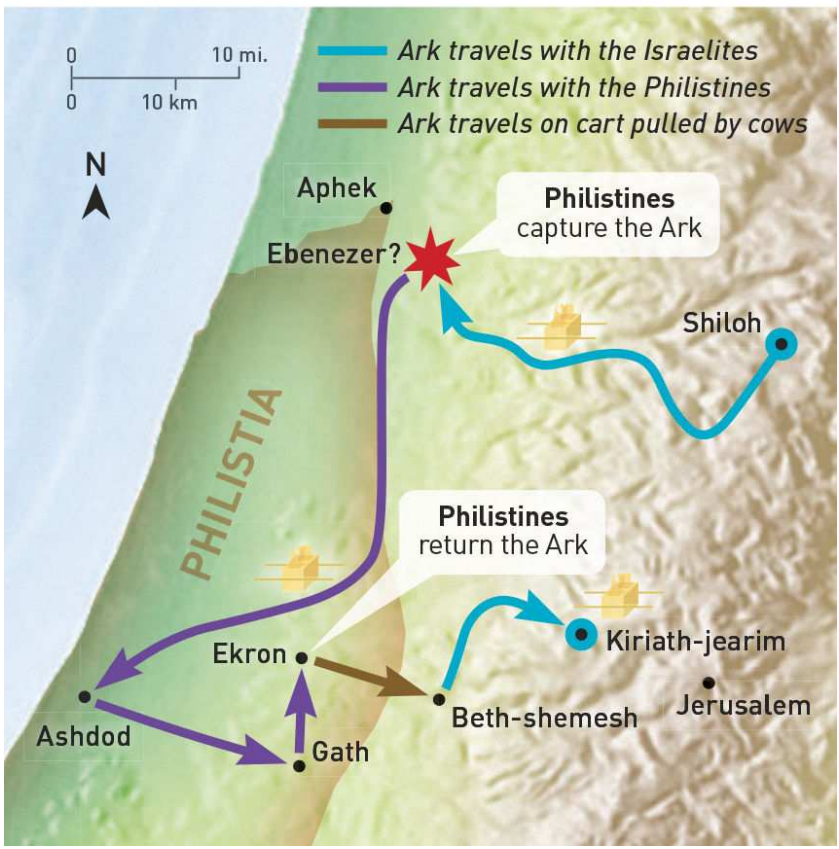


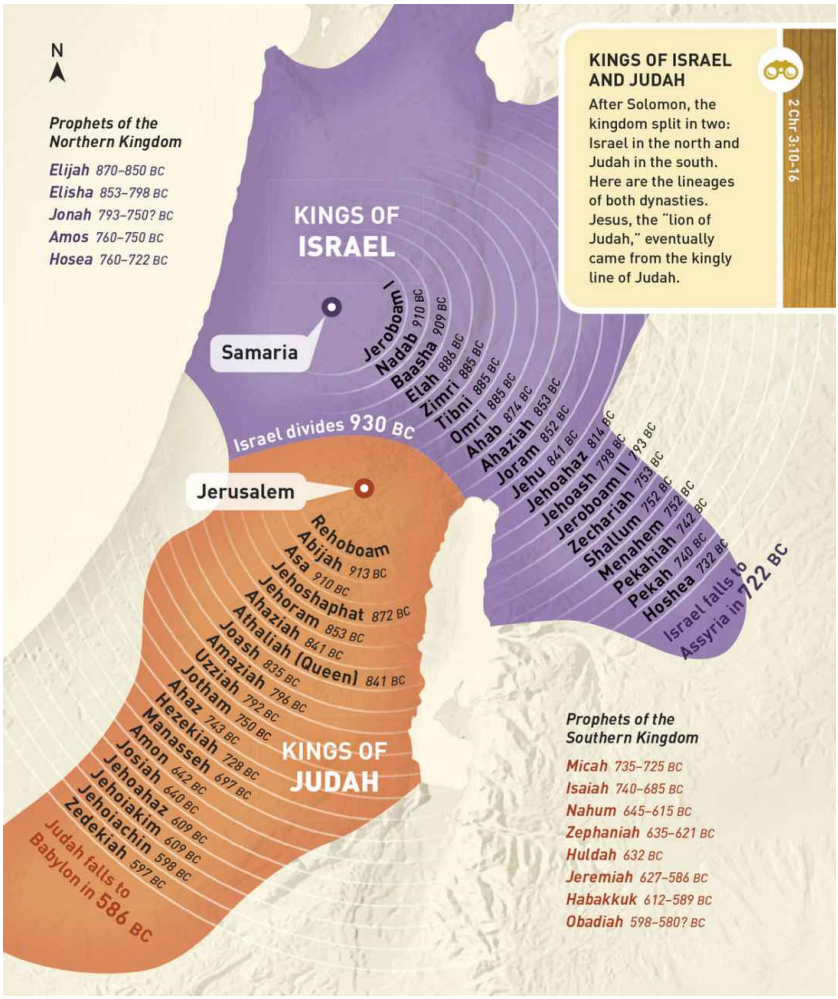
▸ *Excavation at Dan*

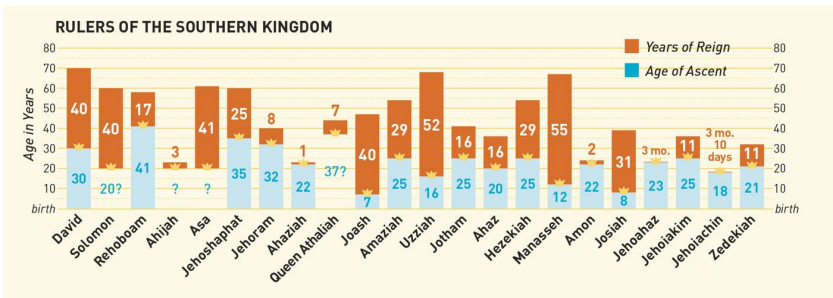
1 Chr 15:25

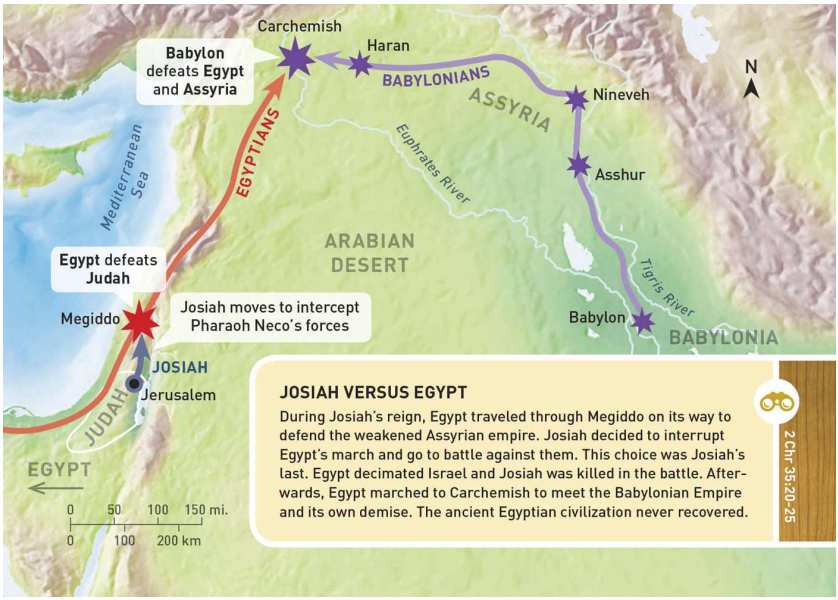
MOVING THE ARK

The Philistines captured Israel's Ark of the Covenant, but it became a curse to them. However, the Levite Obed-edom kept the Ark at his house where it was a great blessing. God's presence is a curse to those who reject him but is a blessing to those who love and fear him.




N
Prophets of the Northern Kingdom
Elijah 870–850 BC
Elisha 853–798 BC
Jonah 793–750? BC
Amos 760–750 BC
Hosea 760–722 BC
KINGS OF ISRAEL
Samaria
Jeroboam I 910 BC
Nadab 909 BC
Baasha 908 BC
Elah 886 BC
Zimri 885 BC
Tibni 885 BC
Omri 885 BC
Ahab 874 BC
Ahaziah 853 BC
Joram 852 BC
Jehu 841 BC
Jehoahaz 814 BC
Jehoash 798 BC
Jeroboam II 793 BC
Zechariah 753 BC
Shallum 752 BC
Menahem 752 BC
Pekahiah 742 BC
Pekah 740 BC
Hoshea 732 BC
Israel falls to Assyria in 722 BC
Israel divides 930 BC
Jerusalem
Rehoboam
Abijah 913 BC
Asa 910 BC
Jehoshaphat 872 BC
Jehoram 853 BC
Ahaziah 841 BC
Athaliah (Queen) 841 BC
Joash 835 BC
Amaziah 796 BC
Uzziah 792 BC
Jotham 750 BC
Ahaz 743 BC
Hezekiah 728 BC
Manasseh 697 BC
Amon 642 BC
Josiah 640 BC
Jehoahaz 609 BC
Jehoiakim 609 BC
Jehoiachin 598 BC
Zedekiah 597 BC
KINGS OF JUDAH
Judah falls to Babylon in 586 BC
KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH
After Solomon, the kingdom split in two: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Here are the lineages of both dynasties. Jesus, the "lion of Judah," eventually came from the kingly line of Judah.
2 Chr 3:10-16
Prophets of the Southern Kingdom
Micah 735–725 BC
Isaiah 740–685 BC
Nahum 645–615 BC
Zephaniah 635–621 BC
Huldah 632 BC
Jeremiah 627–586 BC
Habakkuk 612–589 BC
Obadiah 598–580? BC


RULERS OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM
Years of Reign
Age of Ascent
Age in Years
birth
David 40 30
Solomon 40 20?
Rehoboam 17 41
Ahijah 3 ?
Asa 41 ?
Jehoshaphat 25 35
Jehoram 8 32
Ahaziah 1 22
Queen Athaliah 7 37?
Joash 40 7
Amaziah 29 25
Uzziah 52 16
Jotham 16 25
Ahaz 16 20
Hezekiah 29 25
Manasseh 55 12
Amon 2 22
Josiah 31 8
Jehoahaz 3 mo. 23
Jehoiakim 11 25
Jehoiachin 3 mo. 10 days 18
Zedekiah 11 21

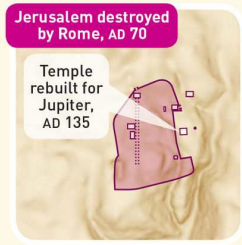

Carchemish
Haran
Babylon defeats Egypt and Assyria
BABYLONIANS
ASSYRIA
Nineveh
N
Mediterranean Sea
EGYPTIANS
Euphrates River
Asshur
ARABIAN DESERT
Tigris River
Egypt defeats Judah
Megiddo
Josiah moves to intercept Pharaoh Neco's forces
Babylon
BABYLONIA
JOSIAH
Jerusalem
JUDAH
EGYPT
0 50 100 150 mi.
0 100 200 km
JOSIAH VERSUS EGYPT
During Josiah's reign, Egypt traveled through Megiddo on its way to defend the weakened Assyrian empire. Josiah decided to interrupt Egypt's march and go to battle against them. This choice was Josiah's last. Egypt decimated Israel and Josiah was killed in the battle. Afterwards, Egypt marched to Carchemish to meet the Babylonian Empire and its own demise. The ancient Egyptian civilization never recovered.
2 Chr 35:20-25

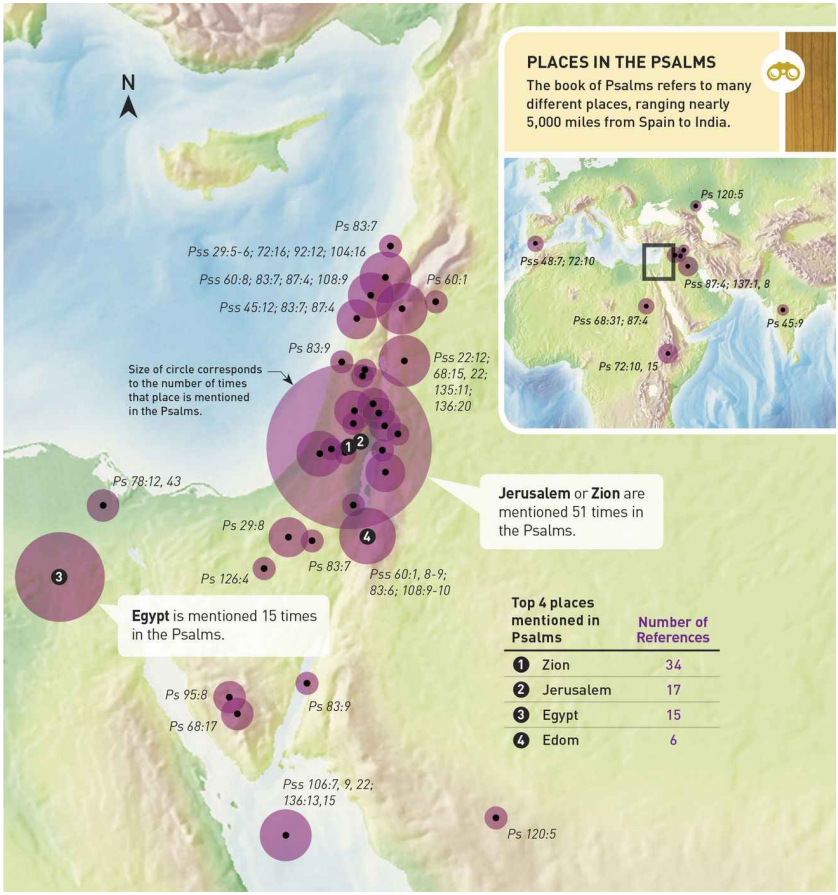
N
RETURNING TO THE PROMISED LAND
The Jews returning from exile traveled some 900 miles from Nippur and Susa back to Jerusalem. This route closely mirrored their ancestor Abraham's trip when he left Ur (Genesis 11:31ff). Like Abraham, many of them had never seen the Promised Land when they set out. They were following God by faith.
Ezra 2:1
New York, NY
St Louis, MO
900 miles
Haran
Tigris River
Aleppo
Euphrates River
Rezeph
Mediterranean Sea
Hamath
Tadmor
Damascus
Hazor
Nippur
Babylon
Susa
Jerusalem
ARABIAN DESERT
BABYLONIA
Dead Sea
Uruk
Avva
Ur
0 100 200 300 400 mi.
0 200 400 600 km
Return under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel
Return under Ezra and Nehemiah

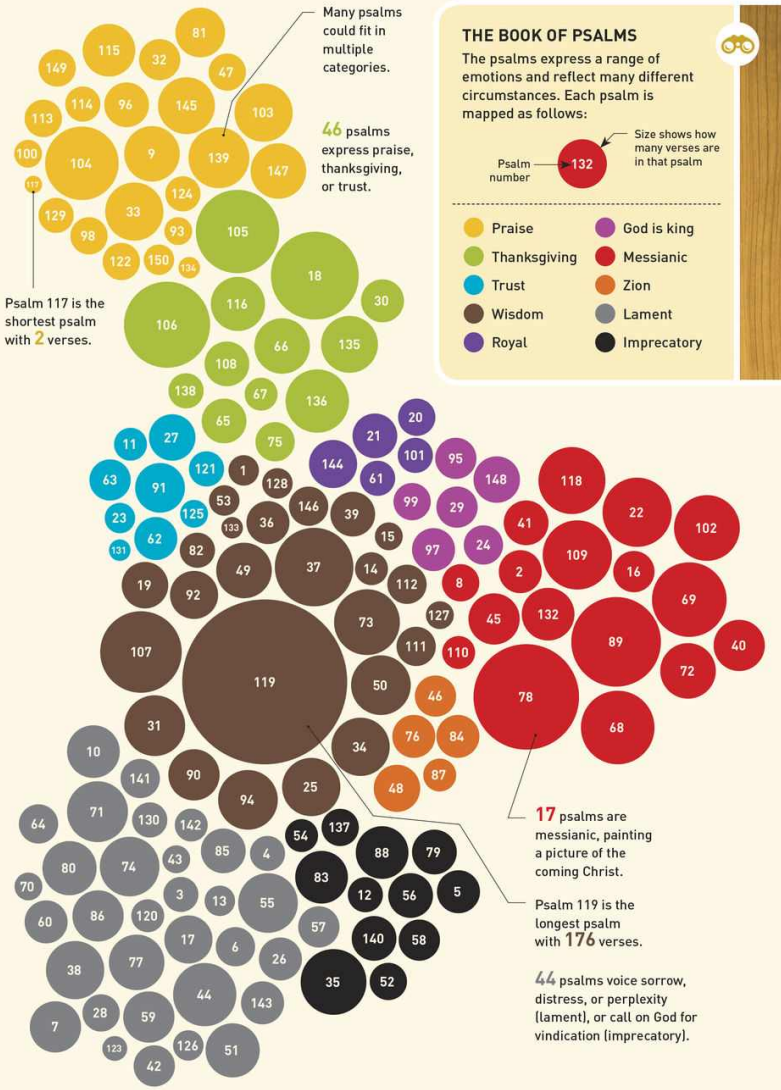
JERUSALEM THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Jerusalem held many sacred moments in Israel's history and continues to carry religious significance among other faiths. Today there are Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Quarters within the Old City district.

Neh 2:11

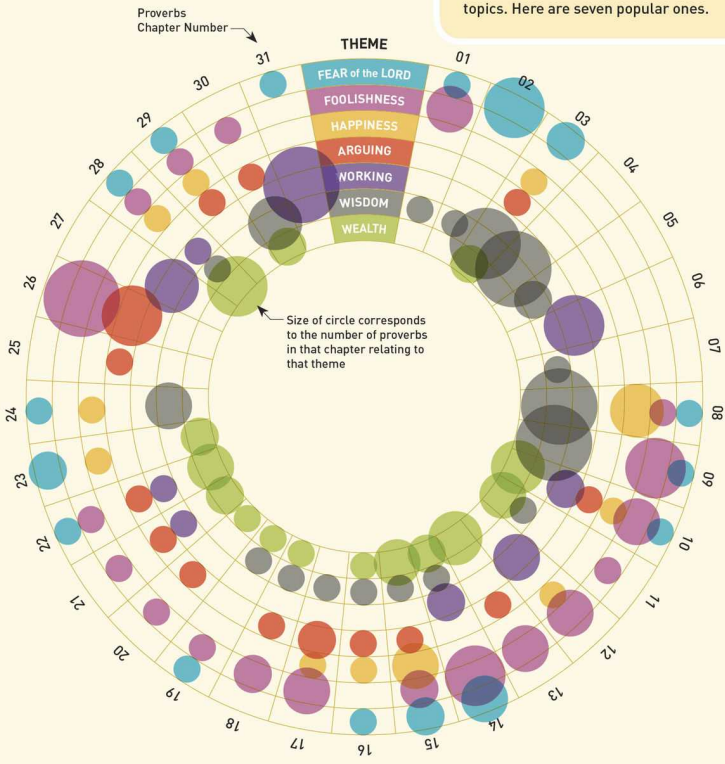



N
PLACES IN THE PSALMS
The book of Psalms refers to many different places, ranging nearly 5,000 miles from Spain to India.
Ps 120:5
Pss 48:7; 72:10
Pss 87:4; 137:1, 8
Pss 68:31; 87:4
Ps 45:9
Ps 72:10, 15
Ps 83:7
Pss 29:5-6; 72:16; 92:12; 104:16
Pss 60:8; 83:7; 87:4; 108:9
Ps 60:1
Pss 45:12; 83:7; 87:4
Ps 83:9
Pss 22:12; 68:15, 22; 135:11; 136:20
Size of circle corresponds to the number of times that place is mentioned in the Psalms.
1
2
Jerusalem or Zion are mentioned 51 times in the Psalms.
Ps 78:12, 43
Ps 29:8
4
Ps 83:7
Pss 60:1, 8-9; 83:6; 108:9-10
Ps 126:4
3
Egypt is mentioned 15 times in the Psalms.
Ps 95:8
Ps 68:17
Ps 83:9
Pss 106:7, 9, 22; 136:13,15
Ps 120:5
Top 4 places mentioned in Psalms
Number of References
1 Zion 34
2 Jerusalem 17
3 Egypt 15
4 Edom 6

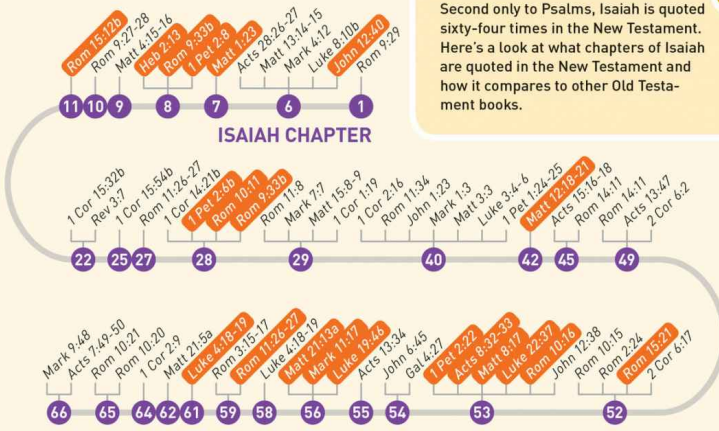

THE BOOK OF PSALMS
The psalms express a range of emotions and reflect many different circumstances. Each psalm is mapped as follows:
Psalm number
132
Size shows how many verses are in that psalm
Praise
Thanksgiving
Trust
Wisdom
Royal
God is king
Messianic
Zion
Lament
Imprecatory
Many psalms could fit in multiple categories.
46 psalms express praise, thanksgiving, or trust.
Psalm 117 is the shortest psalm with 2 verses.
17 psalms are messianic, painting a picture of the coming Christ.
Psalm 119 is the longest psalm with 176 verses.
44 psalms voice sorrow, distress, or perplexity (lament), or call on God for vindication (imprecatory).

THEMES IN PROVERBS

Proverbs covers many different topics. Here are seven popular ones.



Isaiah is quoted in these New Testament verses:



Verses highlighted in orange are prophesies of Jesus that are fulfilled.

ISAIAH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Second only to Psalms, Isaiah is quoted sixty-four times in the New Testament. Here's a look at what chapters of Isaiah are quoted in the New Testament and how it compares to other Old Testament books.

Most quoted OT books

The number of times these Old Testament books are quoted in the New Testament:

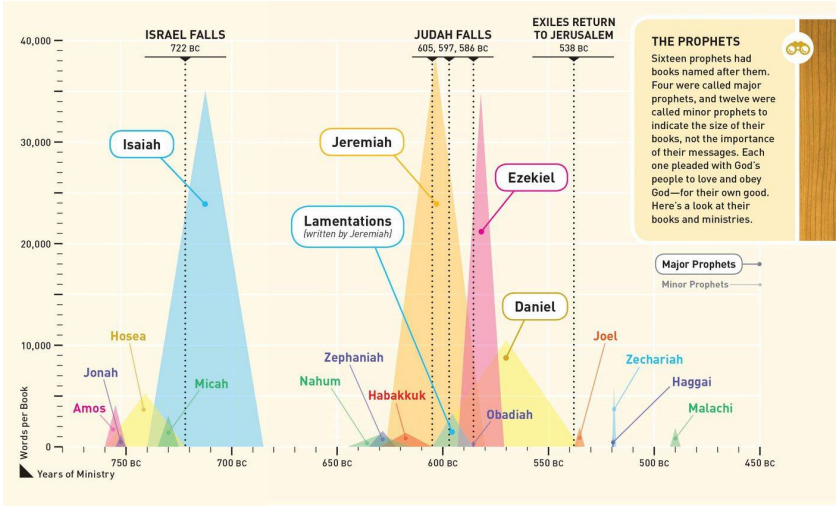
Most quoted OT verses

The Old Testament verses that are quoted most often in the New Testament:

ASSYRIA INVADES JUDAH

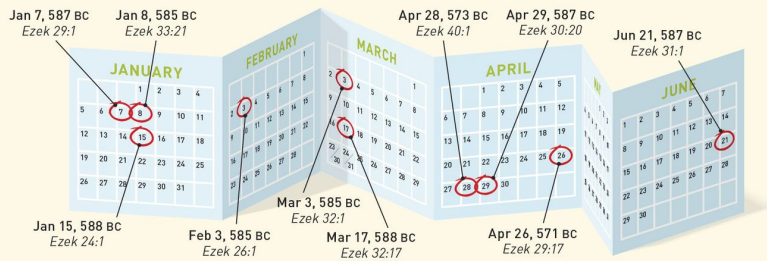
Isa 36–37

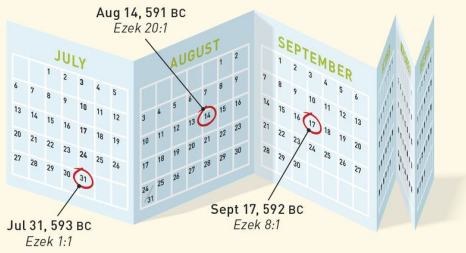
After the Assyrians defeated Damascus and Israel, Judah was next on their march south to Egypt. The army marched to Jerusalem and offered terms of peace that would force Judah to become subjects. King Hezekiah had a choice: Would he surrender, or would he trust in God's protection?



THE PROPHETS

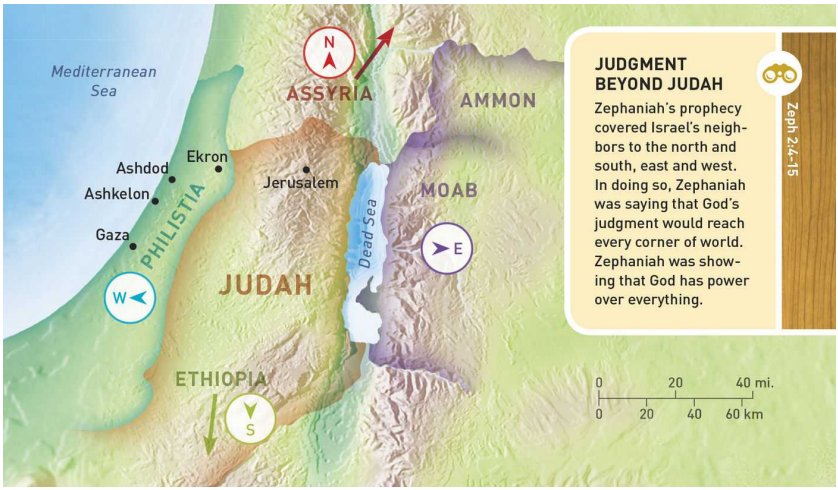
Sixteen prophets had books named after them. Four were called major prophets, and twelve were called minor prophets to indicate the size of their books, not the importance of their messages. Each one pleaded with God's people to love and obey God—for their own good. Here's a look at their books and ministries.





DATING IN EZEKIEL

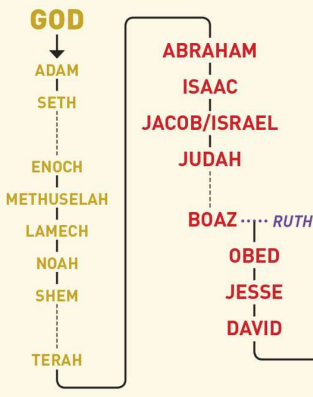
Ezekiel is famous for keeping meticulous dates for his prophecies. Throughout Ezekiel, thirteen dates can be lined up with our modern calendar. But Ezekiel isn't the only one with this much precision. Other books also list exact dates of major events.



JUDGMENT BEYOND JUDAH

Zephaniah's prophecy covered Israel's neighbors to the north and south, east and west. In doing so, Zephaniah was saying that God's judgment would reach every corner of world. Zephaniah was showing that God has power over everything.

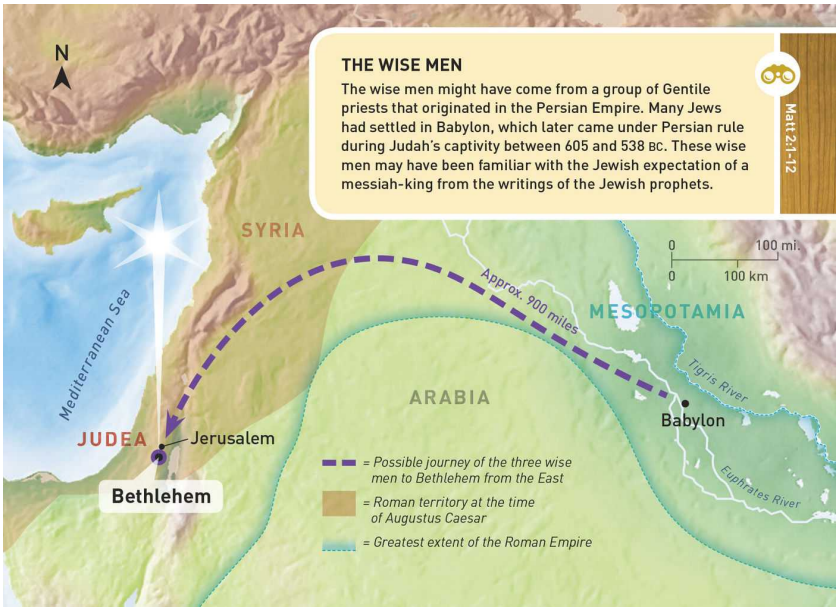
Zeph 2:4-15

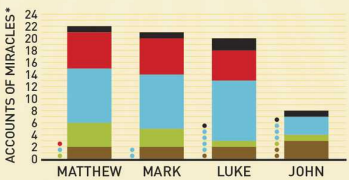


JESUS' ANCESTRY

Both Matthew and Luke record the ancestors of Jesus, although the records differ. The differences occur between King David and Mary's husband, Joseph. Some have said that Luke's genealogy traces Mary's ancestry while Matthew traces Joseph's line. Others argue that both represent Joseph's lineage, one natural, the other legal. Matthew's record back to Abraham reveals that Jesus truly is the King of the Jews. Luke's account, going all the way back to Adam, emphasizes that Jesus is Savior for all.

Matt 1:1-17

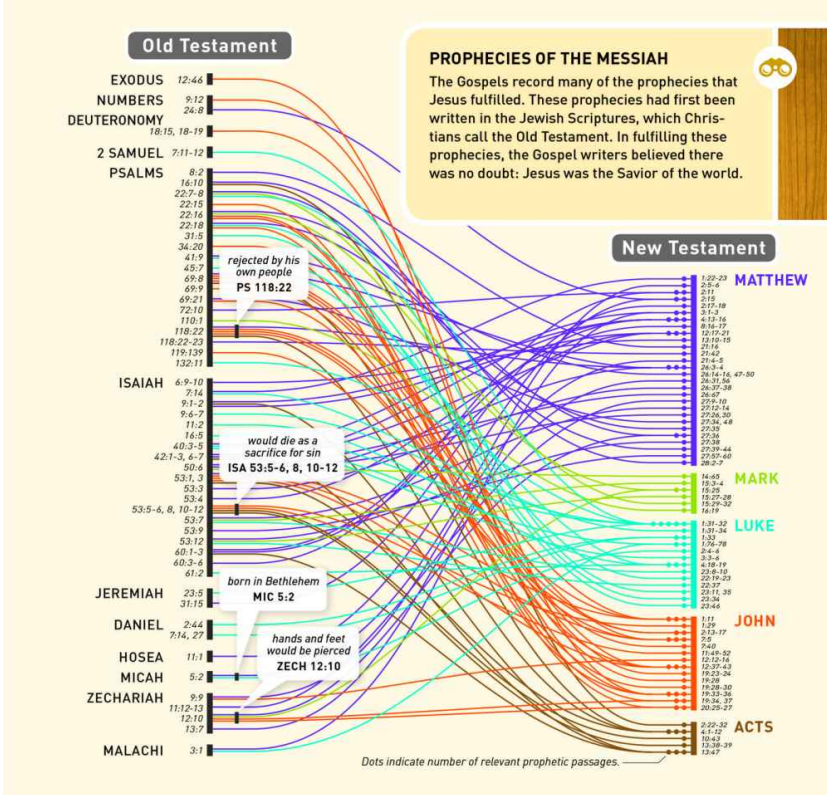




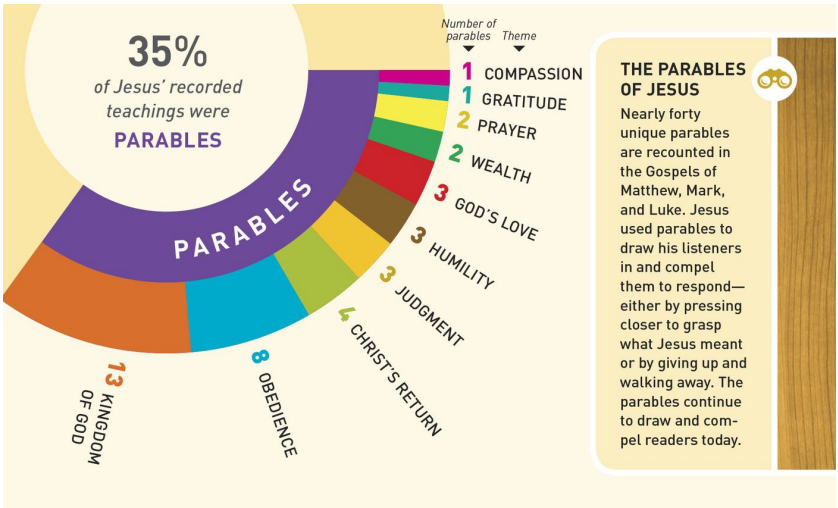
* Dots indicate miracle accounts unique to that Gospel. Most accounts appear in more than one Gospel.

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

The four Gospels record nearly forty miracles that Jesus performed during his ministry. These include nature miracles like calming the storm, healing men and women from physical deformities and biological illnesses, and freeing people from the power of evil spirits. The apostle John called these miraculous events "signs" to capture their purpose: They pointed beyond themselves to God's power revealed in Jesus. They showed people who Jesus really was—the Son of God. At the end of his book, John added, "The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book" (John 20:30). There are still more miracle stories yet to be told.



See "Prophecies of the Messiah" for a complete listing of prophecies.

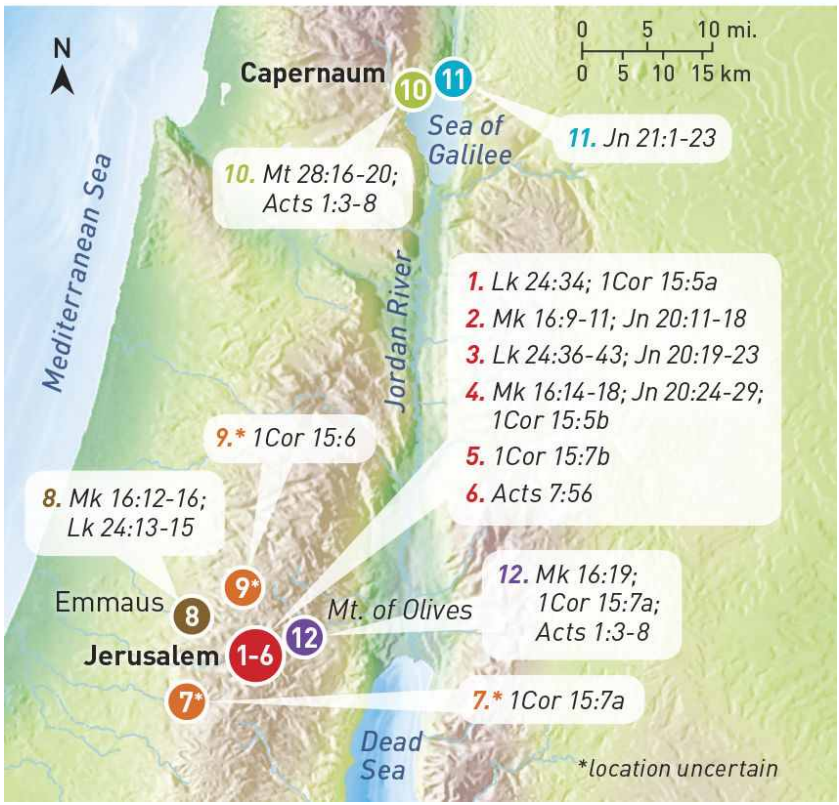


THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Nearly forty unique parables are recounted in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Jesus used parables to draw his listeners in and compel them to respond—either by pressing closer to grasp what Jesus meant or by giving up and walking away. The parables continue to draw and compel readers today.

JESUS APPEARS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

The Bible records twelve separate occasions when Jesus appeared to people after his resurrection. He appeared in many of the same places he had originally ministered, from Jerusalem in the south to Capernaum in the north. His appearances assured his disciples and bolstered their faith. Afterward, they began to spread the hope of new life with Christ.



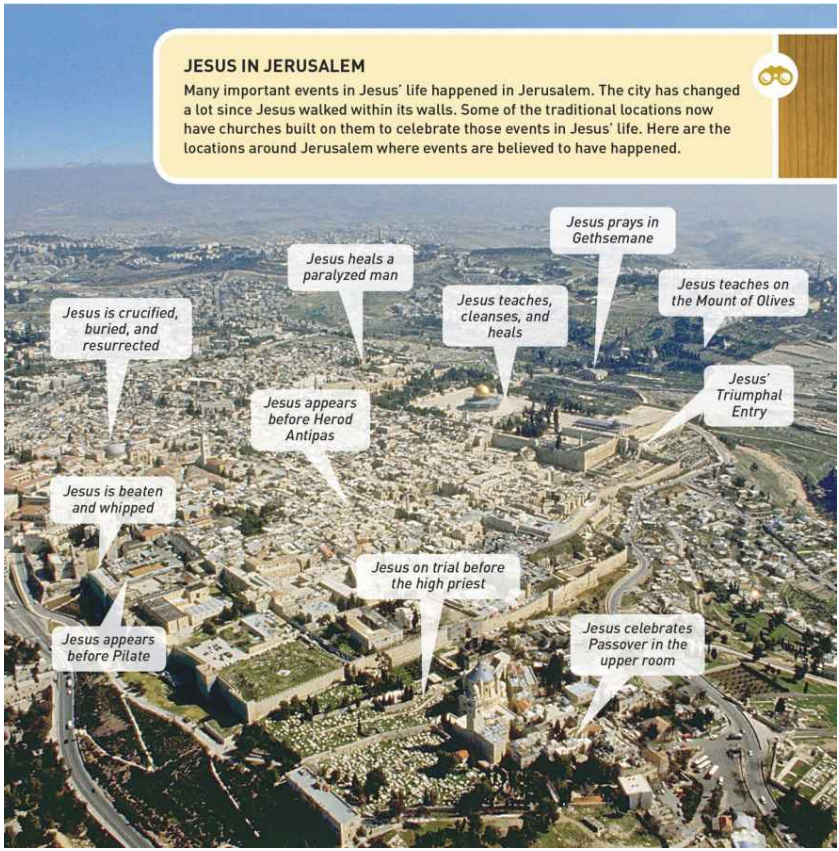
TRAVELING TO JERUSALEM

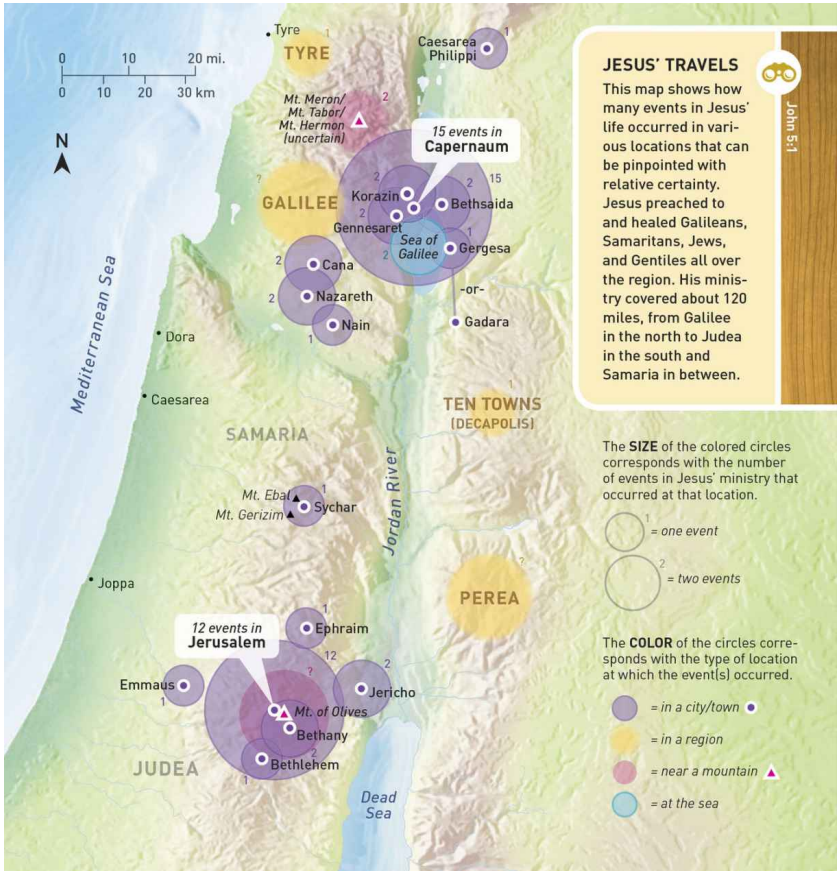
Jesus probably traveled from Galilee to Jerusalem many times throughout his life. There are two likely routes that he may have taken, one through the Judean hills and one along the Jordan River.

John 2:13

JESUS IN JERUSALEM

Many important events in Jesus' life happened in Jerusalem. The city has changed a lot since Jesus walked within its walls. Some of the traditional locations now have churches built on them to celebrate those events in Jesus' life. Here are the locations around Jerusalem where events are believed to have happened.




JESUS' TRAVELS
This map shows how many events in Jesus' life occurred in various locations that can be pinpointed with relative certainty. Jesus preached to and healed Galileans, Samaritans, Jews, and Gentiles all over the region. His ministry covered about 120 miles, from Galilee in the north to Judea in the south and Samaria in between.
John 5:1
0 10 20 mi.
0 10 20 30 km
N
Tyre
TYRE
Caesarea Philippi
Mt. Meron/ Mt. Tabor/ Mt. Hermon (uncertain)
15 events in Capernaum
GALILEE
Korazin
Bethsaida
Gennesaret
Sea of Galilee
Gergesa
Cana
Nazareth
Nain
-or-
Gadara
Mediterranean Sea
Dora
Caesarea
TEN TOWNS (DECAPOLIS)
SAMARIA
Jordan River
Mt. Ebal
Mt. Gerizim
Sychar
Joppa
PEREA
12 events in Jerusalem
Ephraim
Emmaus
Jericho
Mt. of Olives
Bethany
Bethlehem
JUDEA
Dead Sea
The SIZE of the colored circles corresponds with the number of events in Jesus' ministry that occurred at that location.
= one event
= two events
The COLOR of the circles corresponds with the type of location at which the event(s) occurred.
= in a city/town
= in a region
= near a mountain
= at the sea

HOW FAR PAUL TRAVELED

On his first three journeys to spread the news of Jesus, Paul traveled nearly 9,000 miles by both land and sea. You can see the equivalent distances in four trips across the United States.

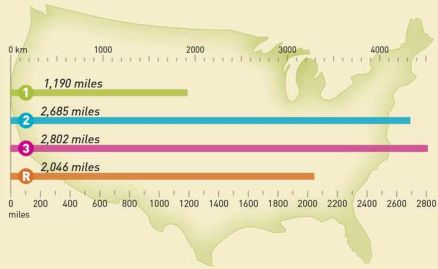
Acts 13–28

1 FIRST: Antioch—Antioch *Acts 13:1–14:28*

2 SECOND: Antioch—Antioch *Acts 15:36–18:22*

3 THIRD: Antioch—Jerusalem *Acts 18:23–21:16*

R TO ROME: Caesarea—Rome *Acts 21:17–28:31*



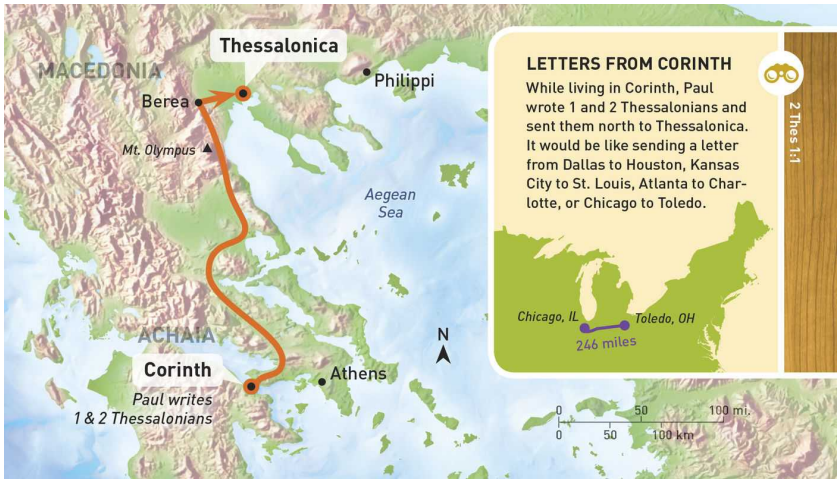
SENDING LETTERS

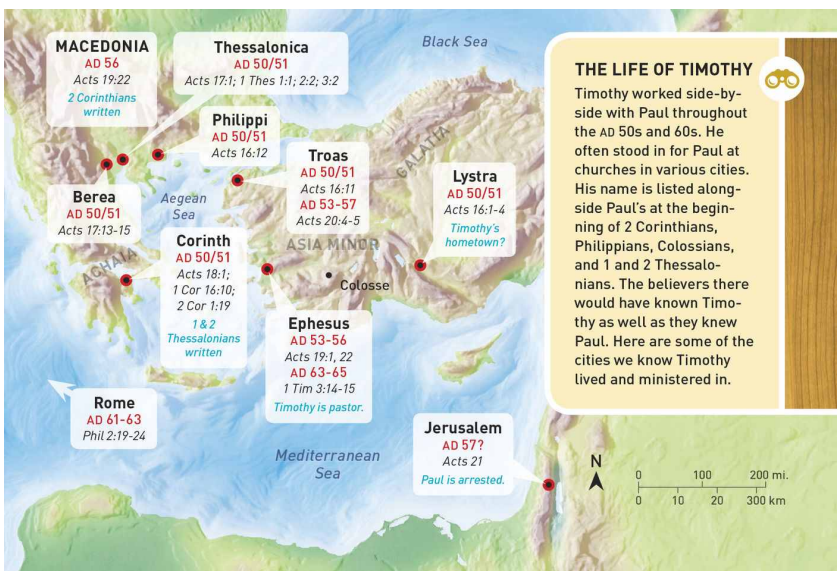
Letters to the early churches traveled a long way to reach their destinations. Here's a look at where they were likely written and where they were sent.

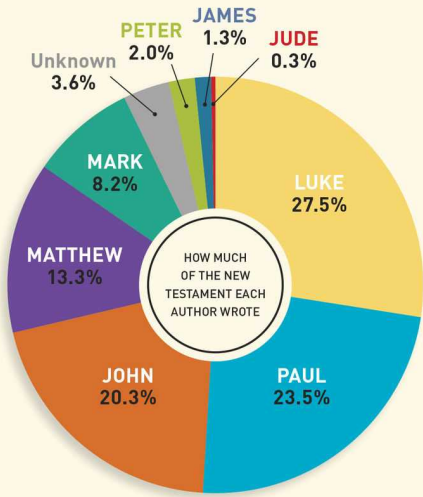
DISTANCE	LETTERS
1,478 mi.	1 & 2 Peter
1,222 mi.	Colossians & Philemon
1,139 mi.	Ephesians & 2 Timothy
1,127 mi.	Philippians
823 mi.	Romans
581 mi.	Galatians
560 mi.	Titus
418 mi.	1 Timothy
294 mi.	Revelation
255 mi.	1 Corinthians
245 mi.	2 Corinthians
241 mi.	1 & 2 Thessalonians
229 mi.	1, 2, 3 John

THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES

Most of the epistles were written in the second half of the first century AD. Paul, John, and Peter wrote most of the letters included in the New Testament. Here you can compare each book's length by the size of the circle.


Thessalonica
MACEDONIA
Philippi
Berea
Mt. Olympus
Aegean Sea
ACHAIA
Corinth
Athens
Paul writes 1 & 2 Thessalonians
N
0 50 100 mi.
0 50 100 km
LETTERS FROM CORINTH
While living in Corinth, Paul wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians and sent them north to Thessalonica. It would be like sending a letter from Dallas to Houston, Kansas City to St. Louis, Atlanta to Charlotte, or Chicago to Toledo.
Chicago, IL
Toledo, OH
246 miles
2 Thes 1:1


MACEDONIA
AD 56
Acts 19:22
2 Corinthians written
Thessalonica
AD 50/51
Acts 17:1; 1 Thes 1:1; 2:2; 3:2
Philippi
AD 50/51
Acts 16:12
Berea
AD 50/51
Acts 17:13-15
Aegean Sea
Corinth
AD 50/51
Acts 18:1; 1 Cor 16:10; 2 Cor 1:19
1 & 2 Thessalonians written
ACHAIA
Troas
AD 50/51
Acts 16:11
AD 53-57
Acts 20:4-5
ASIA MINOR
Colosse
Ephesus
AD 53-56
Acts 19:1, 22
AD 63-65
1 Tim 3:14-15
Timothy is pastor.
Rome
AD 61-63
Phil 2:19-24
Black Sea
GALATIA
Lystra
AD 50/51
Acts 16:1-4
Timothy's hometown?
Jerusalem
AD 57?
Acts 21
Paul is arrested.
Mediterranean Sea
N
0 100 200 mi.
0 10 20 300 km
THE LIFE OF TIMOTHY
Timothy worked side-by-side with Paul throughout the AD 50s and 60s. He often stood in for Paul at churches in various cities. His name is listed alongside Paul's at the beginning of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians. The believers there would have known Timothy as well as they knew Paul. Here are some of the cities we know Timothy lived and ministered in.



THE AUTHORS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament was written by probably eight or nine different men. The known authors are Luke, Paul, John, Matthew, Mark, Peter, James, and Jude. Some scholars disagree about the authorship of some books, but only Hebrews is unknown. Here you see how much of the New Testament was written by each of the traditionally accepted authors.

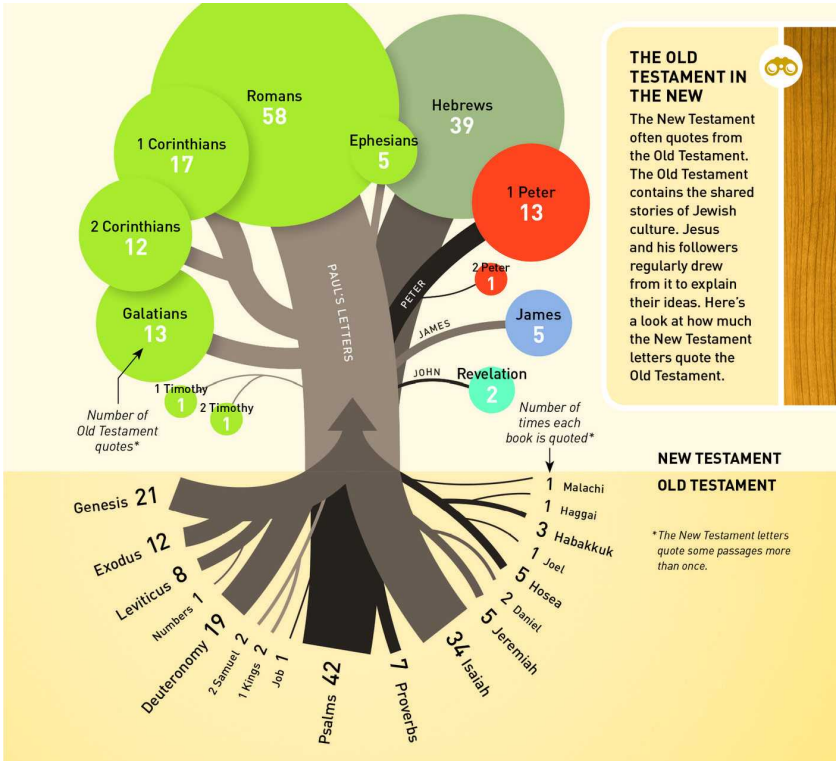
THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE GOSPELS ABOUT JESUS

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	LUKE
Gospel of Matthew	*Gospel of Mark*	*Gospel of Luke*	*Gospel of John*	*Acts of the Apostles*

LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES

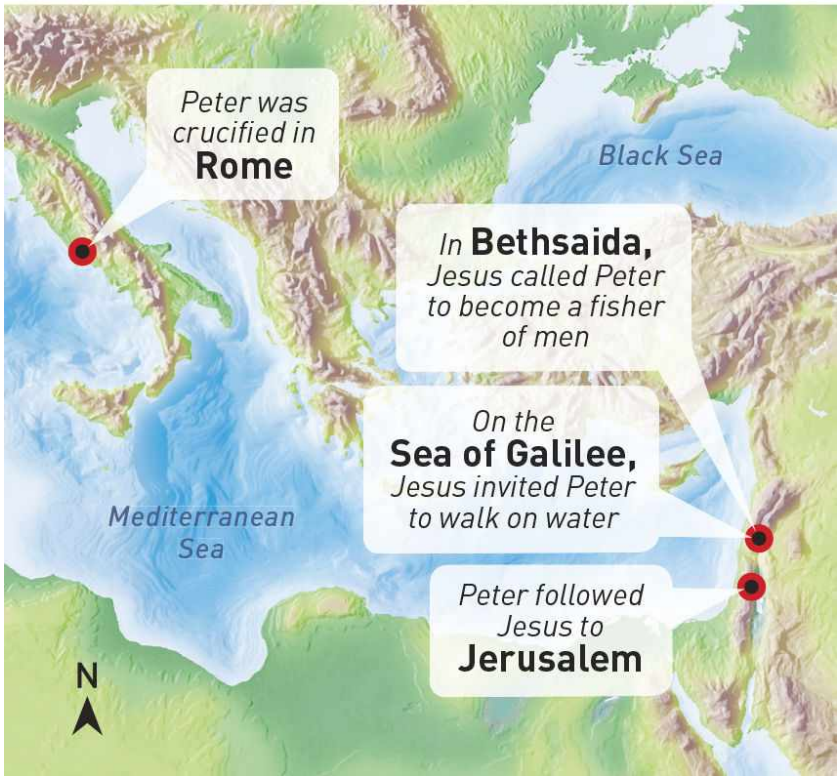
PAUL			JAMES	PETER	JUDE	JOHN
Romans	*1 Thessalonians*	*1 Peter*	?			*1 John*
1 Corinthians	*2 Thessalonians*	*2 Peter*				*2 John*
2 Corinthians	*1 Timothy*	*Hebrews*				*3 John*
Galatians	*2 Timothy*	*James*				*Jude*
Ephesians	*Titus*					*Revelation*
Philippians	*Philemon*					
Colossians						



See "The Old Testament in the New" for a complete listing of quotes.

THE LIFE OF PETER

Peter's quiet life as a fisherman was never the same after meeting Jesus. After he left his nets and the small town of Bethsaida, he followed Jesus to the capital city, Jerusalem. Later after Jesus ascended into heaven, Peter eventually traveled to Rome and probably died there. Peter might say he followed Jesus there too. For Peter, after walking on water, going to Rome was just another step.

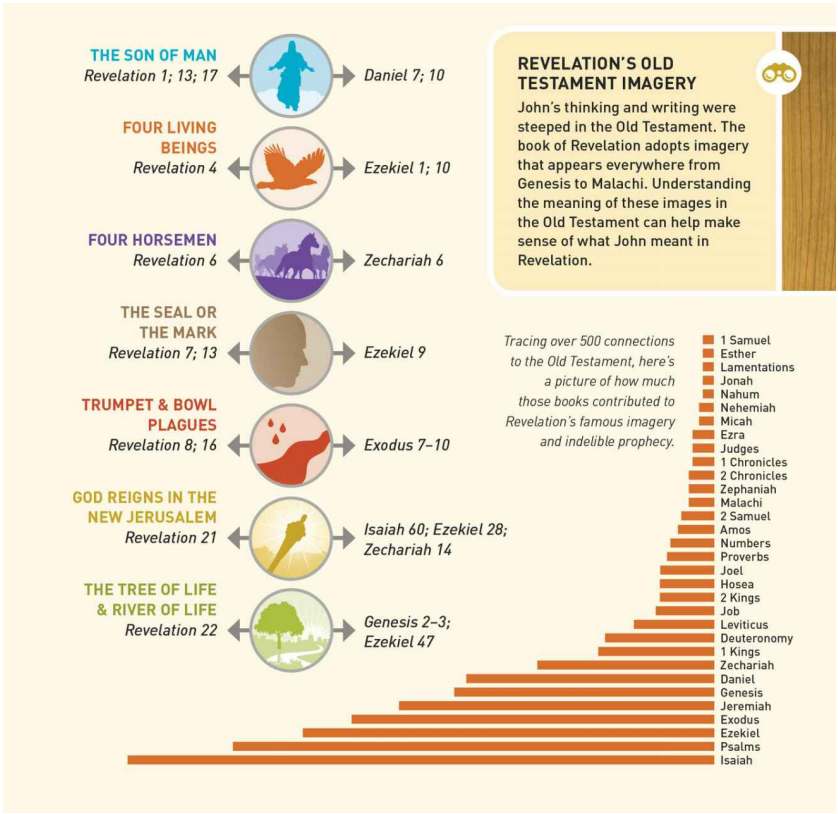


THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Revelation is a letter that John intended to be circulated among seven churches in a region called Asia Minor. These churches were in cities along Roman roads, the expressways of their time.

Rev 1–3

Paved road to acropolis in Pergamum


THE SON OF MAN
Revelation 1; 13; 17
Daniel 7; 10
FOUR LIVING BEINGS
Revelation 4
Ezekiel 1; 10
FOUR HORSEMEN
Revelation 6
Zechariah 6
THE SEAL OR THE MARK
Revelation 7; 13
Ezekiel 9
TRUMPET & BOWL PLAGUES
Revelation 8; 16
Exodus 7–10
GOD REIGNS IN THE NEW JERUSALEM
Revelation 21
Isaiah 60; Ezekiel 28; Zechariah 14
THE TREE OF LIFE & RIVER OF LIFE
Revelation 22
Genesis 2–3; Ezekiel 47
REVELATION'S OLD TESTAMENT IMAGERY
John's thinking and writing were steeped in the Old Testament. The book of Revelation adopts imagery that appears everywhere from Genesis to Malachi. Understanding the meaning of these images in the Old Testament can help make sense of what John meant in Revelation.
Tracing over 500 connections to the Old Testament, here's a picture of how much those books contributed to Revelation's famous imagery and indelible prophecy.
1 Samuel
Esther
Lamentations
Jonah
Nahum
Nehemiah
Micah
Ezra
Judges
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Zephaniah
Malachi
2 Samuel
Amos
Numbers
Proverbs
Joel
Hosea
2 Kings
Job
Leviticus
Deuteronomy
1 Kings
Zechariah
Daniel
Genesis
Jeremiah
Exodus
Ezekiel
Psalms
Isaiah

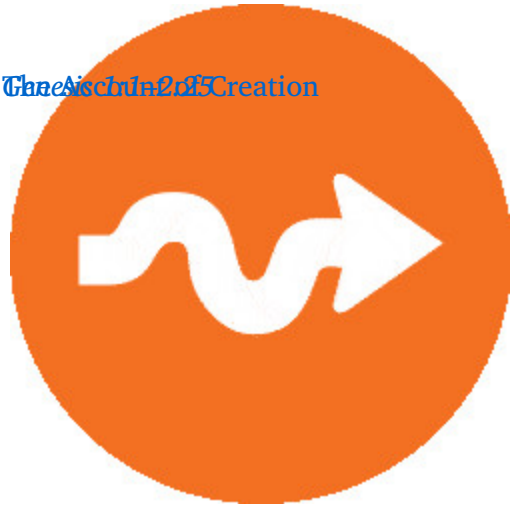
ITINERARY

Some people like to see where the wind takes them. Others like to know where they're going before they leave. If you're in the second group, here's an itinerary to help you plan your trip. This itinerary lists all the scheduled stops on all three routes through the Wayfinding Bible.
This chart may be used as a checklist for your personal reading journey.

FIRST ROUTE

PASSAGE

Genesis 1:1-2:25 The Account of Creation



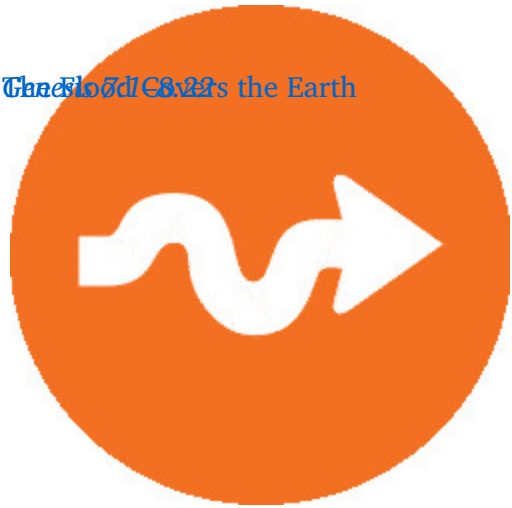
Genesis 3:1-24 The Man and Woman Sin

Gaines and Abel

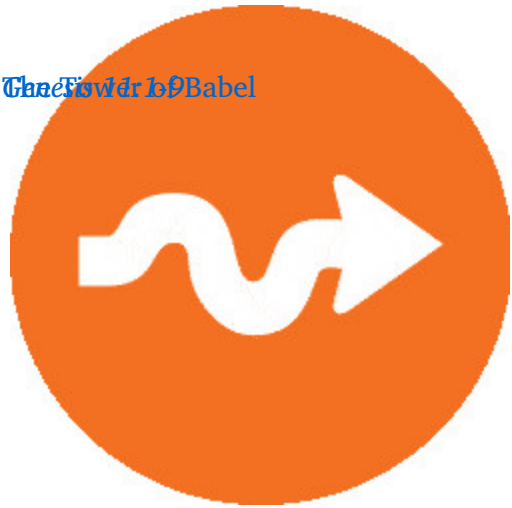
A Wrong Gone Wrong

Genesis 6.1-22

Genesis 7:1–8:22 The Flood Covers the Earth



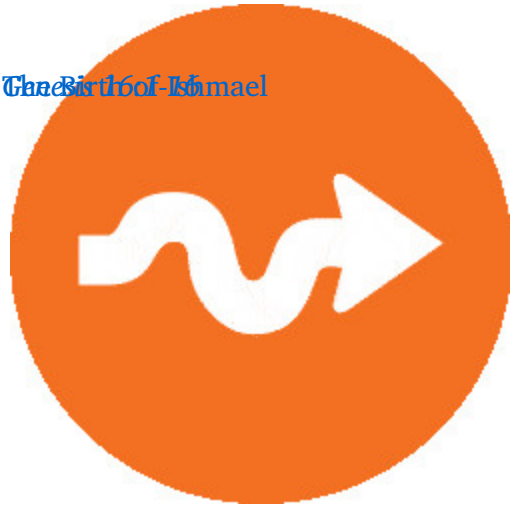
Genesis 9:1–29 God Confirms His Covenant with Noah



Genesis 18:1-8 Abram and Lot Separate

Genesis 15:1-21 The LORD's Covenant Promise to Abram

Genesis 16 The Birth of Ishmael



Genesis 17:1-18:15 Promised to Sarah

Genesis 18:16-19:38

Genesis 21:1-34

Genesis 22: 1-24

Genesis 24: 1-67

Genesis 22: Faith Tested

Genesis 24: Isaac

Genesis 25: 19-34

Genesis 27: 1–28 9

Jacob Steals Esau's Blessing

Jacob's Dream at Bethel
Genesis 28:10–29:14

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel
Genesis 29:14–30:43

Genesis 31:55 Jacob Flees from Laban

Genesis 32:22-32 Jacob Wrestles with God

Job 1:1–2:13 Job's Trials and Anguish

Job 3:1–42:17 Job Speaks to His Friends

Job's Response

Job 40 R-24

The 40 R-24 Challenges Job

Job 42 ORD 7

The LORD Blesses Job

Psalm 1

Poem of the Godly

Genesis 37:1-36

Genesis 38:1-30

Genesis 39 Egypt

Genesis 39 Egypt 40:23

Genesis 41 Dreams

Genesis 41 Dreams

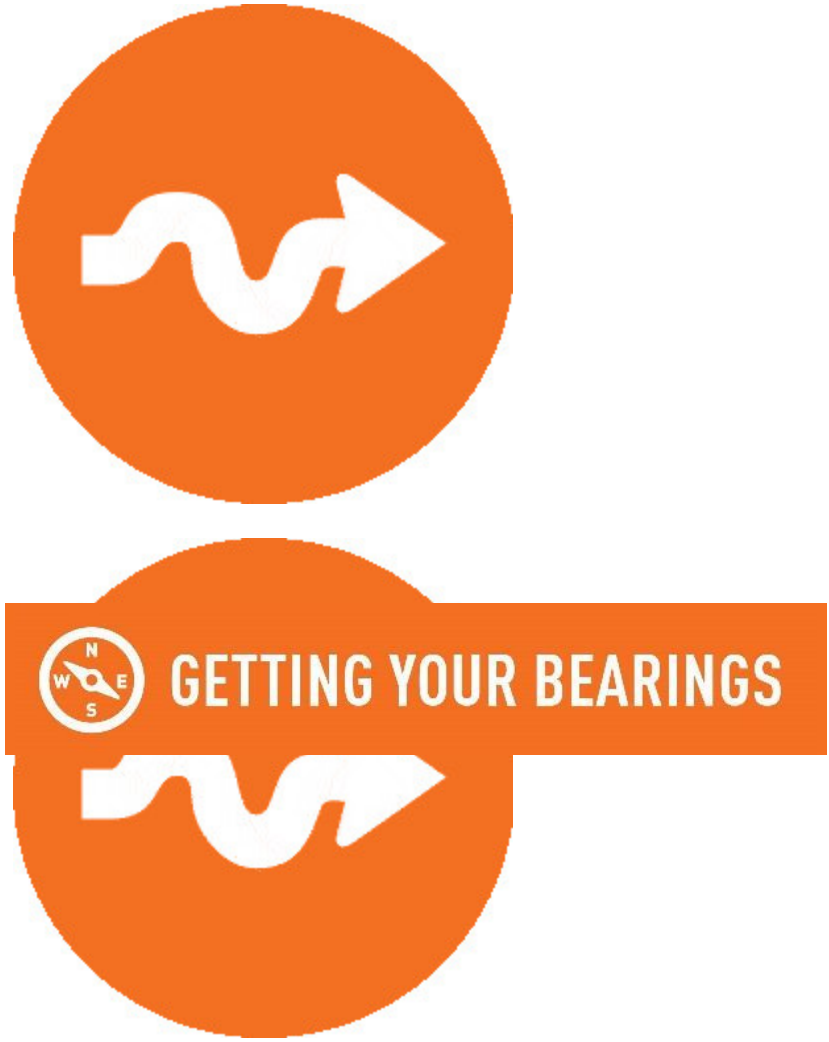
Genesis 41 Dreams

Genesis 42:1–43:34 Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

Genesis 44:1–45:28 Joseph Reveals His Identity

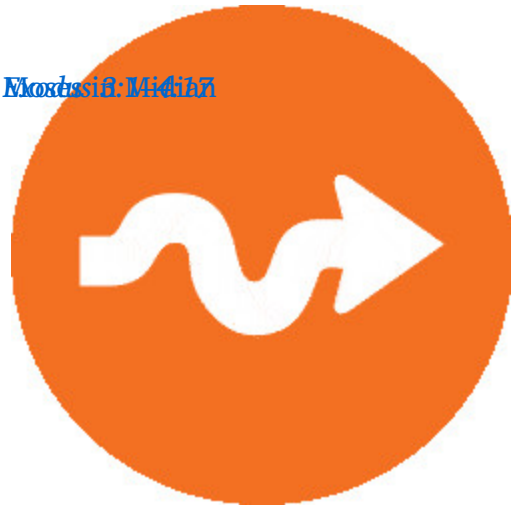
Genesis 46:1–47:31 Jacob in Egypt

Genesis 49:29–50:26 The Death of Jacob and Joseph



The Israelites 2:25 Egypt

Exodus 3:1-4:17
Moses in Midian



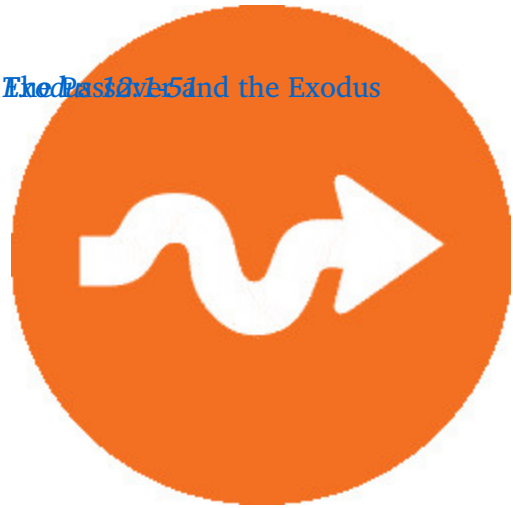
Exodus 4:18-5:23
Moses Returns to Egypt

Exodus 6:1–30 God's Promise of Deliverance

Exodus 7:1–8:19 The Plagues

The Passover and the Exodus

Exodus 12:1-51



Exodus 13:17-14:31

Exodus through the Red Sea

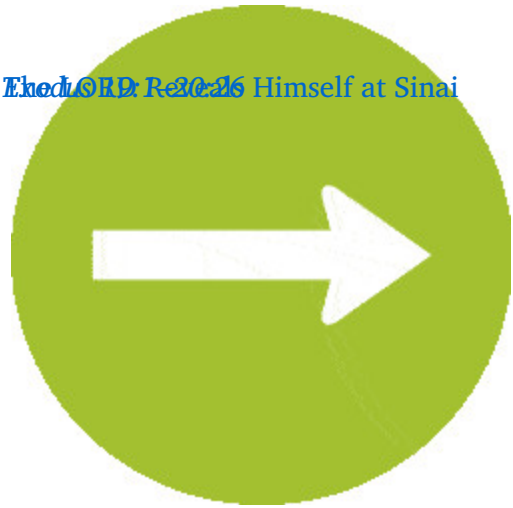
Manna 16:1-36 Mail from Heaven

Psalm 90 A Prayer of Moses

Exodus 17:1-6 Water from the Rock

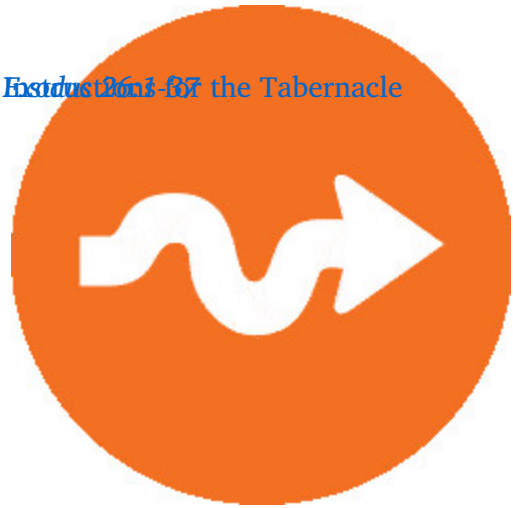
Exodus 18:1-27 Jethro's Visit to Moses

Exodus 20:22–26 The LORD Reveals Himself at Sinai

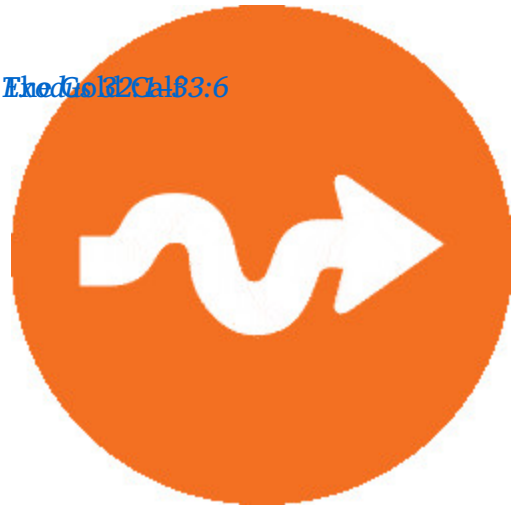


Exodus 23:20–24:18 The LORD’s Presence

Exodus 26:1-37 Instructions for the Tabernacle



Exodus 28:1-43 Clothing for the Priests



Exodus 35:30-36:7 God's Craftsmen

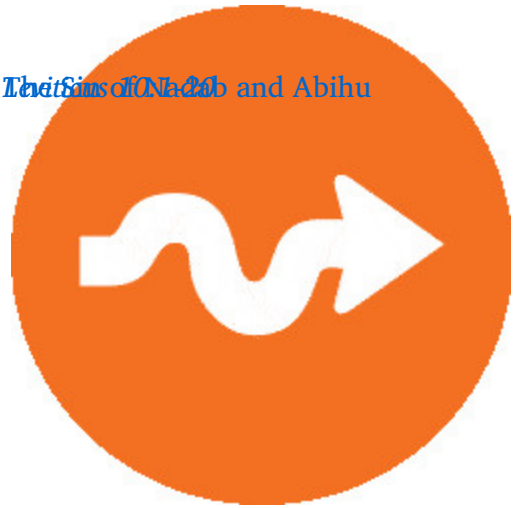
Exodus 39:32-40:38 The LORD Fills the Tabernacle

Leviticus 1:1-17 Laws for the Burnt Offering

Leviticus 8:1-36 Ordination of the Priests

The Sins of Nadab and Abihu

Leviticus 10:1-20



The Day of Atonement

Leviticus 16:1-34

Holiness in Personal Conduct

Leviticus 19:1-37

The Love of God's Law

Psalm 119:97-120

The Salsbath Year

Registration of Israel's Troops

Numbers 1 1-54

Numbers 3:1-13, 40-51 Levites Appointed for Service

Numbers 6:1-27 Nazirites

Numbers 9:15-23 God's Presence with His People

Numbers 13:1-33 Explore Canaan

Numbers 14:1-35 The People Complain to Moses

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Numbers 14:1-45

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Numbers 16:1-50

Numbers 17:1-13 The Budding of Aaron's Staff

Numbers 20:1-13 Moses Strikes the Rock

Number 21: Snake

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Numbers 27:1-28 The Daughters of Zelophehad

Numbers 31:1-54 Conquest of the Midianites

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Regulations concerning War

Deuteronomy 31:29 Israel's Leader

Deuteronomy 34:12 The Death of Moses

Joshua 1:1–2:24 Rahab Protects the Spies

Joshua 3:1–4:24 Israelites Cross the Jordan

Joshua 5:13–6:27

Joshua 10:1–27

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Joshua 11:1–23 Canaan's Northern Kings

Joshua 20:1–9 Cities of Refuge

Joshua's Final Words to Israel

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Judges 4:1–5:31

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Judges 6:36-40 Gideon Asks for a Sign

Judges 7:1-25 Gideon Defeats the Midianites

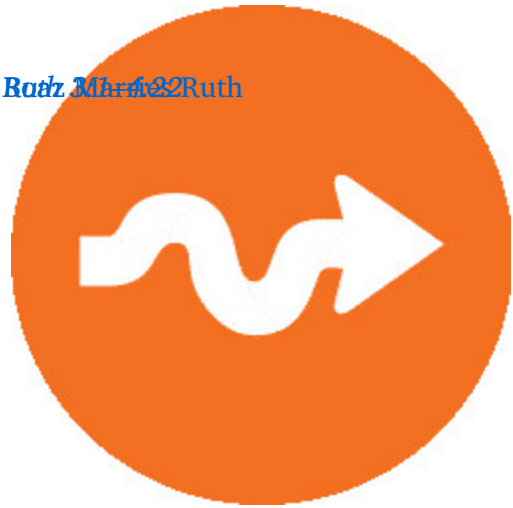
Judges 11:1-40

Jephthah Becomes Israel's Judge

Ruth 1:1-2:23

Naomi and Ruth

Ruth 3 1-4 2 Ruth



Hannah's Prayer for a Son

The LORD Speaks to Samuel

Samuel 3: 1-4

The Birth of Samson

Judges 13: 1-25

Judges 15:1-20 Vengeance on the Philistines

Judges 16:1-31 Delilah

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1 Samuel 15:10-23

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1 Samuel 16:1-23

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1 Samuel 17:1-58

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1 Samuel 18:1-30

1 Samuel 19:1-24 Saul Tries to Kill David

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David Spares Saul's Life

Psalm 142

Psalm 142

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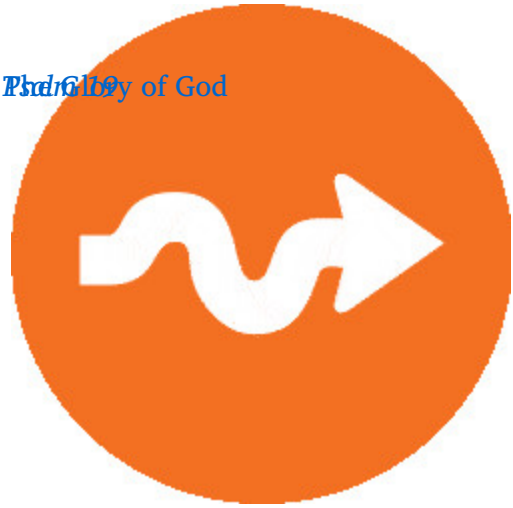
Daniel 1-4

Daniel 25, and Abigail

The Death of Saul
1 *Samuel* 31:1-13

David Becomes King of All Israel
2 *Samuel* 5:1-25

Psalm 119 The Glory of God



Psalm 23 The LORD Is My Shepherd

2 Moving the Ark to Jerusalem

Sing to the LORD

Psalm 96

D Scribe Military Victories 1 - 18

A Call for Help 60

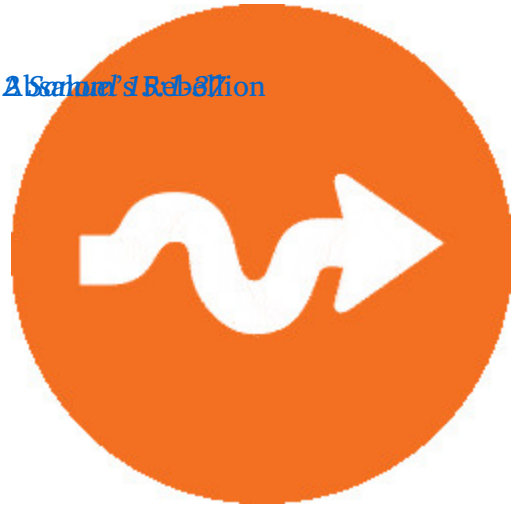
2 Samuel 9:1-13 David shows kindness to Mephibosheth

Psalm 103 LORD

Psalm 51 A Cry for God's Mercy

Psalm 86 A Prayer in Times of Trouble

2 Samuel's Relation



2 Samuel's Defeat and Death

God Knows Us Well

Psalm 139

David Takes a Census

2 Samuel 24: 1-25

David Makes Solomon King

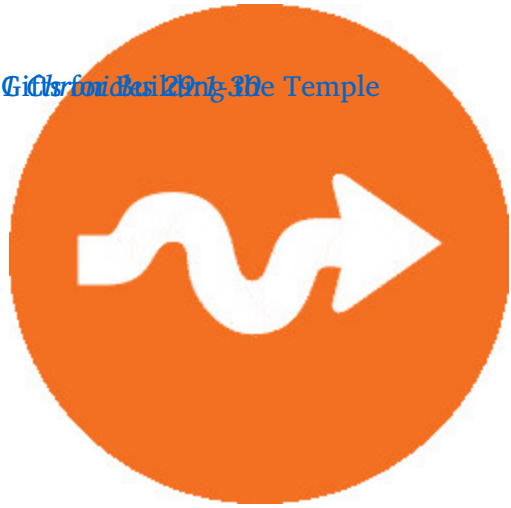
Psalm 72 for Solomon’s Coronation

David's Instructions to Solomon

Psalm 73

The Ways of the Wicked

Gifts for Building the Temple



Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Solomon's Psalm

Proverbs 1 – 2 Proverbs

Proverbs 3:1-35 LORD

Proverbs 10:1-32 Solomon

Proverbs 12:1-28 Contrast of the Godly and the Wicked

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1 Kings 8:1-21, 54-66

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1 Kings 10:1–13

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1 Kings 16:29–17:24

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1 Kings 18:1-46

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1 Kings 19:1-21

2 Kings 2:1–25 Elijah Taken into Heaven

2 Kings 4:1–44 Elisha's Miracles of Compassion

2 Kings 5:1-27

The Healing of Naaman

2 Kings 9:1-13, 20-37; 10:1-7, 18-31

Jehu Anointed King of Israel

2 Kings 13:1-25 Jehoash Rule in Israel

2 Kings 14:1-22 Amaziah Rules in Israel

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Jonah 3:1–4:11 Goes to Nineveh

Hosea 1:1–3:5 Wife and Children

Hosea 11:1-12 The LORD's Love for Israel

Amos 1:1-2; 2:4-16 God's Judgment on Judah and Israel

Amos 4:7-13

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Amos 7:1-8:3

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2 Kings 15:8-31

2 Kings 17:1-41

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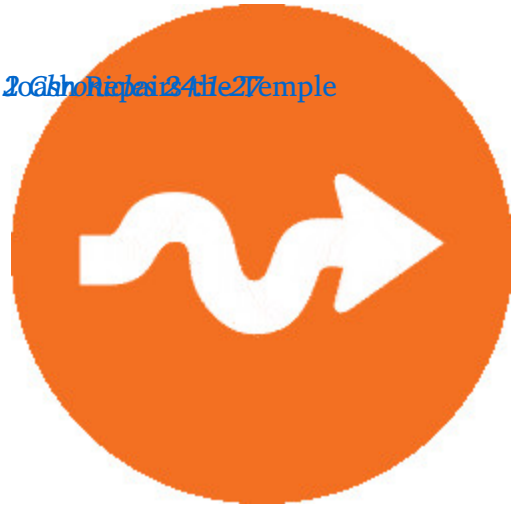
Chronicles 11-23; Judah 3-16

Chronicles 13-22

2 Chronicles 21:1-20 Judah

2 Chronicles 22:10-23:21 Judah

2 Chronicles 24:1-27
Joash Repairs the Temple



Joel 1:1-20
Mourning over the Locust Plague

Joel 2:18-3:21

The LORD's Promise of His Spirit

2 Chronicles 26:1-23

Uzziah Rules in Judah

Isaiah 6:1-13 Cleansing and Call

2 Chronicles 28:1-27 Ahaz Rules in Judah

Isaiah 7:1-25 The Sign of Immanuel

Isaiah 8:1-9:7 Hope in the Messiah

Isaiah 11:1-16 A Branch from David's Line

Micah 1:1–16 Samaria and Jerusalem

Micah 7:1–20 Called to Hope

2 Chronicles 29 - 36

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2 Chronicles 30 - 27

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Isaiah 40:1-31 Comfort for God's People

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Isaiah 55:1-13 Invitation to the LORD's Salvation

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2 Chronicles 33:1-25

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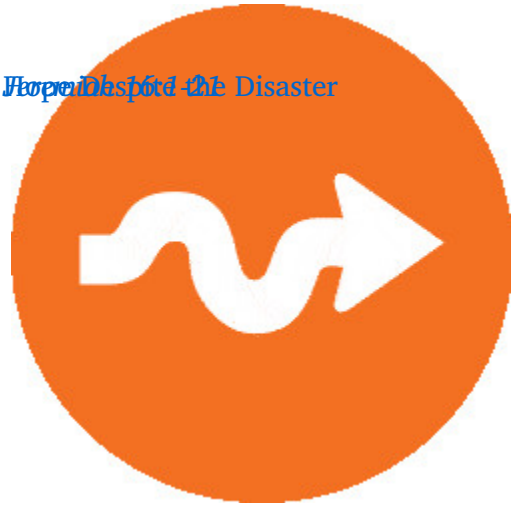
Jeremiah 7:1–8:3

Jeremiah Spoke the Disaster

Jeremiah 16:1–21



The LORD's Anger against Nineveh

Nahum 2:1–3

Zephaniah 3:1–20 Rebellion and Redemption

2 Kings 23:31–24:7 Jehoiakim Rule in Judah

Jeremiah 18:1-23 The Potter and the Clay

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Jeremiah 26:1–24 Escape from Death

Jeremiah 36:1–32 Burns the Scroll

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Habakkuk 3:1–19

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Daniel 3:1-30 Nebuchadnezzar’s Gold Statue and the Blazing Furnace

2 Kings 24:8-17 Jehoiachin Rules in Judah

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No Deliverance from Babylon

Jeremiah 27:1-22 An Ox Yoke

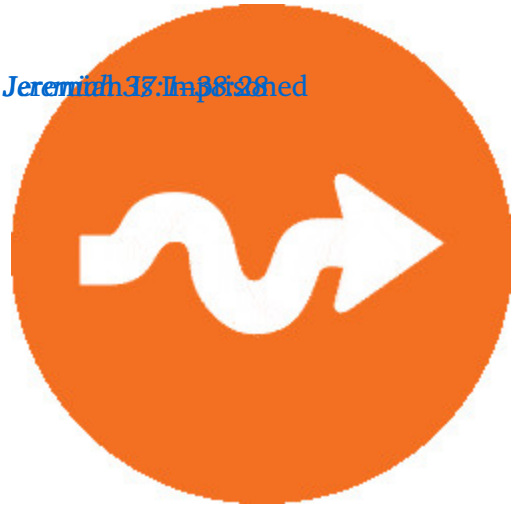
Jeremiah 31:1-40 Turns to Joy

Jeremiah 32:1-25 Purchase

Jeremiah 34:1-22 Zedekiah

Jeremiah 37:1–38:28

Jeremiah 37:1–38:28



2 Chronicles 36:1–21

The Fall of Jerusalem

Jeremiah 52:1-34
The Fall of Jerusalem

Lamentations 1:1-22
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Prayer for Restoration

Lamentations 5:1-22

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Ezekiel 33:1-33 Israel's Watchman

Ezekiel 37:1-14 The Valley of Dry Bones

Ezekiel 43:1-12 The LORD's Glory Returns

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream about a Tree

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Daniel 5:1-31

The Writing on the Wall

Daniel 6:1-28 Daniel in the Lions' Den

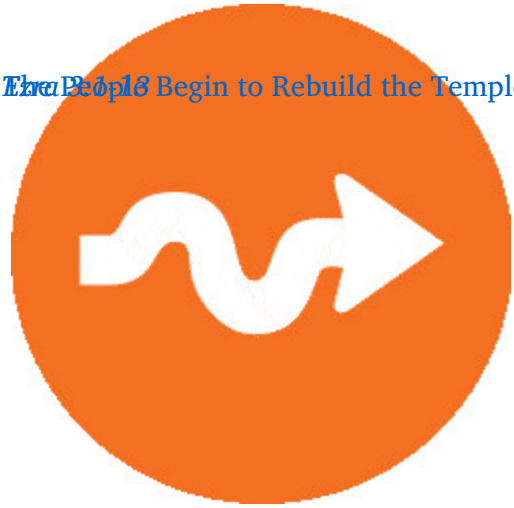
Daniel 10:1 - 12:13 The Time of the End

GETTING YOUR BEARINGS

Cyrus Allows the Exiles to Return

Ezra 1:1–2:2; 2:64–70

Ezra 3:1-13 Ezra People Begin to Rebuild the Temple



Haggai 1:1-2:23 Haggai to Rebuild the Temple

Zechariah 1-1-21

Ezra 6-1-22

Ezra 6-1-22

Ezra Temple's Dedication

Esther 1:1-2:23

Esther Becomes Queen

Esther 3:1-4:17

Esther's Plot against the Jews

Esther 5:1-6:14 Esther's Request to the King

Esther 7:1-8:17 Esther Acted to Help the Jews

Esther 9:1-10:3 The Victory of the Jews

Ezra 7:1-10; 8:15-36 Arrives in Jerusalem

Nehemiah's Concern for Jerusalem

Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem

Ezra Reads the Law

Nehemiah's Various Reforms

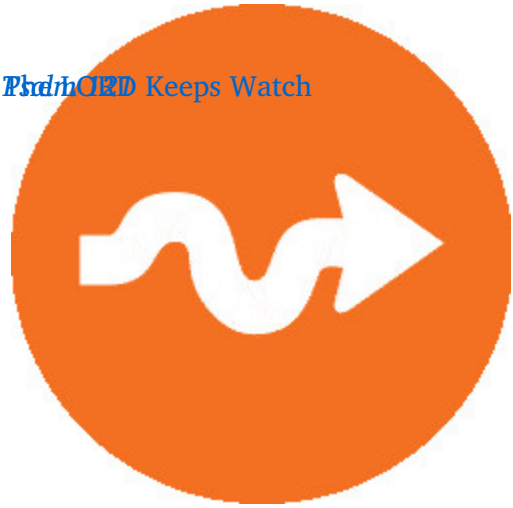
Zechariah 9:9–10:12

Zechariah 14:1–21

The LORD Will Rule the Earth

Psalm 121

The LORD Keeps Watch



Mal 1:1-14

The LORD's Love and Unworthy Sacrifices

Malachi 3:1–6 The Day of Judgment

Luke Bitbs Foretold

Matthew's Dream

The Birth of John the Baptist

Luke 1:57-80

The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-52

Matthew 2:1-23 Visitors from the East

John 1:1-34 The Eternal Word

Luke 3:1-20 John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Matthew 3:1-17 Jesus Baptism

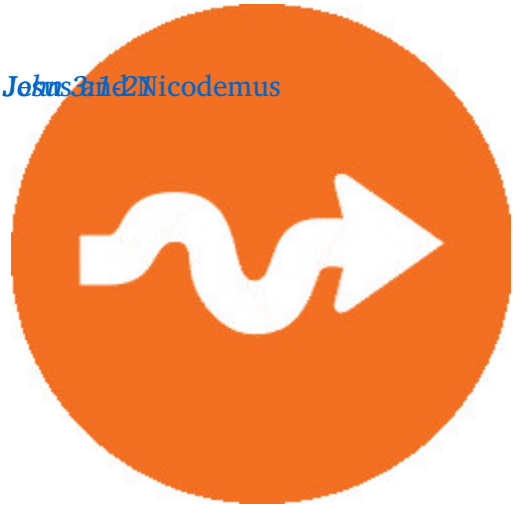
The Temptation of Jesus

Luke 4:1-13

The Wedding at Cana

John 2:1-11

John 3:1-21 Jesus and Nicodemus



John 4:1-54 Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

Luke 5:1-11 Four Fishermen Follow Jesus

Mark 2:1-12 Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

Matthew 5:1-48 Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 6:1-34 Teaching about Prayer and Fasting

Matthew 7:1–29 Jesus Teachings on God's Kingdom

Matthew 13:1–58 Jesus Teaches in Parables

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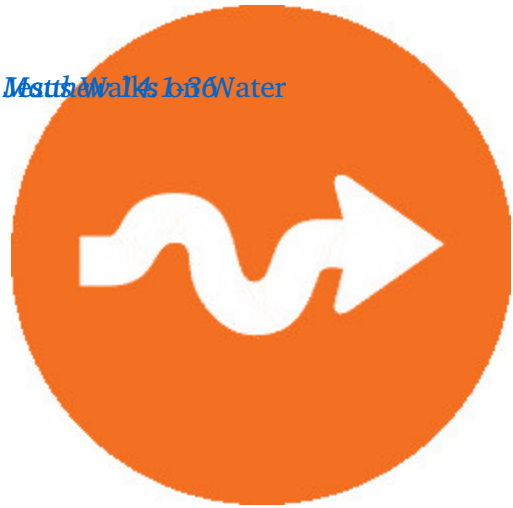
Mark 5:1-13 Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Man

Matthew 8:1-4 Response to Faith

John 6:1-59 Five Thousand

Jesus Walks on Water

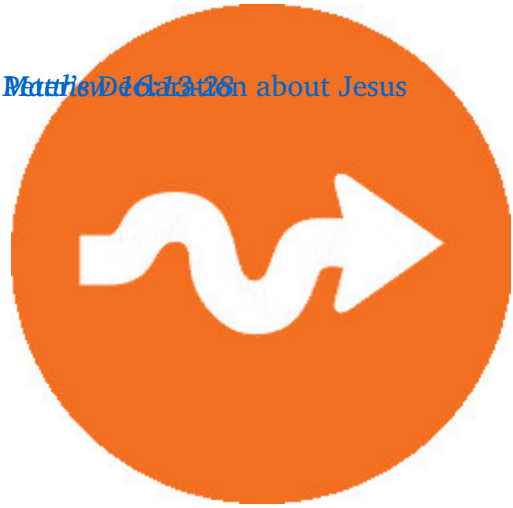
Matthew 14:1-36



Jesus Heals a Deaf Man

Mark 7:1-37

Matthew 16:13-28 Declaration about Jesus



Matthew 17:1-20 Revelation

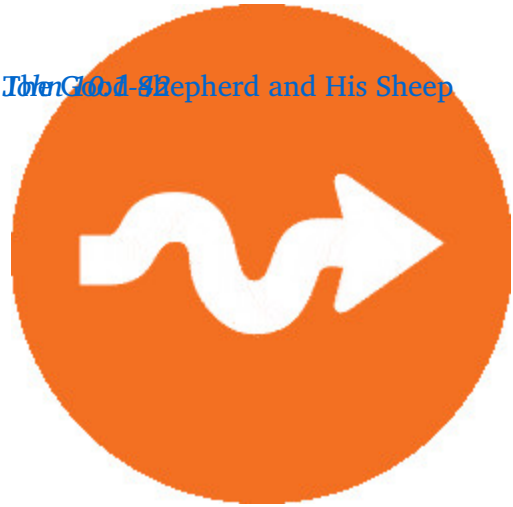
Luke 10:25-37 Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:38-42 Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

Luke 12:13-59 Teaching about Money and Possessions

John 9:1-41 Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

John 10:1-42 The Good Shepherd and His Sheep



Luke 14:1-35 The Cost of Being a Disciple

The Parable of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son

The Healed of Leprosy

John 11:44

The Raising of Lazarus

Mark 10:52

Jesus Blesses the Children

Luke 19:1-10 Jesus and Zacchaeus

John 12:1-19 Jesus Anointed at Bethany

Matthew 21:1-11 Triumphant Entry

Matthew 25:14-30 Three Servants

John 13:1-38 Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

John 14:1-31 Jesus, the Way to the Father

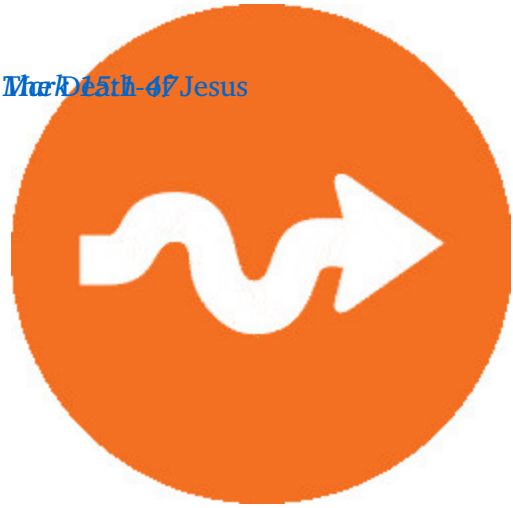
Matthew 26:17-30

Psalm 118 Thanksgiving and Praise

Mark 14:27-52 Gethsemane

Luke 22:54-71 Jesus

Mark 15:1-47 The Death of Jesus

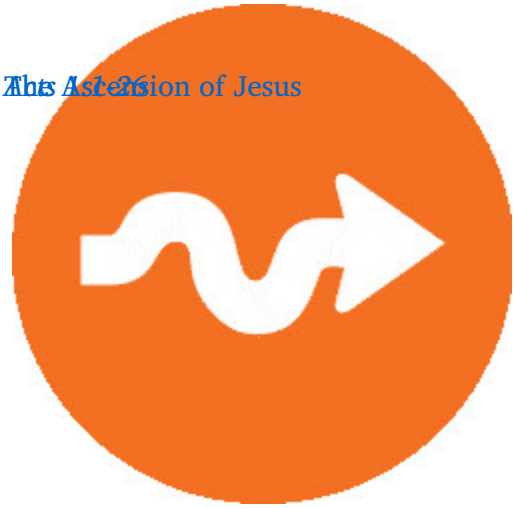


Luke 24:1-12 The Resurrection

Luke 24:13-53 Jesus Appears to Others

John 20:19-21:25 Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

The Ascension of Jesus
Acts 1:6-26



The Holy Spirit Comes
Acts 2:1-47

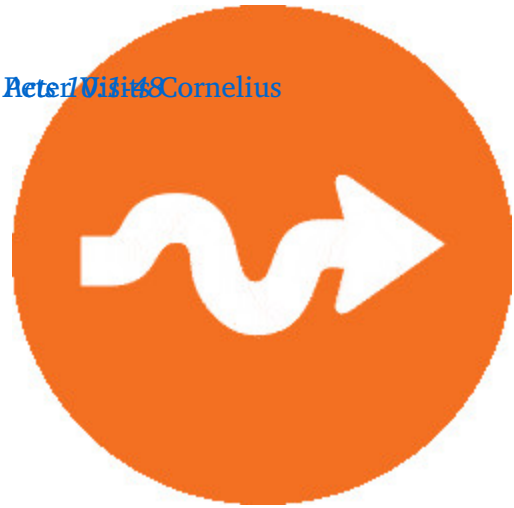
Acts 3:2-6 Peter Heals a Crippled Beggar

The Early Christian Church
Acts 6:8–8:3
Stephen Is Arrested

Acts 8:40 Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Acts 9:1-43 Saul's Conversion

Acts 10:1-48 Cornelius

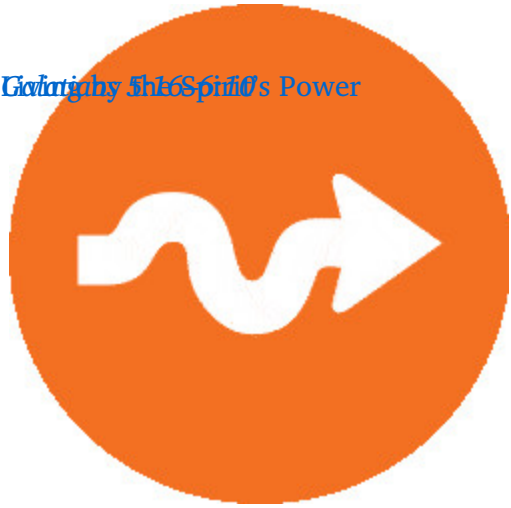


Acts 12:1-19 Miraculous Escape from Prison

Acts 13:1-52 Paul's First Missionary Journey

Galatians 1:1-2:10 Paul's Message Comes from Christ

Living by the Spirit's Power



Faith and Endurance

Controlling the Tongue

James 3:1-18

The Council at Jerusalem: Conflict over Gentiles

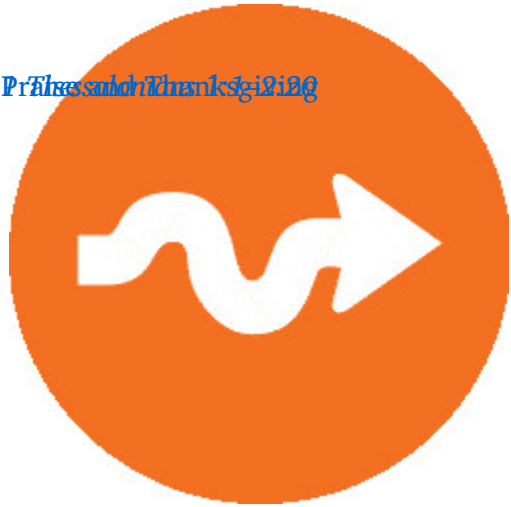
Acts 15:1-35

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Acts 16:1-40

Acts 17:1-4 Paul Preaches in Thessalonica

Acts 18:1-3 Paul Meets Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth



Paul Ministers in Ephesus

Instructions on Marriage

1 Corinthians 7:1-40

Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Love In the Greatest 13 1 13

The Resurrection 15 1 58

Love In the Greatest 13 1 13

The Resurrection 15 1 58

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2 Corinthians 1:1-11 God Offers Comfort to All

2 Corinthians 4:1-18 Treasure in Fragile Clay Jars

2 Corinthians 9:1–15

The Collection for Christians in Jerusalem

2 Corinthians 11:16–12:10

Paul's Many Trials

Acts 20:1-38 Paul's Third Missionary Journey Continues

Romans 3:1-31 All People Are Sinners

Acts 27:1–28:10

Paul’s Journey to Rome

Acts 28:11–31

Paul Preaches in Rome

Ephesians 4:1-32

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Ephesians 5:1–6:24

Living in the Light

Have the Attitude of Christ

Philippians 1:1-11; 2:1-18

Pressing toward the Goal

Philippians 3:12–4:23

Christian Supremo

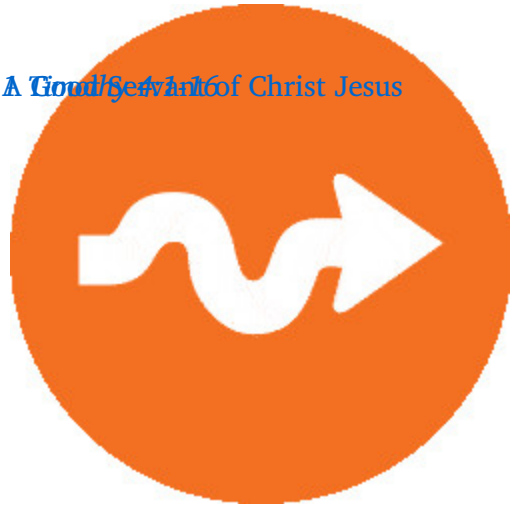
New Life in Christ

Philemon 1:1-25 Paul's Appeal for Onesimus

1 Timothy 2:1-3:16 Instructions about Worship and Leadership

A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

1 Timothy 4:1-16



The Testament

1 Timothy 6:2-21

Do What Is Good

2 Timothy 1:1–2:14 Be Faithful

Live for God's Approval

2 Timothy 2:15–4:22

A Call to Holy Living

1 Peter 1:13–2:25

Instructions for All Christians

Peter 3:1-22

Living for God

Peter 4:1-5:14

2 Peter 1:1–21 Growing in Faith

Jude 1–25 The Danger of False Teachers

The Son Is Greater Than the Angels

A Call to Spiritual Growth

Hebrews 10:19-39

N Calls to Persevere

Great Examples of Faith

Hebrews 11:1-40

Hebrews 12:1-29 God's Discipline Proves His Love

Living in the Light

1 John 2:28–4:21
Love One Another

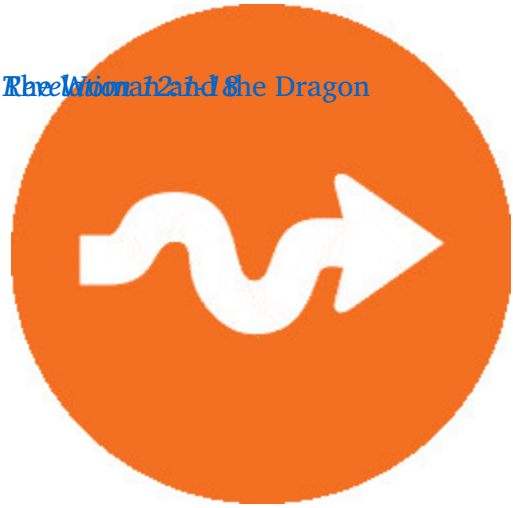
2 John 1:1–3 John 1:14
Live in the Truth

John's Message to the Churches

Revelation 1:1–2:29

Worship in Heaven

Revelation 4:1–5:14



The Woman and the Dragon

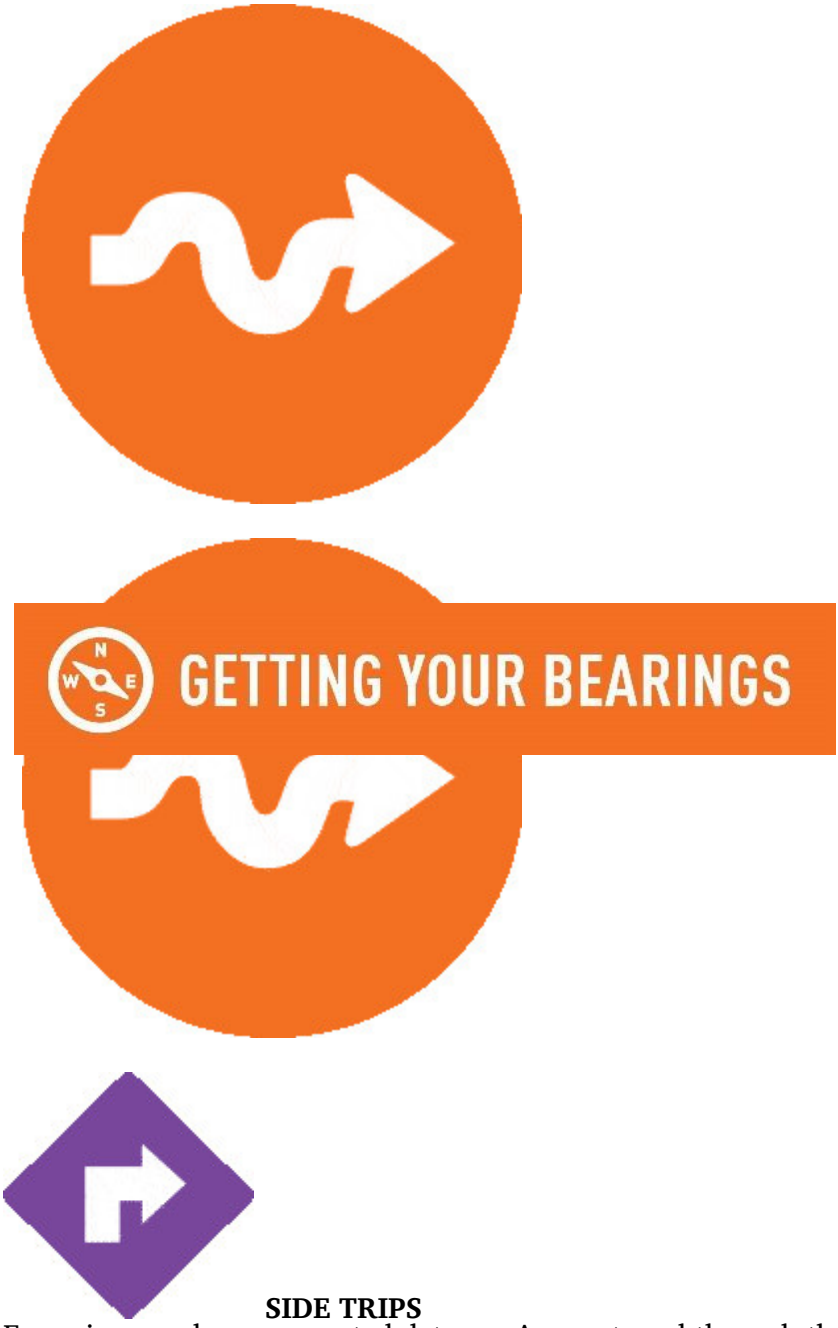
The Lamb and the 144,000

The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:1-22:6

Jesus Is Coming

Revelation 22:7-21



SIDE TRIPS

Every journey has unexpected detours. As you travel through the Bible, you may find yourself glancing at some topics off the beaten path. The best thing to do when you see one that interests you is to

take it!
Scattered along your journey through the Bible, you'll find markers for various topics. You can follow them to learn more about that topic and to see places in the Bible you won't see on your regular routes. Below is a complete list of all the side trips you can take, where they go, and how to find them.

THE AFTERLIFE
ANGELS
BLESSINGS AND PRAISES
THE DEVIL AND HIS DEMONS
DON'T BE AFRAID
EASTER READINGS
FACE TO FACE WITH GOD
GLIMPSES OF THE MESSIAH
GOD LOVES YOU
GOD SPEAKS THROUGH VISIONS
GOD USES UNEXPECTED PEOPLE
GOD'S HAND OF HEALING
THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT
PRAYERS
SONGS
THE THINGS TO COME
UNEXPECTED PEOPLE IN JESUS' FAMILY TREE
WEDDING STORIES
WHERE IS GOD IN SUFFERING?
YOU ARE FORGIVEN

SIDE TRIPS

AFTERLIFE

THE AFTERLIFE

Most people wonder what will happen to them after they die and where they will go. The Bible provides us with some details of heaven and hell, though not as many as some would like. Heaven is the place where God lives and reigns over all things. It is heaven because he is there. Hell is the place for all those who rebel against God. Satan and the fallen angels reside there, eternally separated from God's presence. It is hell

because God is not there.

LUKE 16:19-31 | TWO DESTINATIONS
Jesus uses stories called parables to teach his followers about the Kingdom of God. In this parable about two very different people, Jesus gives us a tiny glimpse of what heaven and hell are like.

LUKE 23:32-43 | HEAVEN IS MOMENTS AWAY
Two criminals are executed along with Jesus. Before Jesus dies, one of the criminals acknowledges that Jesus is truly a king. Jesus promises that man that they will soon be in heaven together.

JOHN 14:1-14 | HEAVEN HAS PLENTY OF ROOM
Talking to his disciples, Jesus describes his Father's house to encourage and comfort them. As the Crucifixion looms, he explains to them where he is going after he leaves them.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-10 | HEAVEN IS OUR

ETERNAL HOME
To believers in Corinth who had wondered about those who had died, Paul explains that when we die we will leave behind our earthly bodies and receive new heavenly bodies in our eternal home.

2 PETER 2:1-11 | HELL IS THE RESIDENCE OF FALLEN ANGELS
In his condemnation of false teachers, Peter states that God will punish them as he did the fallen angels. Peter describes hell as "gloomy pits of darkness."

JUDE 1:3-11 | HELL IS A PRISON
Jude, as he condemns false teachers in the church, gives us a glimpse of hell as a dark prison where the ungodly must wait for judgment day.

REVELATION 7:9-17 | THE THRONE ROOM OF HEAVEN
John's vision provides a magnificent picture of God's great heavenly throne room and of how he cares for those who have given their lives to him.

SIDE TRIPS

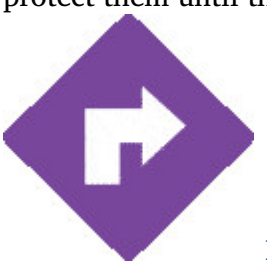
ANGELS

ANGELS

Angels are spiritual beings, created by God for a variety of duties. They worship and praise God, and they carry out his will. They bring messages to earth, announcing good news and words of comfort. They also provide for and protect God's people. Only three angels have specific names in the Bible: Michael, Gabriel, and the fallen angel Lucifer (Satan). In many Old Testament stories, an angel is referred to as "the angel of the LORD." Here are just a few of the many stories about angels in the Bible.

EXODUS 23:20-33 | GOD'S ANGEL PREPARES THE WAY

While the Israelites wandered in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, God promises them that he will send an angel to lead them through unfamiliar territory. The angel will guard and protect them until they arrive safely.



ISAIAH 36–37 | GOD'S ANGEL DESTROYS AN ARMY

During King Hezekiah's reign, the Assyrians conquer the nations around Judah and are heading for Jerusalem. The Assyrian king dispatches his chief of staff with nearly 200,000 troops to threaten Hezekiah. The Assyrians are right outside Jerusalem, but God's angel intervenes (Isaiah 37:36).

DANIEL 6:1-28 | AN ANGEL APPEARS IN THE LION'S DEN

Daniel, a Jewish captive in the Persian Empire, works in the nation's administration. He obeys King Darius until he is required to bow down and pray to Darius. Although Daniel suffers the consequences of breaking the law, God's angel protects him.

ZECHARIAH 3:1-10 | AN ANGEL CLOTHES A PRIEST WITH GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Jeshua, the high priest, is the religious leader of the exiles who have returned from Babylon to Jerusalem. In Zechariah's vision, an angel presents him with new clothes to symbolically cleanse him from his sins and restore him to his priestly position before God.

ACTS 12:1-19 | AN ANGEL RESCUES PETER FROM PRISON

King Herod Agrippa persecutes the believers of the newly founded church and throws Peter in jail. In the middle of the night, an angel appears in the prison cell and helps Peter escape.

ACTS 27:1-44 | AN ANGEL APPEARS TO PAUL

The apostle Paul has a pressing desire to bring the Good News to Rome and proclaim it to Caesar. His journey to Rome, however, is fraught with disaster. During a violent storm at sea, an angel appears to Paul at night and reassures him that he and the others aboard the ship will arrive safely in Italy.

SIDE TRIPS

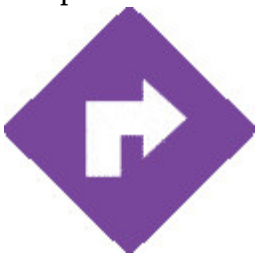
BLESSINGS

BLESSINGS AND PRAISES

The Bible contains a variety of blessings. God blesses his people. Kings, prophets, priests, and apostles bless the faithful, and fathers bless their children and grandchildren. All blessings are given with love. Love and devotion underlie the Bible's praises as well. Doxologies are expressions of praise to God.

GENESIS 48:12-22 | JACOB BLESSES HIS CHILDREN

Late in his life, Jacob moves his family to Egypt and is reunited with his lost son, Joseph. On his deathbed, Jacob blesses his twelve sons and two of his grandsons—Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph.

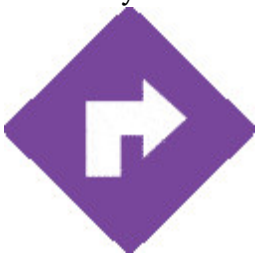


NUMBERS 6:22-27 | THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

During the Hebrews' wilderness wanderings, God gives them the law, the plans for the Tabernacle, and the priesthood to mold their culture. He gives the priests this short blessing, which they can speak over his people. This blessing is one of the best-loved passages in the Bible.

1 KINGS 8:56-61 | SOLOMON'S BLESSING ON GOD'S PEOPLE

At the dedication of the new Temple, King Solomon closes the ceremonies by blessing God's people. In his blessing, Solomon praises the Lord for his faithfulness to his people for the last five hundred years.



ROMANS 15:5-6 | PAUL'S BLESSING ON THE ROMANS

Near the end of his famous letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul pens a short blessing calling them to live in harmony with one another so that they might praise God.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14 | PAUL'S CLOSING BLESSING

In closing his letter to the Christians in Corinth, Paul invokes the three persons of the Trinity as the source of their grace, love, and fellowship.

1 TIMOTHY 6:15-16 | PAUL'S DOXOLOGY

Paul includes a doxology near the end of his first letter to Timothy, his close ally in ministry. It is a testimony of faith, articulating some key Christian beliefs about God.

SIDE TRIPS

DEMONS

THE DEVIL AND HIS DEMONS

The devil is real and active, roaming the earth, looking for ways to unravel God's goodness and love. These stories focus on the work of Satan and his legions. Satan tempts humans and God's Son. He inhabits lives and destroys them. We, however, should not fear him because we are protected by the power of Jesus. In the end, Jesus will be completely

victorious over him.

JOB 1–2 | SATAN TORMENTS JOB

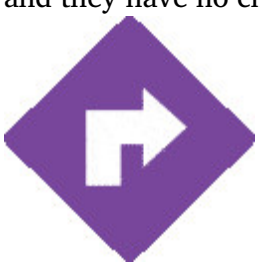
In order to test Job's faithfulness, God allows Satan to attack Job. God gives Satan free rein to do as he wishes, but Satan is still subject to God's restraining power.

LUKE 4:1-13 | SATAN TEMPTS JESUS

Satan hopes to gain power over Jesus by tempting him. But Jesus resists Satan's ploys by quoting Scripture. Jesus' responses, all from Deuteronomy, recall Israel's failures in the face of temptation. But Jesus succeeds where Israel failed.

LUKE 8:26-39 | JESUS DRIVES DEMONS INTO PIGS

Jesus demonstrates his authority and power over evil spirits by confronting them. He commands them to leave a possessed man, and they have no choice but to obey.



ACTS 8:4-25 | SIMON THE SORCERER

Simon is a master magician. He makes great claims about himself and tries to buy the power of the Holy Spirit, but Peter denounces his sinful attitude.

ACTS 19:11-20 | AN EVIL SPIRIT SPEAKS

A group of unbelieving Jews try to use Jesus' name as a sort of magic spell to cast out evil spirits. On this occasion, they receive an unexpected response from the spirit.

REVELATION 20:1-10 | SATAN'S LAST STAND

In the wake of a terrible defeat, Satan is seized, chained, and imprisoned in the bottomless pit. But he is released once more and again spreads chaos and war throughout the world. When his time reaches its limit, he is defeated finally and forever.

SIDE TRIPS

DON'T FEAR

DON'T BE AFRAID

Throughout the Bible, God encourages his people not to be afraid but to be strong and courageous. These aren't just pep talks. These are divine assurances that God's people can remain calm even when faced with the most daunting enemies or confusing situations. We know this is true because God is with us wherever we go.

JOSHUA 1:1-9 | BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

God speaks to Joshua, the new leader of the Israelites. He encourages Joshua three times to be strong, courageous, and unafraid.

PSALM 56 | TRUST IN GOD

We are not completely helpless when fear overtakes us. The one thing we can do is trust God—he is on our side!

PSALM 118:1-18 | THE LORD IS FOR ME

If we trust in God, we do not have to be afraid of anything. The Lord is for us—he's on our side—and his care for us gives us courage.

ISAIAH 41:8-16 | GOD IS WITH US

God punished the people of Israel for being unfaithful to him. Their nation was conquered, and the people were carried off to a foreign land. But God never abandoned his people. Through Isaiah, God promises to bring his people back home.

ISAIAH 50:4-11 | RELY ON GOD

The prophet Isaiah has a difficult assignment. He confronts God's people as God wants him to. He suffers for it, but he relies on God to handle his accusers.

LUKE 8:40-56 | JESUS HEALS A WOMAN AND A GIRL

On his way to heal a little girl, Jesus is delayed by a woman seeking

healing. The little girl dies in the meantime, but Jesus assures her father that it is not too late.

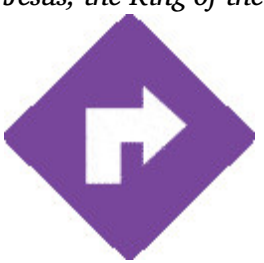
2 TIMOTHY 1:3-11 | THE SPIRIT OF POWER
In Paul's encouraging letter to Timothy, he reminds Timothy that there's nothing to fear because God gives us a spirit of power. With it, Christians can live with confidence even in the face of suffering.

SIDE TRIPS

EASTER

EASTER READINGS

Centuries before Jesus suffered and died to save the world, the prophets predicted his coming and his suffering. As you read about the events of the last week of Jesus' life, you will see how some people responded to Jesus, the King of the Jews.



ISAIAH 52:13–53:12 | THE SUFFERING SERVANT
Long before Jesus is born, the prophet Isaiah describes how Jesus will endure suffering in order to be a servant to all.

MATTHEW 21:1-11 | THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The crowds cheer for Jesus as he rides a donkey into Jerusalem. Shouting, they acknowledge that he is the descendant of David, heir to the throne of Israel.

MATTHEW 26:17-35 | THE LAST SUPPER

Knowing his life will soon be taken from him, Jesus gathers his disciples together to celebrate the Passover supper. The disciples are unaware of just how significant this meal is.

MARK 14:32-42 | JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

Jesus' suffering begins in the garden of Gethsemane. There he spends long hours alone praying that he would not have to suffer, though he submits himself to the Father's will. Jesus repeatedly asks his disciples for their support, but they are too tired to encourage him in his time of agony.

LUKE 22:54-62 | PETER DENIES JESUS

While Jesus is being interrogated, people in the courtyard question Peter about his association with Jesus. Instead of defending his friend, Peter denies even knowing Jesus, fulfilling Jesus' own prediction.

JOHN 18:28–19:16 | JESUS GOES BEFORE PILATE

After an unjust trial, the Jewish leaders take Jesus to the Roman governor Pilate, who questions him. Jesus' answers leave Pilate to make his own decisions, but the governor instead defers to the crowd and accepts their demand to crucify Jesus.

MATTHEW 27:32-66 | JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL

Jesus' crucifixion devastates those who follow him and love him. To honor him and keep the Jewish law, they properly bury his body before the Sabbath begins.

MATTHEW 28:1-20 | JESUS' RESURRECTION

Everyone is surprised by the empty tomb, the angel's words, and the events that follow. Through his personal appearances, Jesus confirms his divine power and many believe.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-22 | THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

Bodily resurrection is a reality not only for Christ but also for all believers. Paul explains that when Christ returns, all those who have put their trust in him will be raised to new life in new bodies, just as Jesus was.

SIDE TRIPS

FACING GOD

FACE TO FACE WITH GOD

Many people in the Bible encountered God and spoke to him. Even though no one has ever literally seen God (1 John 4:12), the encounters humans have with God are sometimes described as "face to face." Here are some of the stories of people who have the privilege of meeting with

God in this way.

GENESIS 32:22-32 | JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

Jacob comes face to face with God in a physical way. In the middle of the night he wrestles with God. By dawn he is a changed man.

EXODUS 33:1-23 | GOD SHOWS MOSES HIS GLORY

Moses routinely met face to face with God and brought the people's requests to God. On this occasion, Moses made a request of his own.

DEUTERONOMY 5:1-29 | GOD MEETS WITH HIS PEOPLE

Moses reminds God's people that they have the great privilege of being God's chosen nation and that they met God at Mount Sinai. Their reaction to the experience pleased God.

JUDGES 13:1-25 | SAMSON'S PARENTS ENCOUNTER AN ANGEL

A childless couple is surprised by some amazing news from the angel of the Lord. They are terrified, however, when they realize that they have faced God himself.

PSALM 17 | COMFORT IN SEEING GOD

David, in writing this psalm, cries out to God for justice and protection. He rejoices that God is willing to listen, and he rests in knowing that he will someday see God face to face.

EZEKIEL 20:30-44 | GOD'S JUDGMENT

God faithfully loves and cares for his people, but he will not tolerate their desire to pursue other gods ahead of him. He will judge them face to face and punish them, so that they will return to loving him above all.

SIDE TRIPS

THE MESSIAH

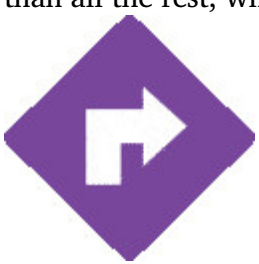
GLIMPSES OF THE MESSIAH

Many people know the Christmas story found in Luke 2. Long before that night in Bethlehem, kings, prophets, and even God himself were

talking about a king and messiah who would rescue humanity. Thousands of years passed between God's first hint that evil would be defeated and the actual arrival of the baby Jesus in the manger.

GENESIS 3:8-19 | EVE'S OFFSPRING
Satan succeeds in tempting Adam and Eve to sin, but God tells him that someday one of Adam and Eve's descendants will crush him.

GENESIS 49:8-12 | THE SCEPTER FROM JUDAH
Jacob, in blessing his son Judah, reveals that Judah's descendants will include mighty leaders and rulers. One of them, more powerful than all the rest, will be honored by every nation on earth.



2 SAMUEL 7:1-16 | DAVID'S ENDLESS KINGDOM
God makes a covenant with David, promising to give him "a dynasty of kings" and declaring that his royal throne will be "secure . . . forever." These promises were ultimately fulfilled by Jesus.

PSALM 2 | GOD'S ROYAL SON

This royal psalm refers again and again to the Lord's anointed one, the king. These references not only point to the human kings of Israel and Judah, but also to a King who reigns over heaven and earth.

ISAIAH 7:10-16 | THE SIGN OF IMMANUEL

The prophet Isaiah is called to give hope to King Ahaz of Judah. The king fears the impending Assyrian invasion of Judah, but Isaiah's message is meant to reassure him that God will be with his people in the immediate future and, many years later, in an even greater way.

ISAIAH 9:2-7 | A CHILD IS BORN

When Assyria invades and conquers Israel, the future looks bleak. But Isaiah has a message of comfort. He assures everyone that the present darkness and despair will not go on forever. Someday, a wonderful child will be born and will rule on David's throne.

ISAIAH 11:1-10 | THE BRANCH FROM DAVID'S FAMILY

Isaiah continues describing future events, both good and bad. Here, he again assures God's people that David's line and throne will not die out. New life will come from the old tree stump.

JEREMIAH 33:14-18 | A RIGHTEOUS DESCENDANT

Jeremiah, like other prophets, promises that the Messiah will descend from the royal line of David. He will be the Righteous One and will reign forever.

EZEKIEL 34:11-24 | THE GOOD SHEPHERD

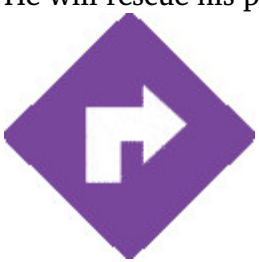
Ezekiel describes a good shepherd who will care for God's sheep. The shepherd will be like David, a royal prince and a caring leader.

DANIEL 9:20-27 | THE ANOINTED ONE

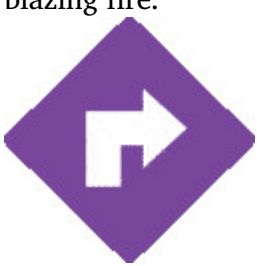
During Daniel's exile in Babylon, the angel Gabriel brings him a message about the future. Gabriel's explanation contains an important glimpse of the Messiah (9:26).

MICAH 5:2-5 | THE BETHLEHEM PROPHECY
Hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Micah proclaims that a ruler of Israel will come from the small town of Bethlehem.

ZECHARIAH 9:9-17 | ZION'S KING
The prophet Zechariah tells of a king who will come to Jerusalem. He will rescue his people and bring peace to the nations.



MALACHI 3:1-5 | THE LORD YOU ARE SEEKING
The prophet Malachi tells of a special messenger who will prepare the way for the Lord. Later in verse 2, Malachi gives us a glimpse of the Messiah, who will come to the Temple in Jerusalem like "a blazing fire."



LUKE 1:26-56 | THE BIRTH OF JESUS FORETOLD
The angel Gabriel visits a young woman named Mary and explains

God's plan. Mary will become pregnant by the Holy Spirit's power and give birth to the Son of God. When Mary's relative Elizabeth encounters Mary just a few days later, she instantly recognizes Mary's blessed status and is overcome with joy.

SIDE TRIPS

GOD LOVES YOU

GOD LOVES YOU

The Bible tells God's story: who he is and what he does for his people. The greatest message he wants us to know is that he chose a people, loved them, and cared for them. He loves his creation and his people as much today as he did at the beginning. God loves you, he cares about you, and he always will.

PSALM 139 | COMPLETELY KNOWN

In this psalm, David rejoices that God loves and cares for us. God knows all about us. We can never escape from his presence. We are held safely in his love.

SONG OF SONGS 4:1-15 | GOD'S PASSION

Song of Songs tells the story of two lovers and their deep desire for one another. The story celebrates romantic love as God intended it, and it also illustrates the passionate intensity of God's love for us.

ZEPHANIAH 3:9-20 | GOD'S JOYFUL SONGS

Just as a mother sings the praises of her child, so the Lord sings and rejoices over his people. He delights in us. This prophecy shows how much God desires to embrace us as his own and live with us forever.

LUKE 12:6-12 | HAIRS AND SPARROWS

God cares for us so much that he even knows the exact number of hairs on our heads. Here, Jesus reminds us that God cares for every sparrow—but that he cares for us even more.

JOHN 3:16-21 | GOD'S GREAT LOVE

Jesus explains to the Pharisee Nicodemus that, because God loves us, he sent his Son to save us. When we look at Jesus, we see God's love.

ROMANS 5:1-11 | GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS LOVE

The apostle Paul explains that God loves us even in our most sinful state. While we were trapped in sin, he chose to save us and sent his only Son to die for us.

ROMANS 8:31–39 | NOTHING SEPARATES US FROM GOD'S LOVE

Paul encourages the Roman believers by assuring them that nothing in heaven or on earth can ever separate us from God's love. This is a great comfort for all who put their trust in God.

EPHESIANS 1:3-11 | WHY GOD MADE US

Paul explains why God chose to create us: It pleased him, and he wanted to do it. Our existence fulfilled God's desire.

1 JOHN 3:1-10 | WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN

John describes God as a Father to us. God loves us as a parent loves a child. He has chosen us to be his children.

SIDE TRIPS

VISIONS

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH VISIONS

God uses a variety of ways to communicate with his people. Throughout his people's history, he speaks mainly through Israel's leaders—the prophets, priests, and kings. From time to time he also communicates through visions and dreams to reveal the future, bring hope, and assure his people that he is in charge, no matter what their present circumstances are.

GENESIS 40:1–41:36 | JOSEPH INTERPRETS DREAMS

While in prison, Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's cup-bearer and baker. God uses the opportunity to demonstrate Joseph's unique abilities to the royal court. Two years later, Joseph again uses his gift, this time for Pharaoh.

EZEKIEL 8–9 | THE MAN OF FIRE

God gives a vision to Ezekiel that shows him Judah's terrible sins:

idols occupying the Temple, women mourning for a pagan god, and men worshiping the sun. God then reveals the way he will punish his people.

DANIEL 7:1-28 | THE DREAM OF FOUR BEASTS

Daniel's dream shows him the present and the future. The four beasts represent four kingdoms of the world.

DANIEL 10–12 | DANIEL'S VISION OF KINGS AND KINGDOMS

God sends Daniel another vision, in which a shining messenger speaks to him about the future of the world's great empires.

ZECHARIAH 4:1-14 | THE GOLD LAMPSTAND AND TWO OLIVE TREES

The prophet Zechariah sees a great vision concerning the completion of the new Temple. Zechariah receives a message that assures Zerubbabel that he will see the Temple completed.

REVELATION 12:1-18 | THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

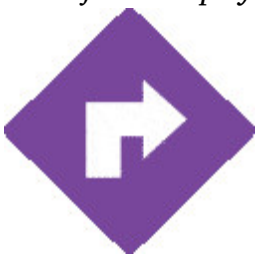
God sends a vision to John during his exile in Patmos. John sees that Christ will defeat Satan and that, even as Satan goes down, he will retaliate against God's people. Nevertheless, Christ's victory will be final.

SIDE TRIPS

WHO, ME?

GOD USES UNEXPECTED PEOPLE

God uses all sorts of people to work out his plans. He uses old people and young people. He selects the shy and the insignificant. God's choices usually surprise these individuals or their family members, but he equips each of them to play a significant part in his big story.



GENESIS 17:1-27 | THE AGING COUPLE

Abraham and Sarah are a very old couple with no children when God chooses them to be the ancestors of his chosen people.

EXODUS 3:1–4:17 | THE TIMID SHEPHERD
Moses is an eighty-year-old exile with a speech impediment. He is very uncertain about his ability when God asks him to confront a world leader and lead millions of people into the desert.

JUDGES 6:1-40 | THE FARMER FROM A LOWLY TRIBE
Gideon is a farmer from the half-tribe of Manasseh who has the lowest position in his family, yet God calls him to be a great leader and freedom fighter.

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13 | THE YOUNGEST SON
David, the youngest son of Jesse, is just a shepherd boy when God chooses him to be the next king of Israel.

2 KINGS 11–12 | THE SOLE SURVIVOR
Joash is rescued as a baby from his grandmother's rampage and grows up in hiding. He is a young boy when he becomes king.

2 KINGS 22:1–23:30 | THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD BOY

Josiah is only eight years old when he becomes the king of Judah. He is young, but he has godly men to advise him.

PHILEMON 1:1-25 | THE FUGITIVE SLAVE

Onesimus is a slave. When he escapes from his master, he falls in with Paul the apostle. As a result, God uses him to paint a picture of the transforming work of Christ.

SIDE TRIPS

HEALING

GOD'S HAND OF HEALING

God created all things. He designated the seasons. He set the planets and stars in their places and controls their movements. He created the rain and the storms, earthquakes and whirlwinds. All of them are under his command. Throughout the Bible, God works within and through the wonders of creation.

GENESIS 21:1-7 | GOD HEALS A BARREN WOMB

Sarah is very old, and has been unable to have children. But God promised that she and her husband Abraham would have a son, and he blesses them with a child even in their old age.

1 KINGS 17:17-24 | GOD BRINGS A YOUNG BOY BACK FROM THE DEAD

A poor widow provided food for the prophet Elijah during a famine. Later, when her son dies, Elijah cries out to God to restore the child's life.

2 KINGS 5:1-19 | GOD HEALS AN ENEMY MILITARY LEADER

Aram and Israel were often in conflict, and one of the greatest military leaders of Aram was Naaman. Naaman suffered from leprosy, and even though he was an enemy soldier, when he went to the prophet Elisha in Israel, God healed him from his disease.

MARK 5:21-43 | JESUS HEALS IN RESPONSE TO FAITH

Two very different people came to Jesus for healing in very different ways, but he responded to both of them with compassion and love. Jairus the religious leader and the nameless bleeding woman both came to Jesus in humility and with great faith, and they both received healing.

MARK 7:31-37 | JESUS RESTORES A MAN'S HEARING AND SPEECH

Jesus regularly encountered people in need of God's healing touch. This man was both unable to hear and unable to speak, and Jesus had compassion on him, opening his ears and releasing his tongue.

JOHN 9:1-11 | JESUS GIVES LIGHT TO A BLIND MAN

When Jesus' disciples asked him about why a certain man had been born blind, Jesus revealed that it was not as a punishment for sin—rather, it was to show God's power in healing him. Jesus, the light of the world, gave light to this blind man.

ACTS 3:1-11 | PETER HEALS A CRIPPLED BEGGAR

When a beggar at the gate of the Temple asked Peter and John for a few coins, Peter responded with something even greater: bodily healing through the power of Jesus.

SIDE TRIPS

HOLY SPIRIT

THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT

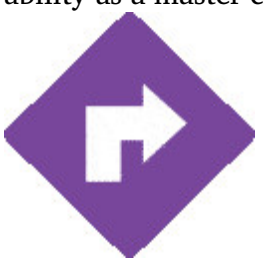
The Holy Spirit is at work in God's people long before the day of Pentecost, when he descends on the believers gathered in an upper room. He is present at Creation and fills individual leaders with extraordinary talents and abilities, empowering them for specific tasks. He reveals God's continuing presence with his people.

GENESIS 1:1-8 | GOD'S SPIRIT IN THE BEGINNING

In the creation story, we see that the Spirit is present from the very beginning.

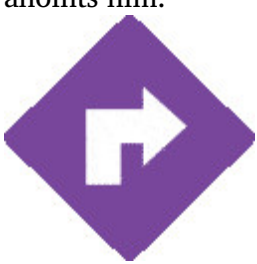
EXODUS 31:1-11 | GOD'S SPIRIT INSPIRES A CRAFTSMAN

God instructs Moses and the people to construct the Tabernacle, a portable structure. Through his Spirit, God fills Bezalel with the ability as a master craftsman to complete this project.



1 SAMUEL 10:1-16 | GOD'S SPIRIT COMES UPON A KING

When the people request a king, God selects one for them. God chooses Saul for their first king, and his Spirit fills Saul after Samuel anoints him.



EZEKIEL 2–3 | GOD'S SPIRIT FILLS A PROPHET

Ezekiel ministers to the Jews who are exiled in Babylon. The Spirit fills him, enabling him to see and understand his visions and to obey God.

ACTS 2:1-13 | GOD'S SPIRIT DESCENDS ON THE BELIEVERS

After Jesus' ascension into heaven, the believers gather to celebrate Pentecost. While they are all together, the Spirit descends on them, filling them with power.

ACTS 11:19-24 | **GOD'S SPIRIT FILLS BARNABAS**

The Spirit is with the early church, filling the new believers with power to lead and to preach. Barnabas is one of these early leaders: a faithful missionary who ministers to the church in Antioch.

SIDE TRIPS

PRAYERS

PRAYERS

Prayer is used in all sorts of ways in the Bible. God's people pray in order to cry out for help, to intercede on the behalf of others, to confess sins, and to offer worship to God. As one of the primary methods of communicating directly with the Lord of the universe, prayer plays a central role in the life of a believer. Hundreds of prayers are recorded in the Bible. This collection includes some of the best known as well as a few lesser known ones.

2 KINGS 18:13–19:19 | **HEZEKIAH PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE**

When Assyria invades Judah and threatens to conquer it, King Hezekiah prays to God for deliverance from Judah's most dreaded enemy.

2 CHRONICLES 6:12-42 | SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

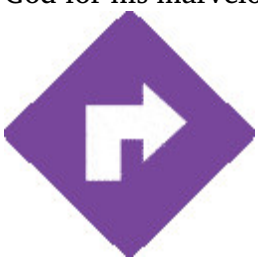
King Solomon prays to God, dedicating to him the newly completed Temple. He praises God's faithfulness, holiness, justice, and power and asks for the Lord's presence to remain in the Temple forever.

JEREMIAH 10:23-25 | JEREMIAH PRAYS FOR JUSTICE

After telling the Israelites of God's coming judgment for idolatry, Jeremiah prays this short prayer to God, asking for mercy on the faithful and judgment on the disobedient.

HABAKKUK 3:1-19 | HABAKKUK'S PRAYER OF WORSHIP

Knowing that God's coming judgment will bring hard times for his people, the prophet Habakkuk sings this prayer to God. He praises God for his marvelous acts and asks for God's mercy.



MATTHEW 6:5-15 | THE LORD'S PRAYER

While teaching about the practice and attitude of prayer, Jesus shows his disciples how to pray, giving them this prayer to follow.

JOHN 17:1-26 | JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

Facing the final hours of his life, Jesus prays for his disciples, for all believers, and for himself.

SIDE TRIPS

SONGS

SONGS

Much of the Bible's poetry serves as songs and hymns of praise to God. Life for Israel was difficult, but it was also filled with joy at times. The songs that God's people composed express their thankfulness for God's blessings and love.

EXODUS 15:1-21 | THE SONG OF MOSES AND MIRIAM

After safely crossing the Red Sea, the people of God join together in a song of praise to him. They poetically express all the wonderful things God has done for them.

DEUTERONOMY 31:30–32:47 | THE SONG

OF MOSES
In this song, Moses traces the history of the Hebrews, reminding the people of their covenant with God and of all the blessings and responsibilities that come with it.

JUDGES 5:1-31 | DEBORAH'S SONG OF VICTORY
Deborah, the wise judge of Israel, sings this song of praise to God after defeating the army of a Canaanite king. In the song, no army can withstand God's might.

1 SAMUEL 2:1-10 | HANNAH'S SONG OF PRAISE
Hannah fervently prays for God to give her a child. When God answers her prayer, Hannah dedicates her young son, Samuel, to the Lord's service. This is her song of thanks and praise.

PSALM 92 | A SONG FOR THE SABBATH
During the daily service in God's Temple, the priests and people sang specific psalms for each day of the week. Psalm 92 would have been sung on the Sabbath day, and it focuses on praising God for his holiness and majesty.

PSALMS 113–118 | SONGS OF JOY
This collection of six psalms is called the “Egyptian Hallel.” These psalms are read or chanted during Passover, celebrating the people’s deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

LUKE 1:46-55 | MARY’S SONG
While Mary is pregnant, she visits her cousin Elizabeth. After they greet one another, Mary sings this song of praise and thanksgiving to God. This song is known as the Magnificat.

LUKE 1:57-80 | ZECHARIAH’S SONG
John the Baptist’s father, Zechariah, sings this song after his son is named and circumcised. The song describes how John will prepare the way for Jesus and foretells salvation for God’s people.

LUKE 2:25-35 | THE SONG OF SIMEON
Eight days after Jesus’ birth, Mary and Joseph bring him to the Temple. Simeon sees the baby boy and bursts into song, praising God for the child.

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11 | A CHRISTIAN HYMN

This song was used as a hymn in the early Christian church. It clearly and simply states some of the church's teachings about Jesus.

REVELATION 15:1-4 | THE SONG OF MOSES AND OF THE LAMB

As John's vision comes to its climax, the apostle sees seven angels with harps singing this song of praise to God. Then the Temple of heaven is "thrown wide open."

SIDE TRIPS

THE FUTURE

THE THINGS TO COME

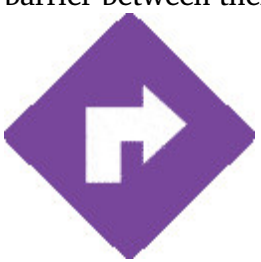
Many people wonder what will happen when the world ends and time is no more. These readings offer insight into what God has in mind for his faithful followers and for unbelievers. The descriptions of some of these events are quite frightening. But if we believe in Jesus Christ, we will have nothing to fear in God's presence.

ISAIAH 65:17-25 | A NEW CREATION

The prophet Isaiah recounts what the Lord has told him about a place of happiness and blessing in the new order of existence. The sadness and suffering of our present earth will be gone forever.

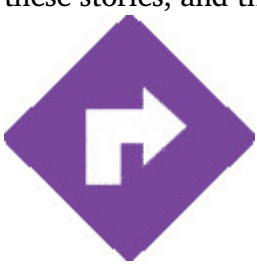
EZEKIEL 40:1-49 | A NEW TEMPLE IN A RESTORED LAND

Ezekiel has a vision in which he sees the restored land of Israel, a magnificent city, and the Temple. With this vision, God gives us a glimpse of the day when he will live among his people without any barrier between them.



MATTHEW 13:24-30, 36-43 | THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

Jesus often tells stories to explain to people what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. The disciples often misunderstand the meaning of these stories, and this time they ask Jesus to explain more.



1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-55 | THE

RESURRECTION BODY
Jesus' resurrection has conquered sin and death for us. Paul explains that, although our present bodies still will die, God will someday clothe us with new spiritual bodies.

2 PETER 3:1-14 | THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH
To encourage his audience to live faithfully, Peter explains what will occur in the last days. He speaks of fire and destruction but leaves believers with the hope of a new heaven and a new earth.

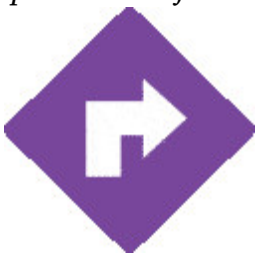
REVELATION 21:1-8 | GOD'S HOME AMONG HIS PEOPLE
The resurrected Jesus reveals to John what a new heaven and a new earth will look like. John also sees the new Jerusalem, where God will live, and he is shown what will become of the ungodly.

SIDE TRIPS

JESUS' FAMILY

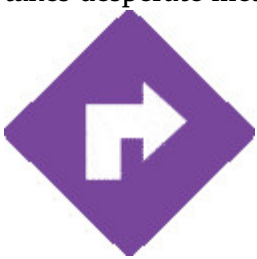
UNEXPECTED PEOPLE IN JESUS' FAMILY TREE
Few people enjoy reading the long lists of names in genealogies. But each

name is a person with an important story. Every family tree has its "characters." Jesus' family tree is no different. The version of the genealogy found in Matthew 1 even includes several women, which was quite unusual for the time. Here are stories behind some of these people.



GENESIS 38:1-30 | THE DESPERATE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

Tamar is the daughter-in-law of Judah. When she becomes a widow, Judah seems to ignore his responsibility to care for her. She takes desperate measures to secure her future.



JOSHUA 2:1-24 | THE PROSTITUTE IN AN ENEMY CITY

Rahab is a prostitute living in the city of Jericho before God's people besiege it. She protects two Hebrew spies, and they reward her for her faithfulness.

RUTH 1–2 | THE FOREIGNER

Ruth is from a foreign country called Moab, east of the Dead Sea. The Moabites have occasionally been enemies of Israel. When Ruth marries into an Israelite family, her life is changed forever.

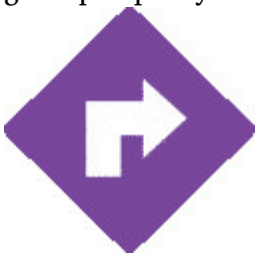
2 SAMUEL 11:1-27 | THE WARRIOR'S WIFE

Bathsheba is the wife of Uriah, a warrior in King David's army. While Uriah is away at war, David commits adultery with Bathsheba. When she becomes pregnant, David is determined to

cover it up.

1 KINGS 22:41-50 | A GOOD KING
Jehoshaphat is the fourth king of Judah, after the division of the country. Although he makes an alliance with the wicked King Ahab and does not remove all the pagan shrines from the kingdom, he is declared a good king.

2 KINGS 15:1-7 | A TEENAGE KING
Uzziah is sixteen years old when he ascends to the throne of Judah, and he reigns for over fifty years. During his reign, Uzziah brings great prosperity to the kingdom of Judah.



2 KINGS 16:1-20 | A DESPERATE KING
Ahaz is a wicked king in Judah who blasphemes the Temple, the altar, and the proper order of sacrifice. Instead of relying on God and honoring God's Temple, he used its riches to buy his protection.

2 KINGS 21:1-18 | A WICKED KING
Although Manasseh is the son of Hezekiah, a God-fearing king, he

does “what [is] evil in the LORD’s sight.” He reconstructs altars and pagan shrines that his father destroyed, and he even places an idol in the Temple.

EZRA 3:1-13 | LEADER OF THE EXILES

Zerubbabel is a prince of Judah who leads a group of exiles back from Babylon to Jerusalem. He remains a strong leader of the people as they rebuild their lives.

SIDE TRIPS

WEDDINGS

WEDDING STORIES

Marriage has been around since the first man and woman. But wedding traditions change over the centuries. These readings illustrate some of the characteristics of weddings and marriages described throughout the Bible.

GENESIS 2:18-25 | ADAM AND EVE

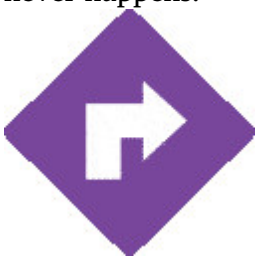
The first union of man and woman in the Garden of Eden illustrates the meaning and purpose that God intends for marriage.

GENESIS 29:14-30 | JACOB, LEAH, AND RACHEL

From this story we learn about ancient wedding ceremonies and marriage customs. Jacob is apparently unaware of some of the local practices in his new home, and Laban uses them against him.

JUDGES 14:1-20 | SAMSON'S WEDDING

Samson's wedding celebration is scheduled to last for a whole week. Because of what transpires during that week, however, the marriage never happens.



PSALM 45:1-17 | A ROYAL WEDDING PSALM

This psalm was likely used as part of the celebration of royal weddings for David and his descendants. It is a beautiful love song celebrating the joyous union of the king and his bride.

JOHN 2:1-12 | THE WEDDING IN CANA

This wedding becomes significant when Jesus miraculously turns water into wine. This is the first of Jesus' miracles to be recorded in

the Bible.

REVELATION 19:6-9 | THE GREATEST WEDDING FEAST

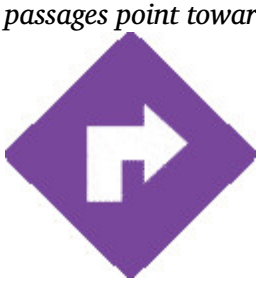
At the culmination of all things, there will be a great wedding feast where Jesus (the Lamb) receives his bride, the church. All previous weddings are a picture looking forward to this moment, when God receives his people and will be with them eternally.

SIDE TRIPS

SUFFERING

WHERE IS GOD IN SUFFERING?

Anyone who has faced suffering usually wonders, Where is God in all this? Why is this happening to me? Those questions have been around since sin corrupted the world and brought in pain and sorrow. These passages point toward some answers to that age-old question.



JOB 36:1-21 | AN EXPLANATION FOR SUFFERING

After Job's three friends exhaust their arguments with him, they

reach an impasse. Then another friend, Elihu, enters the conversation and explains that suffering can help us spot sin and avoid it.

PSALM 22 | A PRAYER OF ANGUISH

This psalm assures us that suffering will end. David pleads with God and questions why he must suffer. But he also vows to praise God when his suffering ends.

ISAIAH 49:8-13 | GOD'S COMPASSION

God's chosen people often suffered. Here Isaiah assures them that the Lord will show them compassion even in their suffering.

JOHN 16:16-33 | JESUS PROMISES BOTH SUFFERING AND PEACE

Jesus does not promise believers a life without suffering—just the opposite, in fact. However, he also promises that, even when we suffer, his life, death, and resurrection are reasons to have hope.

ROMANS 8:15-30 | HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Paul says that whatever suffering we may endure throughout our lives cannot compare to what God has in store. God promises that we will share in his future glory.

HEBREWS 4:14-16 | HELP WHEN WE NEED IT

Since Jesus has come to earth and suffered, he knows the struggles we are experiencing. We can approach God with our needs, and he will help us.

1 PETER 5:6-10 | GOD CARES

We will face trials, suffering, and hardships in life, but our circumstances do not have to overwhelm us. Instead of worrying, we can know that God is in control and he will take care of us.

SIDE TRIPS

FORGIVENESS

YOU ARE FORGIVEN

Love and forgiveness are two virtues that God calls all people to practice. It's easy to love people who are loveable. It's easy to praise forgiveness until we have to forgive someone who has hurt us badly. Here are some stories about God's forgiveness and about people who forgave under difficult circumstances.

GENESIS 50:1-21 | JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

Joseph was Jacob's favored son, and in their jealousy his brothers got rid of him by selling him as a slave. Decades later, after the family reunites, Joseph's brothers realize he has the power to take revenge when their father dies. Joseph chooses to forgive them instead.

LEVITICUS 5:1-19 | OFFERINGS REQUIRED FOR FORGIVENESS

In the Old Testament, the people present offerings that will make them right with God and secure forgiveness for them. Later, Jesus makes his own life into a perfect offering, so the Levitical offerings are no longer necessary today.

JEREMIAH 50:1-20 | GOD FORGIVES HIS PEOPLE

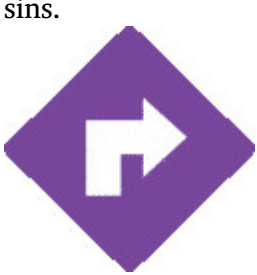
God declares he will punish Babylon, the empire that has conquered Judah. The key message comes at the end of this passage—God will forgive his people.

HOSEA 14:1-9 | GOD FORGIVES ISRAEL'S INFIDELITY

In Hosea, God likens Israel to a faithless wife who sleeps around with other men. But at the end of the book, God expresses his longing to forgive the people who have turned their backs on him.

MATTHEW 9:1-8 | JESUS FORGIVES AND HEALS

When a paralyzed man comes to Jesus to be healed, Jesus demonstrates his power to heal as well as his authority to forgive sins.



LUKE 7:36-50 | JESUS FORGIVES AN IMMORAL WOMAN

While Jesus is having a meal in the home of a Pharisee, a sinful woman comes and anoints Jesus with perfume. With everyone watching, Jesus forgives her sins because of her faith.

THRU-HIKE

The Thru-Hike route is a fourth route through *The Wayfinding Bible*. It will take you through every word of the Bible chronologically. People who hike the entire length of long trails—such as the Appalachian Trail or the Continental Divide Trail—refer to their journey as "thru-hiking." Walking every step of a lengthy trail requires time and dedication, as does reading every verse of the Bible. Completing the Thru-Hike in *The Wayfinding Bible* is not only a significant accomplishment but offers a wonderful opportunity to draw closer to God.

Your Thru-Hike guide is listed below. Simply begin with the first reading and follow the route to the end. Along the way you'll cover all of the readings on the flyover route, the direct route, and the scenic route. As you travel the entire course of the Bible, take the time to read the Historical Markers, stop at the Scenic Overlooks, and gain perspective via the Getting Your Bearings articles. Set a pace for yourself that's comfortable. You're thru-hiking, not racing! Like all thru-hikers, you may occasionally get discouraged. Take a break, then pick up where you left off and keep going. You can do it!

The Beginning

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Gn 1–2
Gn 3–4
Gn 5–6
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Gn 11–12
Gn 13–14
Gn 15–16

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Gn 21–22
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Jb 4–5
Jb 6–7
Jb 8–10
Jb 11–12
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Jb 20–21
Jb 22–24
Jb 25–27
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Jb 35–36
Jb 37–38
Jb 39–40
Jb 41–42
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Gn 37–38
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Gn 41–42
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Gn 45–46
Gn 47–48
Gn 49–50

Waiting for a Deliverer

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Ex 3–4

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Ex 20–21
Ex 22–23
Ex 24–25
Ex 26–27
Ex 28–29
Ex 30–31
Ex 32–33
Ex 34–36
Ex 37–38
Ex 39–40
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Lv 9–10
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Lv 13–14
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Lv 19
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Jo 15–16
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Jo 19–20
Jo 21–22
Jo 23–24

Possessing the Promised Land

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Jgs 6–7
Jgs 8–9
Jgs 10–12
Ru 1–2
Ru 3–4
1 Sm 1–3
Jgs 13–14
Jgs 15–16
Jgs 17–18
Jgs 19–20
Jgs 21
1 Sm 4–5
1 Sm 6–7
1 Sm 8–10
1 Sm 11–12
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1 Sm 15–16
1 Sm 17
1 Sm 18–19
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Ps 57
Ps 142
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1 Sm 27–28
1 Sm 29
Ps 56
1 Sm 30
1 Sm 31
1 Chr 10

2 Sm 1–3
2 Sm 4–5
1 Chr 11–12
Ps 19
Ps 23
2 Sm 6
Ps 96
1 Chr 13–14
1 Chr 15–16
2 Sm 7
1 Chr 17
2 Sm 8
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2 Sm 9
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2 Sm 10
1 Chr 19
2 Sm 11–12
Ps 51
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1 Chr 20
2 Sm 13–14
2 Sm 15–17
Ps 3
Ps 63
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2 Sm 19–20
Ps 7
2 Sm 21–22
Ps 18
Ps 139
2 Sm 23–24
1 Chr 21–22
1 Chr 23–24
1 Chr 25–26
1 Chr 27
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Ps 72
1Chr 28

Ps 73
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Ps 78
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2 Chr 1
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Eccl 7–8
Eccl 9–10
Eccl 11–12
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Sg 3–4
Sg 5–6
Sg 7–8
1 Kgs 5
2 Chr 2
1 Kgs 6–7
Ps 30
2 Chr 3–4
1 Kgs 8
2 Chr 5–6

1 Kgs 9
2 Chr 7–8
1 Kgs 10
2 Chr 9
1 Kgs 11

The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

GYB

The Story of Israel

1 Kgs 12
1 Kgs 13:1–14:20
1 Kgs 15:25–17:24
1 Kgs 18–19
1 Kgs 20–21
1 Kgs 22:1-40
1 Kgs 22:51-53
2 Chr 18
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2 Kgs 3–4
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2 Kgs 7:1–8:15
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Jon 3–4
Hos 1–2
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Hos 5–6
Hos 7–8
Hos 9–10
Hos 11–12
Hos 13–14
Am 1–3
Am 4–6
Am 7–9
2 Kgs 15:8-31
Is 28
2 Kgs 17

The Story of Judah

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2 Chr 12
1 Kgs 14:21-31
2 Chr 13
1 Kgs 15:1-24
2 Chr 14–15
2 Chr 16–17
2 Chr 19–20
1 Kgs 22:41-50
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Mi 5–7
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2 Chr 31
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Pss 46–49
Pss 84–85

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2 Kgs 20
2 Chr 32:24-33

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Jer 3–4
Jer 5–6
Jer 47–48
2 Kgs 23:31–24:7
Jer 7–8
Jer 9–10
Jer 11–12
Jer 13–15
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To see an infographic of this chart, see Luke 1:76-79.

Old Testament reference	New Testament reference
Born of a virgin and called Immanuel	

Kings bearing gifts
Out of Egypt
A massacre of innocents
Born in Bethlehem
A voice in the wilderness, a messenger
Light to the Gentiles
Healed many
Watchers and listeners will not understand
Raised by children
Rejected cornerstone
The king enters Jerusalem on a donkey
Rejected by his own people
Betrayed by his own follower
Forsaken by disciples
Man of sorrows
Struck and spat on by his enemies
Betrayed for the price of a potter's field
Silent before his accusers
Given vinegar
They threw dice for his garments
To suffer with criminals and pray for his enemies
Mocked and insulted
Buried in a rich man's tomb
Raised from the dead
At God's right hand
Would have David's throne
Eternal throne
Anointed with God's Spirit
Commends his spirit to the Father
Dies as a sacrifice for sin
Zealous for his Father
A prophet like Moses
He would thirst
No broken bones
Pierced hands and feet, stared at in death

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW

To see an infographic of this list, see Heb 10:37-38.

Rom 1:17 . . . Hab 2:4

Rom 2:24 . . . Isa 52:5 (Greek version)

Rom 3:4 . . . Ps 51:4 (Greek version)

Rom 3:10-12 . . . Pss 14:1-3; 53:1-3 (Greek version)

Rom 3:13 . . . Pss 5:9 (Greek version); 140:3

Rom 3:14 . . . Ps 10:7 (Greek version)

Rom 3:15-17 . . . Isa 59:7-8

Rom 3:18 . . . Ps 36:1

Rom 4:3 . . . Gen 15:6

Rom 4:7-8 . . . Ps 32:1-2 (Greek version)

Rom 4:17 . . . Gen 17:5

Rom 4:18 . . . Gen 15:5

Rom 7:7 . . . Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21

Rom 8:36 . . . Ps 44:22

Rom 9:7 . . . Gen 21:12

Rom 9:9 . . . Gen 18:10, 14

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Rom 9:13 . . . Mal 1:2-3

Rom 9:15 . . . Exod 33:19

Rom 9:17 . . . Exod 9:16 (Greek version)

Rom 9:25 . . . Hos 2:23

Rom 9:26 . . . Hos 1:10

Rom 9:27-28 . . . Isa 10:22-23 (Greek version)

Rom 9:29 . . . Isa 1:9

Rom 9:33 . . . Isa 8:14; 28:16 (Greek version)

Rom 10:6-8 . . . Deut 30:12-14

Rom 10:11 . . . Isa 28:16 (Greek version)

Rom 10:13 . . . Joel 2:32

Rom 10:15 . . . Isa 52:7

Rom 10:16 . . . Isa 53:1

Rom 10:18 . . . Ps 19:4

Rom 10:19 . . . Deut 32:21

Rom 10:20 . . . Isa 65:1 (Greek version)

Rom 10:21 . . . Isa 65:2 (Greek version)

Rom 11:3 . . . 1 Kgs 19:10, 14

Rom 11:4 . . . 1 Kgs 19:18

Rom 11:8 . . . Isa 29:10; Deut 29:4

Rom 11:9-10 . . . Ps 69:22-23 (Greek version)

Rom 11:26-27 . . . Isa 59:20-21; 27:9 (Greek version)

Rom 11:34 . . . Isa 40:13 (Greek version)

Rom 12:19 . . . Deut 32:35

Rom 12:20 . . . Prov 25:21-22

Rom 13:9 . . . Exod 20:13-15, 17

Rom 13:9 . . . Lev 19:18

Rom 14:11 . . . Isa 49:18; 45:23 (Greek version)

Rom 15:3 . . . Ps 69:9

Rom 15:9 . . . Ps 18:49

Rom 15:10 . . . Deut 32:43

Rom 15:11 . . . Ps 117:1

Rom 15:12 . . . Isa 11:10 (Greek version)

Rom 15:21 . . . Isa 52:15 (Greek version)

1 Cor 1:19 . . . Isa 29:14

1 Cor 1:31 . . . Jer 9:24

1 Cor 2:9 . . . Isa 64:4

1 Cor 2:16 . . . Isa 40:13 (Greek version)

1 Cor 3:19 . . . Job 5:13

1 Cor 3:20 . . . Ps 94:11

1 Cor 5:13 . . . Deut 17:7

1 Cor 6:16 . . . Gen 2:24

1 Cor 9:9 . . . Deut 25:4

1 Cor 10:7 . . . Exod 32:6

1 Cor 10:26 . . . Ps 24:1

1 Cor 14:21 . . . Isa 28:11-12

1 Cor 15:27 . . . Ps 8:6

1 Cor 15:32 . . . Isa 22:13

1 Cor 15:45 . . . Gen 2:7

1 Cor 15:54 . . . Isa 25:8

1 Cor 15:55 . . . Hos 13:14 (Greek version)

2 Cor 4:13 . . . Ps 116:10

2 Cor 6:2 . . . Isa 49:8 (Greek version)

2 Cor 6:16 . . . Lev 26:12; Ezek 37:27

2 Cor 6:17 . . . Isa 52:11; Ezek 20:34 (Greek version)

2 Cor 6:18 . . . 2 Sam 7:14

2 Cor 8:15 . . . Exod 16:18

2 Cor 9:7 See footnote on . . . Prov 22:8

2 Cor 9:9 . . . Ps 112:9

2 Cor 10:17 . . . Jer 9:24

2 Cor 13:1 . . . Deut 19:15

Gal 3:6 . . . Gen 15:6

Gal 3:8 . . . Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18

Gal 3:10 . . . Deut 27:26

Gal 3:11 . . . Hab 2:4

Gal 3:12 . . . Lev 18:5

Gal 3:13 . . . Deut 21:23 (Greek version)

Gal 3:16 See notes on . . . Gen 12:7 and 13:15

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Gal 5:14 . . . Lev 19:18

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Eph 4:26 . . . Ps 4:4

Eph 5:31 . . . Gen 2:24

Eph 6:2-3 . . . Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16

1 Tim 5:18 . . . Deut 25:4; Luke 10:7

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Heb 1:5 . . . Ps 2:7

Heb 1:5 . . . 2 Sam 7:14

Heb 1:6 . . . Deut 32:43

Heb 1:7 . . . Ps 104:4 (Greek version)

Heb 1:8-9 . . . Ps 45:6-7

Heb 1:10-12 . . . Ps 102:25-27

Heb 1:13 . . . Ps 110:1

Heb 2:6-8 . . . Ps 8:4-6 (Greek version)

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Heb 5:6 . . . Ps 110:4

Heb 6:14 . . . Gen 22:17

Heb 7:17 . . . Ps 110:4

Heb 7:21 . . . Ps 110:4

Heb 8:5 . . . Exod 25:40; 26:30

Heb 8:8-12 . . . Jer 31:31-34

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1 Pet 2:6 . . . Isa 28:16 (Greek version)

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1 Pet 2:10 . . . Hos 1:6, 9; 2:23

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1 Pet 3:10-12 . . . Ps 34:12-16

1 Pet 4:18 . . . Prov 11:31 (Greek version)

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POINTS OF INTEREST

ABORTION

God cares for the unborn (Exodus 21:22-25)

We should protect the helpless (Psalm 82:3-4)

Children are from God (Psalm 127:3)

God forms every child (Psalm 139:13-16)

God plans the future of every child (Jeremiah 1:5)

ABUSE

God cares about minorities (Exodus 22:21)

God protects those who are helpless (Psalm 12:5)

Jesus was abused (Matthew 26:67-68)

Abuse has no place in family relationships (Ephesians 5:21–6:4)

ADOLESCENCE

Young people should worship God (1 Kings 18:12)

God can give hope to young people (Psalm 71:5)

Young people should remember God (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

Young people should be an example to others (1 Timothy 4:12)

Young people should run from their youthful lust (2 Timothy 2:22)

ADULTERY

God forbids adultery (Exodus 20:14)

Adultery has consequences (Proverbs 6:26)

Adultery is foolish (Proverbs 6:32)

Adultery is disgusting to God (Jeremiah 7:9-10)

God considers lust as sinful as adultery (Matthew 5:27-28)

Divorce often leads to adultery (Mark 10:11-12)

God can forgive the adulterer (John 8:1-11)

ADVICE

Leaders should consider the advice of others (Exodus 18:13-26)

Older people often give wise advice (1 Kings 12:1-11)

Stay away from people who give wicked advice (Psalm 1:1)

God's advice is best (Psalm 73:24)

Wise people seek advice (Proverbs 1:5)

Advice helps provide success (Proverbs 11:14)

Foolish people do not listen to advice (Proverbs 12:15)

Give advice to those in need (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

ALCOHOL

Being controlled by alcohol is foolish (Proverbs 20:1)

Becoming drunk is sin (Romans 13:13-14)

God hates drunkenness (Galatians 5:19-21)

Church leaders should not be controlled by alcohol (Titus 1:7)

ANGELS

Angels carry out God's judgment (2 Samuel 24:16-17)

Angels serve God (Psalm 103:21)

Angels praise God (Psalm 148:2)

Angels are messengers (Daniel 4:17)

Angels protect God's people (Daniel 6:22)

Angels do not marry (Matthew 22:30)

Angels do not die (Luke 20:36)

Angels will be judged by people (1 Corinthians 6:3)

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14)

Angels encourage Christians (Hebrews 1:14)

Angels who sinned were thrown into hell (2 Peter 2:4)

Angels are holy (Jude 1:14)

Angels are in the presence of God (Revelation 4:8)

Angels should not be worshiped (Revelation 22:8-9)

ANGER

Anger can lead to murder (Genesis 4:3-8)

Anger leads to evil actions (Psalm 37:8)

Showing anger is foolish (Proverbs 12:16)

Gentle words can soothe anger (Proverbs 15:1)

Being quick-tempered is foolish (Ecclesiastes 7:9)

God becomes angry when we are ruled by anger (Amos 1:11)

Anger is like murdering someone (Matthew 5:21-22)

Jesus grew angry at sin (John 2:13-17)

Anger can give Satan a place in your life (Ephesians 4:26-27)

Christians should get rid of anger (Colossians 3:8)

Leaders in the church should not be quick-tempered (Titus 1:7)

Be slow to become angry (James 1:19)

ANTICHRIST

Many will claim to be God's messenger (Matthew 24:5)

Many will have miraculous powers (Matthew 24:24)

Many will claim to be Christ (Luke 21:8)

The Antichrist will be lawless and deceitful (2 Thessalonians 2:1-10)

There are many antichrists (1 John 2:18)

The Antichrist will oppose God (1 John 4:3)

The Antichrist will curse God (Revelation 13:1-8)

The Antichrist will be punished by God (Revelation 20:10)

APPEARANCE

God is not impressed by someone's appearance (1 Samuel 16:7)

Physical beauty fades (Proverbs 31:30)

Do not worry about clothes (Matthew 6:25-34)

Appearances can be deceiving (Matthew 23:27)

Christians should care more about their spiritual welfare than their physical appearance (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

Do not judge others by their appearance (James 2:2-4)

Inner beauty is more important than physical beauty (1 Peter 3:1-6)

ARGUMENTS

Arguments can be avoided by using gentle words (Proverbs 15:1)

Loving arguments is a sin (Proverbs 17:19)

A fool is quick to argue (Proverbs 20:3)

Avoid becoming entangled in others' arguments (Proverbs 26:17)

Avoid arguing with a weak Christian (Romans 14:1)

We should avoid arguments (Philippians 2:14)

Arguments between Christians are useless (Titus 3:9)

ASSURANCE

God always holds his children (Psalm 37:23-24)

God will never abandon his people (Psalm 138:8)

God's promises last forever (Jeremiah 32:40)

False assurance is dangerous (Luke 18:18-30)

We can be assured of eternal life (John 5:24)

God will not refuse any who come to him (John 6:37-40)

Our place in God's family is secure (John 10:27-28)

Christians have peace with God (Romans 5:1-5)

Nothing can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:35-39)

Salvation cannot be canceled (Romans 11:29)

Accountability should help others (Galatians 6:1)

Our salvation was guaranteed before Creation (Ephesians 1:4-5)

Assurance comes from faith (Ephesians 3:12)

God will guard what has been entrusted to him (2 Timothy 1:12)

ATONEMENT

God required a perfect sacrifice (Exodus 12:5)

God required blood for our atonement (Leviticus 17:11)

Jesus paid for all of our sins (Isaiah 53:3-12)

Atonement is good news (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus willingly died for our sins (John 10:17)

Christ secured salvation through his blood (Acts 20:28)

Jesus provided the atonement for sins (Romans 3:23-25)

Jesus' death purchased forgiveness (1 Corinthians 7:23)

Jesus died for sins (1 Corinthians 15:3)

Our atonement allows us to know God (Ephesians 2:13)

Jesus' death rescues us from eternal punishment (Colossians 1:13)

Christ's death purifies God's people (Titus 2:14)

Sin requires that a sacrifice be made (Hebrews 9:22)

Jesus' sacrifice was perfect (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Jesus took our punishment (1 Peter 2:21-24)

We cannot improve Jesus' sacrifice (1 Peter 3:18)

ATTITUDE

Bad attitudes hurt our relationship with God (Genesis 4:6-7)

Bad attitudes lead to poor decisions (Numbers 14:1-4)

Always trust God for your life (Proverbs 29:25)

Choose a positive attitude (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

God will reward the meek (Matthew 5:5)

God gives Christians a new attitude (Philippians 1:20-25)

We should imitate Jesus' attitude (Philippians 2:5)

Christians should always rejoice (Philippians 4:4)

Never be anxious (Philippians 4:6-7)

AUTHORITY (see also Respect)

God will hold people in authority accountable for their actions (Daniel 4:31)

Jesus is the highest authority (Matthew 28:18)

God gave government its authority (John 19:11)

Christians should obey the government (Romans 13:1-2)

Parents are authorities to their children (Ephesians 6:1)

The Bible is our authority (2 Timothy 3:16)

Church leaders are authoritative (Hebrews 13:17)

BAPTISM

Baptism signifies repentance (Matthew 3:11)

All followers of Jesus should be baptized (Matthew 28:19)

Jesus was baptized (Mark 1:9)

Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1:32-33)

Baptism is closely linked with a changed life (Acts 2:38)

New Christians should be baptized (Acts 8:12-17)

Entire families of the early church were baptized (Acts 16:33-34)

Baptism initiates us into Christ (Romans 6:3-8)

Salvation is identified with baptism (1 Peter 3:21)

BELIEF

Believing God makes us righteous (Genesis 15:6)

Belief in God should be accompanied by action (Deuteronomy 27:10)

Belief affects the way we live (Mark 1:15)

Right beliefs are important for salvation (Romans 10:9)

Believing is more than acknowledging (James 2:21)

BIBLE

The Bible is perfect (Psalm 18:30)

The Bible is true (Psalm 33:4)

The Bible will last forever (Psalm 119:89)

The Bible gives us wisdom (Psalm 119:99)

The Bible can be trusted (Psalm 119:138)

The Bible reveals the truth (Acts 18:28)

The Bible is holy (Romans 1:2)

God's Holy Spirit helps us understand the Bible (1 Corinthians 2:12-16)

The Bible is authoritative (Galatians 3:10)

The Bible is a Christian's spiritual weapon (Ephesians 6:17)

The Bible is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16)

The Bible judges our life (Hebrews 4:12)

The Bible helps us grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2)

BLESSING

God blesses those who obey him (Leviticus 26:3-5)

God blesses godly people (Psalm 5:12)

We are blessed when we worship God (Psalm 24:3-6)

Christians bless God through praise (Psalm 103:1)

God will bless those who fear him (Psalm 112:1-3)

God blesses us when we seek to please him (Matthew 6:33)

Christians should bless their enemies (Luke 6:28)

Salvation is our greatest blessing (Ephesians 1:3)

The Bible brings us blessing (James 1:25)

BODY OF CHRIST

The body of Christ has been given many gifts (Romans 12:3-6)

There are many parts, but one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

Christians make up the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Christians of different nationalities form one body (Ephesians 3:6)

There must be unity in the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:3)

Different members of the body help each other grow (Ephesians 4:11-12)

Jesus is the head of the body (Colossians 1:18)

BOOK OF LIFE

God writes our names in his book (Psalm 87:6)

The names of Christians are in the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3)

Our names cannot be removed from the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5)

People whose names are not written in the Book of Life will experience God's wrath (Revelation 20:15)

Only those whose names are in God's Book will enter heaven (Revelation 21:27)

BUSINESS

God's people should be good workers (Genesis 31:42)

Work should not overrun your time with God (Exodus 16:23)

God gives you the ability to work (Exodus 35:30-31)

Workers should be trustworthy (Proverbs 25:13)

Do the best job you can (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Work as though Jesus were your boss (Ephesians 6:6-7)

Christians should do their best at their job (Titus 2:9-10)

CARING

God cares for his people (Deuteronomy 7:9)

God cares for underprivileged people (Psalm 68:5)

Protect the needy (Psalm 82:3)

God's people should help the oppressed (Isaiah 1:17)

Care for your enemies (Luke 6:27)

God's people should care for the needy (Luke 14:13-14)

God cares for his children (Romans 1:6-7)

Treat parents with care (Ephesians 6:2)

Treat co-workers with care (Colossians 4:1)

Care for the elderly (1 Timothy 5:1-4)

Christians need to care for the needy (James 1:27)

CHILDREN

God tells children to honor their parents (Exodus 20:12)

Parents should teach their children to follow God (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

Christians are children of God (John 1:12)

Children of God should imitate God (Ephesians 5:1)

Parents should nurture their children (Ephesians 6:4)

Children must obey their parents (Colossians 3:20)

CHURCH (see also Worship)

Jesus is the cornerstone of the church (Psalm 118:22)

We should have joy going to God's house (Psalm 122:1)

Satan works against the church (Matthew 16:18)

Members of the church should take care of each other (Acts 2:44)

The church sends out missionaries (Acts 13:2)

The church is like a body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

The church is a family of Christians (Galatians 6:10)

God's children form the church (Ephesians 2:19-22)

The church should not allow immoral behavior by its members (Ephesians 5:3-4)

Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18)

Many people groups form one universal church (Colossians 3:11)

Church leaders are qualified to lead by their character (Titus 1:6-9)

The church is made up of God's children (1 John 3:1)

The church is the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7-8)

COMFORT

Friends should comfort each other (Job 2:12-13)

God comforts us (Isaiah 40:1-11)

God promises to comfort those who mourn (Matthew 5:4)

God's Holy Spirit is our Comforter (John 14:16)

Jesus has overcome the world's troubles (John 16:33)

God comforts those who are hurting (2 Corinthians 1:3-11)

Christians should comfort each other (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

All pain will end (Revelation 21:3-4)

COMPLAIN

Bring your complaints to God (Psalm 142:1-2)

Christians should not complain to each other (Philippians 2:14)

People complain because they want their own way (Jude 1:16)

COMPROMISE

Do not compromise your convictions (1 Kings 11:4)

Compromise can be wise (Matthew 5:25)

Compromise can divide our loyalty (Matthew 6:24)

Compromise can keep us from doing what is right (Mark 15:15)

Compromise can weaken faith (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

CONFESSION OF SIN (see also Repentance)

Sin must be confessed (Leviticus 5:5)

God will restore those who turn away from evil (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Remorse accompanies confessing sin (Ezra 10:1)

God forgives confessed sins (Psalm 32:5)

Do not try to hide sin (Proverbs 28:13)

Confession of sin accompanies a changed lifestyle (2 Timothy 2:19)

God purifies those who confess their sin (1 John 1:9)

CONSCIENCE

Conscience moves us to turn from our mistakes (Proverbs 28:13)

We can suppress our conscience (Jonah 1:5)

The Holy Spirit can speak through our conscience (Romans 9:1)

Keep your conscience clear (1 Timothy 1:18-19)

Church leaders must have clear consciences (1 Timothy 3:9)

Consciences can be destroyed (1 Timothy 4:2)

Jesus' forgiveness clears our conscience (Hebrews 9:14)

A clear conscience helps us live a God-honoring life (1 Peter 3:16)

COURAGE

God gives us victory (Psalm 112:8)

Jesus' strength gives us courage (John 16:33)

Courage helps us boldly represent Christ (Acts 4:31)

Christians should be courageous (1 Corinthians 16:13)

Pray for courage (Ephesians 6:19-20)

Christians can pray to God with confidence (Hebrews 4:16)

CREATION

God the Holy Spirit was involved in Creation (Genesis 1:1-2)

God created people (Genesis 1:27)

God created the world good (Genesis 1:31)

God the Father was involved in Creation (Psalm 33:6)

God rules over his creation (Psalm 89:11)

God created every angel (Psalm 148:2-5)

God created everything (Jeremiah 10:16)

Creation reveals God's greatness (Amos 4:13)

Jesus was involved in Creation (Colossians 1:16)

God the Creator is worthy of worship (Revelation 4:11)

God will make a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1-4)

CRITICISM

Take care of your own problems before criticizing others (Matthew 7:3-5)

Criticism should help people deepen their relationship with God (Luke 17:3-5)

Criticism should be given with a loving attitude (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)

Harsh criticism can destroy rather than help (Galatians 5:15)

CROSS

Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:31-35)

Christians should pick up their own crosses (Mark 8:34-38)

Jesus' death was powerful (1 Corinthians 1:17-18)

Jesus' death unified all Christians (Ephesians 2:16)

Jesus' death was a sacrifice (Colossians 1:20-22)

Jesus' death defeated Satan (Colossians 2:14-15)

Jesus' cross is an example for us (Hebrews 12:2)

DEATH

Death is a result of sin (Genesis 3:17-19)

Life is short (Job 7:6-7)

Every person will face death (Psalm 89:48)

Death of Christians is precious (Psalm 116:15)

Christians enter perfect peace at death (Isaiah 57:1-2)

God has power over death (John 14:19)

The death of Christians brings fellowship with Jesus (Acts 7:59)

God provides eternal life (Romans 6:23)

Jesus will raise everyone who has died (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

Living in heaven is better than living on earth (2 Corinthians 5:6-7)

Death is not the end of a person (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

Prepare your spiritual life for death (Hebrews 9:27-28)

We don't know how long we'll live (James 4:13-14)

God will destroy death (Revelation 21:4)

DECISIONS

Pray before making decisions (Nehemiah 1:4)

Decide to do things that honor God (Job 1:8)

God's Word helps us make decisions (Psalm 119:105)

Get good advice before making decisions (Proverbs 18:15)

Ask God for wisdom before making decisions (James 1:2-8)

DEMONS (see also Satan)

Worship in false religions honors demons (Psalm 106:37)

Demons try to hinder God's plan (Daniel 10:13)

Demons are no match for Jesus (Mark 1:34)

Demons want to destroy people (Mark 5:5)

Demons submit to the name of Jesus (Luke 10:17)

Demons can be driven out by Jesus' followers (Acts 16:16-18)

Demons are powerful (Acts 19:16)

Demons cannot separate people from God's love (Romans 8:38-39)

Demons deceive people (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

Christians fight against the plans of demons (Ephesians 6:12)

Demons want to mislead people (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

Demons believe in God (James 2:19)

Demons are angels that have sinned (2 Peter 2:4)

God will judge demons (Jude 1:6)

Do not take demons lightly (Jude 1:8-9)

Demons can work miracles (Revelation 16:13-14)

In the last days, demons will be bound by God (Revelation 20:1-3)

DEPRESSION

Depression can follow exhausting times (Judges 15:18)

God can encourage hurting people (2 Samuel 22:29-31)

Depression can follow success (1 Kings 19:3-4)

God helps those who feel crushed (Psalm 34:18)

Abraham had hope when there was no reason to hope (Romans 4:18-22)

God will wipe away depression (Revelation 21:4)

DESIRES

You should not desire something that belongs to someone else (Exodus 20:17)

Wicked people desire evil (Psalm 36:1-4)

God gives those who fellowship with him what they desire (Psalm 37:4)

Desire to know God (Psalm 42:1)

Desire to worship God (Psalm 84:1-2)

Desire to honor God (Psalm 86:12)

Do not desire self-promotion (Psalm 119:36)

Money doesn't satisfy desires (Ecclesiastes 5:10)

Christians should not give in to sinful desires (Ephesians 4:22)

Sinful desires should not have a home with God's children (1 Peter 1:14)

Desire to do God's will (1 Peter 4:2)

God's children desire to obey God (1 John 2:3-6)

DETERMINATION

Be determined to obey God (1 Samuel 7:3)

Determine not to sin (Job 31:1)

Determine to stand firm (Isaiah 7:9)

God helps us be determined (Isaiah 50:7)

Determine to follow Christ (Mark 8:34-38)

DEVOTION

Be fully devoted to God (1 Chronicles 28:9)

Worship God with devotion (1 Chronicles 29:9)

Be devoted to prayer (Psalm 5:3)

Let your life be devoted to God (Romans 12:1-2)

DISCERNMENT

The Bible will help you discern bad teaching (Acts 17:11)

God grants discernment (1 Corinthians 12:10)

Discern between right and wrong behavior (Hebrews 5:14)

Ask God for help in discerning his will (James 1:5)

DISCIPLINE

Punishment is a consequence of sinful actions (Genesis 3:6-19)

God's punishment does not change his love for us (Psalm 89:32-33)

The Lord disciplines those he loves (Proverbs 3:11-12)

Parents are responsible to discipline their children (Proverbs 13:24)

Punishment for sin may be swift and severe (Acts 5:1-11)

Paul commanded punishment for blatant sin in the church (1 Corinthians 5:1-5)

Punishment should lead to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:8-9)

Sometimes God punishes us to bring us back to himself (Hebrews 12:5-11)

DISCRIMINATION

Be fair in your judgment of others (Leviticus 19:15)

Don't discriminate against someone who is not powerful (Deuteronomy 1:17)

Do not oppress the disadvantaged (Malachi 3:5)

God does not discriminate among his people (Acts 10:34)

All Christians are equal in God's eyes (Galatians 3:28)

God will judge those who discriminate (Colossians 3:25)

Do not discriminate against the poor (James 2:1-9)

DISHONESTY

Dishonesty is listed in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:16)

Be honest in your business dealings (Leviticus 19:35-36)

Do not lie for your own gain (Deuteronomy 19:14)

Dishonest people cannot know God (Psalm 101:7)

God hates deception (Proverbs 12:22)

God will punish those who take advantage of others (1 Thessalonians 4:6)

DOUBT

God will help us overcome doubts (Psalm 42:5-6)

God doesn't leave us during our time of doubt (Isaiah 40:27-28)

Help those who have spiritual doubts (Hebrews 3:12)

Doubt inhibits our prayers (James 1:5-7)

DRINKING

People controlled by alcohol are fools (Proverbs 20:1)

Alcohol can cause you to become poor (Proverbs 21:17)

Alcohol can destroy you (Proverbs 23:29-35)

God will judge those who are controlled by alcohol (Isaiah 5:22)

Becoming drunk is dangerous (Luke 21:34)

Drunkenness is not fitting for a Christian (Romans 13:11-14)

Drunkenness can cause immoral behavior (Ephesians 5:18)

EARTH

God created the earth (Genesis 1:1)

People are the caretakers of the earth (Genesis 1:28)

The earth was cursed because of sin (Genesis 3:17-19)

The earth belongs to God (Psalm 89:11)

The earth was created for God's glory (Colossians 1:16)

Jesus sustains the earth (Hebrews 1:3)

EDUCATION

Parents are responsible to teach their children (Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

Train children to follow God (Proverbs 22:6)

Christians should always learn more about God (Ephesians 4:14-15)

EMBARRASSMENT

Be careful not to embarrass others (Ruth 2:15)

Embarrassment can lead to rash actions (Matthew 14:1-12)

We should not be embarrassed about the gospel (Romans 1:16)

We should not be embarrassed by Jesus (Galatians 1:10)

EMOTIONS

Emotions can lead us to sin (Genesis 4:2-6)

Emotions can lead to foolish promises (Judges 11:29-40)

Emotions are a part of worship (Ezra 3:1-13)

God heals those with broken hearts (Psalm 34:18)

Carefully guard your emotions (Proverbs 4:23)

Emotions can crush us (Proverbs 15:13)

Do not be led by emotions (Proverbs 19:2)

Jesus experienced emotions (John 11:35)

Emotions are not reliable guides (Galatians 5:1-17)

Some emotions can be sinful (Ephesians 4:31)

EMPLOYMENT

God's people should be good workers (Genesis 31:42)

Work should not overrun your time with God (Exodus 16:23)

God gives you the ability to work (Exodus 35:30-31)

Workers should be trustworthy (Proverbs 25:13)

Do the best job you can (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Work as though Jesus were your boss (Ephesians 6:6-7)

Christians should do their best at their job (Titus 2:9-10)

ENCOURAGEMENT

Encourage the underprivileged (Isaiah 1:17)

God encourages us (Isaiah 40:31)

The Holy Spirit encourages us (Acts 9:31)

Encourage your neighbor (Romans 15:2)

The Bible encourages us (Romans 15:4)

Our position in Christ encourages us (Philippians 2:1)

We should encourage each other (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

Encourage those who are weak and afraid (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Encourage elderly people (1 Timothy 5:1-4)

Encourage others not to sin (Hebrews 3:13)

Encourage others to love (Hebrews 10:24)

ENVY

Envy can destroy someone (Job 5:2)

Do not envy those who do wrong (Psalm 37:1)

Do not envy the prosperity of wicked people (Psalm 73:2-3)

Envy steals your peace (Proverbs 14:30)

Envy is a powerful enemy (Proverbs 27:4)

Being envious is foolish (Ecclesiastes 4:4)

Envy can cause you to act rashly (Acts 7:9)

Envy characterizes sinful people (Romans 1:29)

We should not envy other Christians (Galatians 5:26)

Envy has no place in a Christian's life (Titus 3:3)

Do not harbor envy (James 3:14-15)

Get rid of envy (1 Peter 2:1)

ETERNAL LIFE

Eternal life is only for those who do God's will (Matthew 7:21)

The righteous will receive eternal life (Matthew 25:46)

Belief in Jesus is required for eternal life (John 3:15-16)

Evil people will receive eternal punishment (John 5:28-29)

Jesus came to give life (John 10:10)

Jesus gives eternal life (John 11:25)

Jesus is eternal life (John 14:6)

Eternal life cannot be earned (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Eternal life comes from God (Titus 1:2)

Eternal life gives us hope (Titus 3:7)

EVIL

God will destroy evil people (Job 4:8)

God helps keep his people from sin (Psalm 19:13)

God hates people who do evil (Psalm 26:5)

God permits evil (Romans 1:24-28)

God cannot coexist with evil (Galatians 5:16-17)

Christians should put away evil from their lives (Ephesians 4:22)

There are spiritual forces behind evil (Ephesians 6:12)

FAITH

Believing God takes faith (Genesis 15:6)

Only a small amount of faith is needed (Luke 17:6)

Faith is needed for salvation (Romans 3:28)

Faith puts us in a right relationship with God (Romans 5:1)

Faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17)

Accept the person who has weak faith (Romans 14:1)

Christianity is the only true faith (Ephesians 4:5)

Faith is hoping in what is not seen (Hebrews 11:1)

Faith accompanies obedience to God (Hebrews 11:7-12)

FAMILY

The members of a family can teach each other about God (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Do not let sin affect your family life (Psalm 101:2)

Do not bring trouble to a family (Proverbs 11:29)

Christian faith is of greater importance than family (Luke 12:51-53)

Christians are members of God's family (Ephesians 2:19)

Husbands and wives should love each other (Ephesians 5:21-33)

Children should obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1)

Church leaders must have a good family life (1 Timothy 3:4-5)

Families should take care of each other (1 Timothy 5:3-5)

FEAR

God will protect us (Genesis 15:1)

God will not forget us (Genesis 46:3)

We should fear God (Psalm 25:12)

Christians do not need to fear anyone (Psalm 27:1)

God strengthens us (Psalm 46:1-3)

We do not need to fear darkness or violence (Psalm 91:5)

We do not need to fear bad news (Psalm 112:7)

Love drives fear away (1 John 4:18)

FOOLISHNESS

Being foolish is lacking discernment (Job 5:2)

Fools do not acknowledge God (Psalm 14:1)

Fools do not know God (Proverbs 1:7)

Fools invite their own destruction (Proverbs 10:14)

Fools enjoy evil (Proverbs 10:23)

Fools show their annoyance (Proverbs 12:16)

Stay away from foolish people (Proverbs 14:7)

A foolish person rejects discipline (Proverbs 15:5)

Fools return to their folly (Proverbs 26:11)

A foolish person gives in to anger (Proverbs 29:11)

A foolish person is lazy (Ecclesiastes 4:5)

The foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:25)

FORGIVENESS

God forgives our many sins (Psalm 65:3)

God forgives us because he loves us (Psalm 86:5)

God makes us as clean as freshly fallen snow (Isaiah 1:18)

God removes our impurities (Ezekiel 36:25)

We must forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15)

Don't keep track of how many times you forgive (Matthew 18:21-35)

Freely forgive others as God has forgiven you (Colossians 3:13)

God will forgive our sins if we confess them (1 John 1:8-9)

FOUL LANGUAGE

Foul language is not fitting for a Christian (Ephesians 5:4)

Our speech reflects our relationship with God (Colossians 4:6)

Our speech should be an example to others (1 Timothy 4:12)

FREEDOM

Christians are spiritually free (John 8:36)

Christians are free from sin's power (Romans 5:21)

Christians are free in order to serve others (Galatians 5:1)

FRIENDSHIP (see also Relationships)

Friends can cause great pain (Psalm 55:12-14)

Friends love during difficult times (Proverbs 17:17)

Faithful friends are not common (Proverbs 18:24)

Friends influence you (Proverbs 22:24-25)

Friendship is marked by sacrifice (John 15:13-15)

We can be friends with God (James 2:23)

FUTURE

God has plans for our future (Genesis 12:1-4)

God will bless our future if we obey him (Deuteronomy 5:29)

Do not plan your future like evil people do (Jeremiah 10:2-3)

God gives us hope for our future (Jeremiah 31:17)

God prepares a future for us (1 Corinthians 2:9)

GIVING

God is honored by our gifts (Exodus 35:22)

Generous giving honors God (Ezra 2:68-69)

God will reward us for giving to others (Mark 9:41)

Giving helps others live (Acts 2:44-45)

We should support Christian workers (Acts 28:10)

Wealthy people should give generously (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

God is pleased with our gifts (Hebrews 13:16)

Giving reflects God's love (1 John 3:17)

GOD

God created everything (Genesis 1:1)

God is a warrior (Exodus 15:3)

God is one (Deuteronomy 6:4)

God is trustworthy (Deuteronomy 7:9)

God is too great to be described (1 Kings 8:27)

God is gracious and merciful (Nehemiah 9:31)

God is good (Psalm 34:8)

God helps his people when they are in trouble (Psalm 46:1)

God is mighty (Psalm 50:1)

God is our rock (Psalm 62:6)

God is our hope (Psalm 71:5)

God is near everyone (Psalm 75:1)

God is our salvation (Isaiah 12:2)

God is sovereign (Isaiah 25:8)

God is holy (Isaiah 29:23)

Only God is worthy of glory (Isaiah 42:8)

God is our father (Matthew 6:9)

God is all-powerful (Luke 1:37)

God is spirit (John 4:24)

God is all-knowing (Romans 11:33)

God is knowable (Ephesians 1:17)

God is living (1 Timothy 4:10)

God is King of kings (1 Timothy 6:15)

God is approachable (James 4:8)

God is judge (James 4:12)

God is love (1 John 4:16)

God is almighty (Revelation 1:8)

GOD'S WILL

God guides us (Psalm 16:7)

Ask God for guidance (Psalm 25:4-7)

God will direct you (Psalm 48:14)

God works everything out for his plan (Proverbs 16:4)

God directs events in our life (Acts 16:6-7)

God gives wisdom for making decisions (James 1:2-5)

GOSPEL

Christians should tell others about the gospel (Matthew 28:18-19)

The gospel's message is for everyone (Luke 24:46-47)

People should respond to the gospel with faith (John 1:12)

The gospel is powerful (Romans 1:16)

The gospel of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1-5)

Believing the gospel brings a change to life (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

GOSSIP

Do not gossip (Exodus 23:1)

Be careful not to slander (Leviticus 19:16)

Gossiping betrays confidence (Proverbs 11:13)

Gossip separates friends (Proverbs 16:28)

Gossip prolongs tension between people (Proverbs 26:20)

Gossip is attractive (Proverbs 26:22)

People who gossip are wicked (Romans 1:29)

Gossip should have no place among Christians (1 Timothy 5:13)

GOVERNMENT

God holds those in government accountable (Deuteronomy 17:18-19)

God gives authority to those in government (Romans 13:1)

Christians should obey the government (Titus 3:1)

GRACE

God is full of grace (Exodus 34:6)

God is slow to become angry (Psalm 86:15)

God's grace makes salvation possible (Ephesians 1:7-8)

God accepts us by his grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

God's grace gives us hope (1 Peter 1:13)

GREED

Greed creates disagreement (Proverbs 28:25)

The Pharisees had greedy hearts (Matthew 23:25)

Christians should avoid being greedy (Ephesians 5:3)

People full of greed will not enter heaven (Ephesians 5:5)

Leaders of the church must not be greedy (Titus 1:7)

GRIEF (see also Sorrow)

Friends should comfort each other (Job 2:12-13)

God comforts us in our darkest times (Job 35:9-10)

God comforts us (Isaiah 40)

God promises to comfort those who grieve (Matthew 5:4)

God's Holy Spirit is our Comforter (John 14:16)

Jesus has overcome the world's troubles (John 16:33)

The Holy Spirit comforts us (Acts 9:31)

The Bible comforts us (Romans 15:4)

God comforts those who grieve (2 Corinthians 1:3-11)

All grief will end (Revelation 21:3-4)

GUIDANCE

Ask God to give you guidance (Psalm 25:4-5)

God will guide you (Psalm 32:8)

The Bible gives us guidance (Psalm 119:133)

God directs your path when you trust him (Proverbs 3:5-6)

GUILT

Guilt causes us to hide from God (Genesis 3:7-11)

Ask God to forgive hidden sins (Psalm 19:12-13)

God forgives sins and removes guilt (Psalm 32:5)

God can cleanse us from all sin (Psalm 51:2)

All people are guilty of sin (Romans 3:9-12)

Jesus Christ takes away all guilt (Romans 3:23-24)

HATRED

Hatred causes trouble (Proverbs 10:12)

Followers of Jesus will be hated (Matthew 10:22)

Many in the world hate Jesus (John 15:18)

Christians should hate evil (Romans 12:9)

All people are equal in Christ (Galatians 3:28-29)

Christians need to get rid of their own hatred (Colossians 3:8)

HEART

Love God with all of your heart (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Our heart can have confidence (Psalm 27:3)

God will not despise a repentant heart (Psalm 51:17)

Guard your heart (Proverbs 4:23)

Those who have pure hearts will see God (Matthew 5:8)

Words and actions begin in the heart (Luke 6:45)

HEAVEN

Death will not exist in heaven (Isaiah 25:8)

Only righteous people will enter heaven (Matthew 5:17-20)

Few people will enter heaven (Matthew 7:13-14)

Jesus is preparing heaven for his followers (John 14:2-3)

Our lives will not be complete until we enter heaven (2 Corinthians 5:2)

Heaven is much better than earth (Philippians 1:23)

Christians should look forward to heaven (Colossians 3:1-5)

Heaven is the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13)

God is the focus of attention in heaven (Revelation 7:17)

There will not be any sadness in heaven (Revelation 21:4)

People in heaven will walk with God (Revelation 22:5)

HELL

God will deliver his children from hell (Psalm 86:13)

Hell is a place of weeping (Matthew 8:12)

Hell was prepared for Satan and demons (Matthew 25:41)

Wicked people will receive punishment (Romans 1:18-20)

God will punish those who do not turn from their sin (2 Peter 2:4-9)

Hell is a place of eternal fire (Jude 1:7)

God will send to hell those who do not believe in him (Revelation 21:8)

HOLY

God is known for his holiness (Psalm 93:5)

God cannot tolerate sin (Isaiah 59:2)

God uses his Word to make us holy (John 17:17)

Christians should try to be holy (1 Peter 1:15)

God is worthy of praise because he is holy (Revelation 4:8)

HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit was involved in Creation (Genesis 1:2)

The Holy Spirit empowers leaders (Judges 3:10)

The Holy Spirit teaches us (John 14:26)

The Holy Spirit guides us (John 16:13)

The Holy Spirit empowers us to be witnesses (Acts 1:8)

The Holy Spirit lives within us (Romans 8:11)

The Holy Spirit sanctifies us (Romans 15:16)

The Holy Spirit opens our spiritual eyes (1 Corinthians 2:10)

The Holy Spirit is involved in salvation (Titus 3:5)

HOMOSEXUALITY

God finds homosexual behavior detestable (Leviticus 18:22)

God will judge those who practice homosexual behavior (Romans 1:18-32)

Homosexual behavior has no place among Christians (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

HONESTY

Honesty is commanded by God (Exodus 20:16)

Only honest people can worship God (Psalm 24:3-4)

God is truth and desires truth (Psalm 51:6)

God hates lies (Proverbs 6:16-17)

Be honest (Proverbs 19:1)

Christians should be known by their honesty (Matthew 5:37)

Lies make someone unclean before God (Matthew 15:18-20)

Christians should put away dishonesty from their lives (Ephesians 4:25)

HOPE

God gives hope to the needy (Psalm 9:18)

Hope gives us confidence (Psalm 25:3)

The Bible gives us hope (Psalm 119:43)

Christians always have hope (Romans 8:28)

Hope comes from the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13)

Jesus' resurrection gives us hope (1 Corinthians 6:14)

We have hope in Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:19)

We have confidence of eternal life (Titus 1:1-2)

HOSPITALITY

Christians should take care of those in need (Matthew 25:34-40)

Hospitality brings heavenly reward (Mark 9:41)

Christians should be hospitable (Romans 12:13)

Christians should be hospitable to people they do not know well (Hebrews 13:2)

Be cheerful about being hospitable (1 Peter 4:9-11)

Hospitality reflects God's love (3 John 1:5-8)

HUMILITY

God humbles us for our own good (Deuteronomy 8:16)

God hears the prayers of the humble (2 Chronicles 7:14)

God saves those who are humble (Psalm 18:27)

God preserves the lives of humble people (Psalm 147:6)

Those who are humble become wise (Proverbs 11:2)

God cares for the humble (Isaiah 66:2)

God will exalt the humble (Luke 18:14)

Be humble in dealing with others (Philippians 2:1-11)

Humble yourself before God (James 4:10)

HYPOCRISY

Do not associate with hypocrites (Psalm 26:4)

God hates hypocrisy in worship (Isaiah 29:13)

Hypocrites pretend to be devoted to God (Ezekiel 33:31-32)

God finds hypocrites repulsive (Matthew 23:27-28)

Beware of hypocrisy in your life (Luke 12:1-2)

God will punish hypocrisy (Luke 20:46-47)

Hypocrites are worthless (Titus 1:16)

Get rid of hypocrisy (1 Peter 2:1)

IDOLATRY

We should have no other gods (Exodus 20:3)

Do not be devoted to anyone or anything more than God (Deuteronomy 4:23)

Devote your heart to God (Joshua 24:14)

Look to God for your security (Judges 10:13-16)

We give in to idolatry when we forget God (Psalm 106:19-22)

God will not share his glory with anything else (Isaiah 42:8)

Christians cannot serve both God and the things of this world (Luke 16:13)

INTEGRITY

Leaders should have integrity (Psalm 78:72)

Integrity takes effort (Psalm 101:3-8)

Leaders in the church should be full of integrity (Titus 1:7)

Maintain integrity in teaching others (Titus 2:7)

JEALOUSY

God doesn't want to share our devotion (Deuteronomy 4:24)

Jealousy can destroy someone (Job 5:2)

Do not envy those who do wrong (Psalm 37:1)

Do not be jealous of wicked people (Psalm 73:2-3)

Jealousy steals away peace (Proverbs 14:30)

Jealousy is a powerful enemy (Proverbs 27:4)

Jealousy is foolish (Ecclesiastes 4:4)

Jealousy can cause rash behavior (Acts 7:9)

We should not be jealous of other Christians (Galatians 5:26)

Jealousy has no place in a Christian's life (Titus 3:3-5)

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is all-powerful (Isaiah 9:6)

Jesus has authority over demons (Mark 1:27)

Jesus is the Son of God (Luke 1:35)

Jesus is God (John 1:1-5)

Jesus is the Messiah (John 4:25-26)

Jesus is the Judge (John 5:22)

Jesus gives life (John 10:10)

Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)

Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6)

Jesus is the author of life (Acts 3:15)

Jesus is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:21-24)

Jesus is the head of the church (Ephesians 5:23)

Jesus is the highest authority (Philippians 2:9-10)

Jesus is the Creator (Colossians 1:15-16)

Jesus is faithful (2 Timothy 2:13)

Jesus is coming again (Titus 2:13)

Jesus is sinless (Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus is holy (Hebrews 7:26)

Jesus is the King of the ages (Revelation 15:3)

Jesus is the Lamb of God (Revelation 21:22)

JUDGMENT

God is able to judge (Job 34:23)

God is the ultimate authority (Psalm 9:7)

God will judge all people (Ecclesiastes 3:17)

God will judge people for their actions (Ecclesiastes 11:9)

God will judge everything done in secret (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

God will rule that wicked people are guilty (Malachi 3:5)

God will judge the words we speak (Matthew 12:36)

God does not judge by appearances (John 7:21-24)

God will judge Christians (Romans 14:10)

God will judge Christians for their actions (2 Corinthians 5:10)

God will judge all people (Hebrews 9:27)

People whose names are in God's Book of Life will enter heaven (Revelation 20:11-15)

JUSTICE

Justice should not be influenced by a crowd (Exodus 23:2)

Protect the poor (Exodus 23:6)

Do not hold back justice (Deuteronomy 27:19)

God loves justice (Psalm 11:7)

Jesus' death was justice for sin (Romans 3:25-26)

KINDNESS

Christians should be kind to each other (Ephesians 4:32)

Be kind to people who treat you wrongly (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

Choose to be kind rather than to argue (2 Timothy 2:24)

Being kind takes effort (2 Peter 1:5-7)

KINGDOM OF GOD/HEAVEN

You must turn from sin before you can enter God's Kingdom (Matthew 3:1-2)

Jesus describes members of God's Kingdom (Matthew 5:1-19)

Obeying God's commands yields great rewards in his Kingdom (Matthew 5:19)

Only righteous people will enter God's Kingdom (Matthew 5:20)

God's Kingdom is open to those who do his will (Matthew 7:21)

Healed lives are associated with God's Kingdom (Matthew 9:35-36)

Entering God's Kingdom costs someone everything (Matthew 13:44-45)

God's Kingdom is reserved for the humble (Matthew 18:2-3)

No one deserves God's Kingdom (Matthew 18:23-35)

God's Kingdom is within our hearts (Luke 17:20-21)

God's Kingdom will fully arrive in the future (Luke 21:25-31)

Only those who are spiritually reborn can enter God's Kingdom (John 3:3)

Entering God's Kingdom is not easy (Acts 14:22)

Christians should tell others about the Kingdom of God (Acts 28:31)

God's Kingdom affects our lives (Romans 14:17)

God's Kingdom is powerful (1 Corinthians 4:20)

No immoral person will be allowed into God's Kingdom (Ephesians 5:5)

Christians are members of God's Kingdom (Colossians 1:13)

Christians' lives should reflect their membership in God's Kingdom (1 Thessalonians 2:12)

God calls people into his Kingdom (1 Thessalonians 2:12)

God's Kingdom cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28)

God's Kingdom will one day be fully consummated (Revelation 11:15)

LAZINESS

Laziness can ruin you (Proverbs 6:6-11)

Laziness can make you poor (Proverbs 10:4-5)

Lazy people work for others (Proverbs 12:24)

Lazy people make excuses (Proverbs 22:13)

Lazy people oversleep (Proverbs 26:14)

Encourage lazy people to work (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

Lazy people should not be allowed to be freeloaders (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

LEADERSHIP

Leaders should be trustworthy (Exodus 18:21)

Leaders look out for the people's best interests (Numbers 27:16-17)

Leaders should represent God in their decisions (2 Chronicles 19:5-7)

Leaders should receive advice (Proverbs 11:14)

Leaders must serve others (Matthew 20:26-28)

Leaders should sacrifice for others (John 10:11)

Leaders should be obeyed (Romans 13:1-4)

Leaders give an account to God for their actions (Hebrews 13:17)

LIFE

Life comes from God (Genesis 2:7)

God carefully creates each person (Psalm 139:13-14)

Life should be enjoyed (Ecclesiastes 9:9)

God plans the lives of people before they are born (Jeremiah 1:5)

People must be reborn spiritually to enter heaven (John 3:3)

Jesus came to give abundant life (John 10:10)

We should live lives worthy of our Christian calling (Ephesians 4:1)

Christ is the reason for life (Philippians 1:21)

Our lives should honor God (Colossians 3:17)

LIGHT

Light comes from God (Genesis 1:3)

God is light (Psalm 27:1)

God's Word enlightens our path (Psalm 119:105)

God can turn darkness into light (Isaiah 42:16)

Christians are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14)

Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12)

Light shines in the hearts of Christians (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Christians are children of light (Ephesians 5:8)

LONELINESS

God is concerned about our loneliness (Genesis 2:18)

God encourages the lonely (1 Kings 19:14-18)

God takes care of lonely people (Psalm 68:6)

Friends help in times of loneliness (Ecclesiastes 4:10-11)

God remains with us (Matthew 28:20)

LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus celebrated the Lord's Supper with his disciples (Matthew 26:26-29)

Christians should be thankful for the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 10:16)

Christians who celebrate the Lord's Supper together should be unified (1 Corinthians 11:20-34)

LOVE

Love in marriage is strong (Song of Songs 8:6-7)

Love your enemies (Matthew 5:43-44)

Loving God is the most important command (Mark 12:29-30)

Christians must love each other (John 13:34)

We cannot be separated from Jesus' love (Romans 8:35-39)

Love must be genuine (Romans 12:9)

Love never quits (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

God's love for us is beyond our understanding (Ephesians 3:18)

Love helps you look past offenses (1 Peter 4:8)

God is love (1 John 4:16)

We must be known for our love (2 John 1:5)

LOYALTY

Friends are loyal (Proverbs 17:17)

We cannot divide our loyalty (Matthew 6:24)

There must be loyalty in marriage (Hebrews 13:4)

LUST

Lustful thoughts are sinful (Matthew 5:28)

Christians should not give in to lust (Colossians 3:5)

Christians should avoid lust (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)

Godless people enjoy immorality (1 Peter 4:3)

LYING (see Dishonesty)

MARRIAGE

God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16)

Two people become one through marriage (Mark 10:2-12)

Angels do not get married (Mark 12:25)

Married partners should meet each other's needs (1 Corinthians 7:2-5)

Married partners are united to each other for life (1 Corinthians 7:39)

A Christian wife can witness to her non-Christian husband (1 Peter 3:1-6)

MERCY

God requires that we show mercy (Micah 6:8)

People who show mercy to others will be rewarded (Matthew 5:7)

We should imitate God's mercy (Luke 6:36)

Jesus is merciful (1 Timothy 1:2)

Mercy is from God (2 Timothy 1:2)

MESSIAH

The prophets prophesied about the Messiah (Genesis 3:15)

The Messiah's mother would be a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)

The Messiah would be great (Isaiah 9:6-7)

The Messiah would suffer (Isaiah 53:2-12)

The Messiah would heal broken lives (Isaiah 61:1-3)

The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)

Jesus' disciples knew he was the Messiah (Mark 8:27-29)

The Messiah will come again (Mark 14:61-62)

Jesus claimed to be the Messiah (John 4:25-42)

The Messiah brings salvation (Hebrews 2:10)

MIND

Keep away from mental sins (Matthew 5:27-30)

A Christian's thoughts should be holy (Romans 12:2)

Our fellowship with God helps us make decisions (1 Corinthians 2:6-16)

Christians should please God with their thoughts (Philippians 4:8)

MONEY

Greed brings trouble (Proverbs 15:27)

Do not make money the most important part of your life (Matthew 6:19)

Money can distract people from God (Mark 10:17-24)

You cannot serve both God and money (Luke 16:13)

Christians should share their resources with those in need (Acts 2:42-45)

Christians should not be lovers of money (1 Timothy 3:3)

We should look to God for security, not money (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

Do not love money (Hebrews 13:5)

Be careful to treat rich and poor equally (James 2:1-9)

MUSIC

Music can be used to worship God (Exodus 15:1)

Music is useful to focus our attention on God (Psalm 81:1-2)

We should make music for God's glory (Colossians 3:16)

OBEDIENCE

Obeying is better than saying, "I'm sorry" (1 Samuel 15:22)

People who obey God's Word will be blessed (Luke 11:28)

Christians should obey the government (Romans 13:1-4)

Children should obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1)

Christians obey God (1 John 2:3)

PAIN

God cares for his people (Deuteronomy 7:9)

Friends should comfort each other (Job 2:12-13)

God comforts us in our darkest times (Job 35:10)

God watches over the weak (Psalm 12:5)

God comforts us (Isaiah 40:9-11)

God promises to comfort those who mourn (Matthew 5:4)

God's Holy Spirit is our Comforter (John 14:16)

Christians should comfort each other (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

All pain will end (Revelation 21:3-4)

PARENTS

Parents should teach children to follow God (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

Parents should nurture their children (Ephesians 6:4)

Children must obey their parents (Colossians 3:20)

PATIENCE

Be patient with God (Psalm 75:2)

Patience is valuable (Proverbs 25:15)

Patience is better than pride (Ecclesiastes 7:8)

Patience demonstrates love (1 Corinthians 13:4)

Patience is evidence of the Holy Spirit working in our lives (Galatians 5:22)

Be patient with each other (Ephesians 4:2)

PEACE

Be full of peace (Psalm 34:14)

Jesus is known as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Wicked people will not know peace (Isaiah 48:22)

We can have peace with God (Isaiah 53:5)

Make peace with others quickly (Matthew 5:23-26)

The peace Jesus gives is different than the world's peace (John 14:27)

Jesus gives us peace (Romans 5:1)

Peace is evidence of the Holy Spirit working in our lives (Galatians 5:22)

We can have peace through prayer (Philippians 4:4-7)

POWER

Christians receive power from the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)

The Bible is a powerful weapon (Ephesians 6:17)

Jesus is the greatest power (Hebrews 1:1-4)

Prayer can be powerful (James 5:16)

Christians have power to overcome the world (1 John 5:4-5)

PRAYER

Ask God for help (Psalm 40:13)

God does not hear our prayers if we are purposely sinning (Micah 3:4)

Prayer should not be a show (Matthew 6:6)

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray (Matthew 6:9-13)

Pray with an attitude of humility (Luke 18:9-14)

Pray in Jesus' name (John 16:23-24)

Pray all the time (Ephesians 6:18)

Pray without doubting (James 1:6)

Pray with the right motives (James 4:3)

Pray according to God's will (1 John 5:14-15)

PRIDE (see also Self-Esteem)

Pride leads to shame (Proverbs 11:2)

Pride leads to arguments (Proverbs 13:10)

Pride will be punished (Proverbs 16:5)

Pride ends in destruction (Proverbs 16:18)

Pride cuts us off from God and others (Luke 18:9-14)

There is no place for proud boasting in the Christian life (Romans 3:27)

God chose to reveal himself to the humble, not the proud (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

Pride is not compatible with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-26)

God opposes the proud (James 4:6)

PROBLEMS (see Stress, Suffering, Trials)

PROCRASTINATION

We must not procrastinate in choosing to serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15)

God does not procrastinate (Habakkuk 2:3)

Those who procrastinate lose out (Luke 14:16-21)

Today is the day to be saved (2 Corinthians 6:2)

No one can procrastinate forever (Revelation 10:6)

PROPHECY (see also Teaching)

Prophecy reveals a message from God (Deuteronomy 18:21-22)

False prophecy is not from God (Jeremiah 23:25-32)

Claiming to prophesy does not indicate salvation (Matthew 7:21-23)

The Holy Spirit allows believers to prophesy (Acts 2:17-18)

Prophecy is a spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 14:1-5)

We should listen to God's message (1 Thessalonians 5:20)

True prophets speak God's words (2 Peter 1:20-21)

PURITY

Only God can make us pure (Psalm 51:1-10)

We can remain pure by following God's Word (Psalm 119:1-20)

We cannot claim purity apart from God (Proverbs 20:9)

The pure in heart will see God (Matthew 5:8)

Purity begins in the heart (Matthew 5:27-30)

Outward purity cannot substitute for inner purity (Matthew 23:25-28)

Purity comes from God (John 17:17)

Purity ought to mark believers' lives (Ephesians 5:1-4)

Our minds should think about things that are pure (Philippians 4:8)

One day our purity will be like Christ's (1 John 3:1-3)

QUESTIONS

God may not always answer our questions (Job 42:1-3)

God welcomes our sincere questions (Luke 7:18-23)

We need not be afraid when questioned about our faith (Luke 21:12-15)

We should be ready with answers when questioned about our faith (1 Peter 3:15)

RELATIONSHIPS (see also Friendship, Marriage) Our relationship with God is made possible through Jesus Christ (John 14:19-21)

Our relationships should not compromise our faith (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

We are unified with all believers in God's family (Ephesians 2:21-22)

Our relationship with Christ is deep and abiding (2 Timothy 2:11-13)

Our relationship with Christ makes us children of God (1 John 3:1-3)

REPENTANCE (see also Confession of Sin)

Repentance of sin opens the way for a relationship with God (Luke 3:7-8)

Unless we repent of our sins, we will perish (Luke 13:3-5)

Angels rejoice when a sinner repents (Luke 15:7)

Forgive those who repent of wrongs done to you (Luke 17:4)

Repentance is essential for the Holy Spirit to work (Acts 2:38)

God can use difficulties to encourage us to repent (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

God would like everyone to repent and believe (2 Peter 3:9)

REPUTATION

A good reputation can be built by obeying God's Word (Deuteronomy 4:1-14)

Integrity builds a good reputation (Ruth 2:1-13)

A bad reputation will follow you (Proverbs 25:9-10)

The Christians in Rome had a reputation for obedience (Romans 16:19)

Guard your reputation (2 Corinthians 8:18-24)

Maintain a good reputation among non-Christians (Colossians 4:5)

RESPECT (see also Authority)

God is worthy of our respect (Exodus 3:5)

Our parents are worthy of respect (Leviticus 19:3)

Those in authority should have our respect (1 Samuel 24:1-6)

Husbands and wives should respect each other (Ephesians 5:33)

Those in leadership should have respectful children (1 Timothy 3:4)

Show respect to all people (1 Peter 2:17)

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible people admit their wrongs (1 Chronicles 21:8)

Responsible people are faithful with what they have been given (Matthew 25:14-30)

People are responsible for their decision about Christ (John 3:18-19)

Responsible people know their abilities and limitations (Acts 6:1-7)

People are responsible for their own actions (James 1:13-15)

REST

God gave us an example of and a command to rest (Genesis 2:3)

Rest is important for worship (Exodus 20:8)

God tells us to rest (Exodus 23:12)

Jesus promises to give us rest from our burdens (Matthew 11:28-30)

Rest is a gift of God (Hebrews 4:9-11)

Heaven will be a place of rest (Revelation 14:13)

RESURRECTION

Christ's resurrection is a historical fact (Matthew 28:5-10)

All people will be resurrected (John 5:24-30)

Jesus promised to raise his followers (John 6:38-40)

We know we will be resurrected (John 11:24-26)

We will experience resurrection (Romans 6:3-11)

Jesus' resurrection is the foundation of Christianity (1 Corinthians 15:12-21)

Our resurrected bodies will be eternal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51-53)

REVENGE

God's people should not seek revenge (Leviticus 19:18)

Do not pay back evil for evil (Proverbs 24:29)

Believers ought to resist revenge (Matthew 5:38-42)

Leave revenge in God's hands (Romans 12:19)

Desire for revenge is not compatible with the Christian life (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

Jesus is our example (1 Peter 2:21-23)

RIGHTEOUS/RIGHTEOUSNESS

God is completely righteous (Isaiah 45:21-24)

We cannot attain righteousness on our own (Isaiah 64:6)

Human nature is the opposite of righteousness (Romans 3:10-18)

Righteousness is not attained by works (Romans 4:18-25)

Strict legalism cannot make us righteous (Galatians 3:11-21)

Our God-given righteousness is armor against Satan's attacks (Ephesians 6:14)

We become righteous through faith in Christ (Philippians 3:9)

Studying God's Word helps us grow in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)

Righteousness ought to characterize each believer's life (1 Peter 2:24)

SADNESS (see Grief, Sorrow)

SALVATION

Those who receive salvation become God's children (John 1:12-13)

Salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life (John 3:1-16)

Belief and trust in Jesus Christ are the only way to be saved (John 14:6)

Salvation includes gaining a relationship with God (John 17:1-5)

Receiving salvation means we must turn from our sins (Acts 2:37-38)

Salvation cannot be earned; it is a gift of God (Romans 6:23)

Receiving salvation is simple and personal (Romans 10:8-10)

Salvation is by God's grace alone (Ephesians 2:1-9)

Salvation rescues us from Satan's dominion (Colossians 1:13-14)

Our salvation was obtained by Jesus' blood (1 Peter 1:18-19)

SATAN (see also Demons)

Satan is under God's authority (Job 1:6-12)

Satan will tempt Jesus' followers (Matthew 4:1-11)

Satan is completely evil (John 8:44)

Satan is the temporary ruler over this world (Ephesians 2:1-2)

Satan and his demons are spiritual (Ephesians 6:12)

Satan works through an army of demons (1 Timothy 4:1)

Believers have the authority to resist Satan (James 4:1-10)

Satan is an enemy to Christians (1 Peter 5:8)

Jesus destroyed Satan's work with his death on the cross (1 John 3:7-8)

Satan is a defeated enemy (Revelation 20:10)

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We do not know when Jesus will return (Matthew 24:36)

Christ's return will be unmistakable (Mark 13:26-27)

Christ's return will be joyous for those who are ready (Luke 12:35-40)

The Second Coming will be a time of judgment on unbelievers (John 12:37-50)

At Christ's second coming we will be with him forever (John 14:1-3)

The promise of Christ's return (Acts 1:10-11)

Believers will be resurrected and given glorious bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

Christ's return will be visible and glorious (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

At Christ's return, Christians who are dead and alive will rise to meet him (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Continue to serve God as you await the Second Coming (1 Peter 4:7-8)

Patiently await Christ's return (2 Peter 3:8-13)

Jesus is coming soon (Revelation 22:20-21)

SELF-ESTEEM (see also Pride)

We are made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27)

We are a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:3-5)

God took special care to create us (Psalm 139:1-18)

We have been formed by God's loving hands (Isaiah 64:8)

We are of great value to God (Luke 12:4-12)

God gave his Son for us (John 3:16)

Our self-esteem is affected by our relationship with Christ (Romans 12:1-8)

Our self-esteem is based on God's approval (2 Corinthians 10:12-18)

We should not overestimate ourselves (Galatians 6:3-5)

SEX

Sex is God's gift to married people (Proverbs 5:15-21)

Sex outside of marriage is foolish (Proverbs 6:23-35)

Sex within marriage is meant to be a delight (Song of Songs 4:1-16)

Sexual sin begins in the mind (Matthew 5:27-30)

Sex is a powerful bond not meant to be taken lightly (1 Corinthians 6:13-20)

Sexual immorality has no place among Christians (Ephesians 5:1-3)

We are to have nothing to do with sexual immorality (Colossians 3:5)

God wants us to live in holiness, not lustful passion (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8)

Sex in marriage is honorable and pure (Hebrews 13:4)

SICKNESS

God cares for the sick (Psalm 41:1-13)

A cheerful spirit can act as good medicine against sickness (Proverbs 17:22)

Jesus can heal sickness (Matthew 4:23-25)

Believers ought to have compassion on the sick (Matthew 25:34-40)

It is better to be physically crippled than spiritually crippled (Mark 9:43-48)

Paul had an infirmity that God would not remove (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

SIN

Sin has consequences (Genesis 3:1-19)

God must punish sin (Exodus 32:34)

Our consciences can identify sin (2 Samuel 24:10-15)

We should humbly confess our sins to God (Ezra 9:5-15)

We should ask God to forgive our sins (Psalm 51:1-10)

Stay away from people who lead you to sin (Proverbs 1:10-19)

Sin begins in the mind (Matthew 5:27-28)

All people have sinned (Romans 3:23)

Sin leads to eternal death (Romans 6:23)

Jesus takes the penalty of our sin on himself (Romans 8:1-2)

Sin begins with temptation (James 1:15)

We can sin by avoiding something we should do (James 4:17)

God is willing to forgive our sins (1 John 1:8-9)

SINGLENESS

Some people remain single to work for God's Kingdom (Matthew 19:12)

Singleness is a gift from God (1 Corinthians 7:7-8)

Single people can serve God (1 Corinthians 7:25-31)

Single people have more time to focus on service for God (1 Corinthians 7:32-35)

SORROW (see also Grief)

Sorrow is often a necessary part of repentance (Judges 2:4-5)

Weeping will be followed by joy (Psalm 30:5)

Jesus understands sorrow (Isaiah 53:3-9)

God promises comfort to those who experience sorrow (Matthew 5:4)

God may use sorrow to point out sin and draw us back to him (2 Corinthians 7:10-11)

We sorrow over believers who die, but one day we will meet again (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Sorrow will not exist in God's Kingdom (Revelation 21:3-4)

SOUL

People cannot destroy your soul (Matthew 10:28)

We are to love God with our whole being—heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:36-40)

It is of no value to gain the world but lose your soul (Mark 8:34-38)

We can place our soul under Christ's protection (John 10:27-29)

Believers are assured of immortality (1 Corinthians 15:46-53)

STRESS

Delegating work can alleviate stress (Exodus 18:13-26)

God is a refuge in times of stress (Psalm 62:1-8)

Pray to God in times of stress (Psalm 69:1-36)

Wait upon the Lord (Isaiah 40:30-31)

God is always with us (Romans 8:31-39)

God cares about our stress (2 Corinthians 4:8-12)

Don't let stress cause you to worry (Philippians 4:4-9)

SUFFERING (see also Trials)

Those who suffer need encouragement (Job 16:1-6)

Christ's followers will face suffering (Matthew 16:21-26)

Our suffering helps us comfort others who are suffering (2 Corinthians 1:3-7)

Our suffering will end in glory (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

Jesus can help us through suffering (Hebrews 2:11-18)

Christ showed how to handle suffering (1 Peter 2:21-24)

There will be no suffering in Christ's Kingdom (Revelation 21:4)

TEACHING

Parents must teach their children about the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) page 223

Believers teach each other (2 Timothy 2:2)

Qualities of a good teacher (2 Timothy 2:22-26)

Instruction to those who teach God's Word (Titus 2:1-15)

TEMPTATION

Temptation comes from Satan (Genesis 3:1-6)

How to avoid temptation (Proverbs 7:1-5)

How to respond when tempted (Matthew 4:1-11)

God will provide a way of escape from every temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Run from temptation (2 Timothy 2:22)

Christ can help us, for he, too, has faced temptation (Hebrews 4:15-16)

God never tempts people to sin (James 1:13-15)

THANKFULNESS

Thank the Lord because he is good (Psalm 107:1-3)

Be thankful for answers to prayer (Psalm 138:1-5)

Be thankful for salvation (Ephesians 2:4-10)

Our prayers should include words of thankfulness (Philippians 4:6)

Our life should be characterized by thankfulness to God (Colossians 3:15-17)

We are called to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

TRIALS (see also Suffering)

Christ promises us rest from our trials (Matthew 11:28-30)

Jesus understands our struggles (John 15:18)

Have peace in trials (John 16:33)

Trials help us develop patience (Romans 5:1-5)

God knows what he is doing with our life (Romans 8:28)

Believers can expect to suffer for their faith (2 Corinthians 6:3-13)

Present trials fade in comparison to the joy of our relationship with Christ (Philippians 3:7-11)

God expects us to grow through our trials (James 1:2-4)

TRUST (see Faith)

TRUTH

God wants us to be true and righteous (Psalm 51:1-6)

Truth never changes (Proverbs 12:19)

Truth sets us free (John 8:31-32)

Truth is found in Jesus Christ (John 14:6)

God's Word is truth (John 17:17)

We must not only believe the truth but also live by it (1 John 1:5-7)

UNITY

Unity among believers pleases God (Psalm 133:1)

Christians are not supposed to live in isolation (John 17:11)

Unity includes bearing one another's joys and burdens (Romans 12:9-16)

Believers must seek unity in all essentials (1 Corinthians 1:10)

There can be great unity even in great diversity (Ephesians 4:3-13)

The love Christ commanded should create unity among believers (Philippians 1:3-11)

Unity ought to be a distinctive mark among Christians (Philippians 2:1-2)

WISDOM

The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7)

To find wisdom, first find God (Proverbs 2:6-12)

Wise people accept advice (Proverbs 13:10)

Wise people boast not in their wisdom but in knowing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

The wise understand God's ways and follow his guidance (Hosea 14:9)

Wise people build on the solid foundation of God and his Word (Matthew 7:24-27)

God's wisdom is different from the world's wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:1-16)

God will give us wisdom if we ask for it (James 1:5)

WOMEN

God's image is shared equally by women and men (Genesis 1:26-27)

Women should fulfill their responsibilities well (Proverbs 31:10-31)

Women and men are equal before God (Galatians 3:28)

The church should care for widows who have no relatives (1 Timothy 5:3-16)

WORK

Hard work is honored by God (Genesis 31:38-42)

Use your skills to honor God (Exodus 36:1)

Hard work brings rewards (Proverbs 12:14)

Hard work helps supply basic needs (Proverbs 28:19)

Our work for God is never wasted (1 Corinthians 15:58)

All work should be done as though we are working for God (Ephesians 6:5-9)

WORRY (see Stress)

WORSHIP (see also Church)

Worship is an encounter with the living and holy God (Exodus 3:1-6)

Worship is reserved for God alone (Exodus 34:14)

In worship, we ascribe to the Lord the glory due him (Psalm 29:1-2)

We can worship because of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf (Hebrews 10:1-10)

We should worship with reverence for God (Hebrews 12:28)

When we draw near to God, he draws near to us (James 4:8)

YOUTH (see Adolescence)